

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 200

Share profits with workers

2152 WOLF CREEK RD ■ From Page One

Yes, new banks still don't want to lend. It's most ridiculous about the situation is that they're not lending. With the cost of living always going up, if the banks do not pump in some money to the staffs who are also consumers, how will we turn the economic cycle.

"This is something simple—the banks are making huge profits, so share with the workers. We are not asking for very high," she said.

The tweet came when announcing the new 10 percent policy. The NUBE is generally thought to be a good deal for the public, but proposals for the MEBA also include the two-month contractual bonus, which works out to a 40 percent increase. The NUBE proposed for a 30 percent hike.

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No full scale protest yet but Sabah Bank Employees Union wants 30 p.c. pay hike

By Joseph Sipalan

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Bank Employees' Union (SBEU) will be forwarding similar demands as the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) when they meet with the Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) on Monday, Sept 24.

SBEU chairman Margaret Chin Sat Peng said while the State union has yet to launch a full-scale protest as done by NUBE in Serembanjung Malaysia, their demands will be met with the 30 percent salary hike as proposed by NUBE.

"The bank staff are not happy and disappointed with the SCBA because all this while our collective agreement has expired since December 2005 and since then only one round of negotiations has been held," Chin said when contacted yesterday.

She said the SCBA did not reply to their first letter requesting for a meeting to discuss the new CA, and after a second letter was issued, they told the State union that they did not have time to hold a meeting.

The situation led to the SBEU organising a silent protest since Monday where the 2,000-odd bank employees represented by the union wore badges in support.

"Only when we start a protest that they give us a date for the meeting... It's not that we want to do this but if we have nowhere else to turn to we will be forced to go further (with the protest)," Chin said.

She stressed that the union will not accept any proposal from the SCBA that carries an offer similar to what has been issued by the



PUTTING ON

Awang Alizan (2nd left) and Salasmain B. Timbun (2nd right) pin the "SBEU Protest Injustice" badges on their colleagues Radios Sakir (3rd left) and John Freddy (right) while Josie Augustine (left) looks on at the Maybank Gaya Street branch, yesterday.

**The SBEU
launched a silent
protest since Monday
to pressure the SCBA
to discuss the terms
of their new
Collective
Agreement. Photo by
Daniel Bisson.**

"Under our expired CA, clerical staff get a two-month contractual bonus and this has been the case for over 40 years now.

"When the MCBA said 30 percent, they mislead the staff by taking out the bonus and absorbing it into their salaries. If they cannot afford (to give the salary hike), we are open to discussion but the thing is they can afford it," she said.

Two weeks ago, NUBE enforced a "work-to-rule" policy involving some

deadlock.

Chin pointed out that the Government is not a profit-making body but can still hand out salary increments of between 30 percent and 45 percent to its staff.

"The banking industry on the other hand historically earns profit every year and you can see that in the financial reports. Increasing the staff's salaries is not an affordability issue for the banks.

"We are the movers of the industry because we are at the frontlines meeting

of RM995 for clerical level workers in banks is higher than most employees in Sabah, Chin stressed it does not reflect the workload.

"Bear in mind, when you join a bank, you are expected to either have a diploma or be a graduate. With a diploma they expect you to multi-task. You have to do sales, customer service and even problem-solving," she said.

"Nowadays, it seems like the staff are working seven days a week."

Share profits with lower ranking staff, banks told

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) urged employers from the Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) to appreciate the contributions made by the lower ranking employees and share their profits with them.

Its President Margaret Chin Sat Peng, in a statement Tuesday, said banks have been making profits year after year but yet the salary of the lower ranking employees do not reflect the sterling performance of the banks.

"One clear example is Affin Bank Berhad, where the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) is paid RM4,487,000 in 2006 compared to RM2,825,000 in 2005. The increase of 58.84 per cent in a year was justified even though the bank suffered a slight dip in their profits before tax of RM218.459 million in 2006," she said, citing the bank's Financial Reports for 2005 and 2006.

She also said SBEU's request for a 30 per cent pay hike for three years for Non-Clerical and Clerical posts where the basic salary ranges from RM662 to RM2,930 per month was countered by the banks with the removing of the two months' fixed contractual bonus.

"The banks wanted to implement a performance related remuneration system (PRRS) for bonus, where parameters cannot be discussed and is at the banks' absolute discretion," she said.

Chin added that the union has been monitoring the banks' current performance appraisal systems and has received many complaints from members who claimed that there are no clear guidelines on how the banks reward performers.

"For example, most staff are not given job descriptions at all, too many bosses to report to, conflict between banks' policies and staff efficiency when in fact the fundamental elements for any performance related remuneration systems are transparency, sharing of information and mutual agreement in setting guidelines.

"On the other hand, SBEU is open about the PRRS and this is proven by the inclusion of an article in the Collective Agreement between both sides more than 10 years ago but sadly none of the banks has come forward to discuss the implementation of this system," she said.

She added that the union did not want a hostile working environment by rushing into a system, which has not even been discussed as not only will the employees in the banking industry suffer, but customers of the banks will also become victims in the process.

"If the banks are serious about their corporate social responsibility, we urge them to share their profits with lower ranking staff because at the end of the day, 'no people, no profit'," said Chin.

Bank workers picket demanding bonus

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 1,000 bank employees picketed peacefully in front of the Maybank tower here Tuesday demanding the restoration of the two-month bonus which their employers had withdrawn.

The workers, carrying banners and placards, picketed for about an hour before dispersing at about 1.30pm.

National Union of Bank Employees (Nube) Secretary-General, J. Solomon, said the picket was held to protest the

retraction of the bonus payment.

He said that through negotiations held previously, the Malaysian Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) had agreed to increase the workers' salary by 30 per cent, but withdrew the payment of the annual two-month bonus.

"I'm disappointed that the banks' chief executive officers, who receive very high salaries, don't care about the wellbeing of their workers, some of

whom are receiving only RM662 a month," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) President Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud said the picket was in line with the demand by MTUC for employees in the private sector to be paid a minimum wage of RM900.

"What the workers are demanding is not much but commensurate with the current increase in the prices of goods," he added. — Bernama

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

Bank employees to take protest a step further

By Joseph Sipalan

KOTAKINABALU: Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) president Margaret Chin Sar Peng yesterday urged union members to continue wearing their badges in silent protest following a deadlock in wage negotiations with the Sabah Commercial Banks Association

(SCBA).

She said the negotiations on Monday failed to cover any ground due to the "firm stance" of the SCBA, which is believed to be in line with the offer made by the Malaysian Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) to the National Union of Banking Employees (NUBE).

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SBEU plans to take protest a step further

■ From Page One

"We plan to take the protest a step further but we will announce that by Monday (Oct 1). For now we urge all our members to continue wearing their badges," Chin said when contacted yesterday.

The SBEU started its silent protest early last week to pressure the SCBA to set a date to renegotiate their Collective Agreement (CA), which expired in December 2005.

After the failed meeting on Monday, both parties agreed to continue with negotiations on Oct 18-19 after the Hari Raya celebrations.

Chin said the union, which represents some 2,000 bank employees statewide, is demanding a 30 percent salary hike in line with NUBE's proposal for bank employees in Semenanjung Malaysia.

NUBE implemented a "work-to-rule" policy earlier this month when wage negotiations with the MCBA reached a deadlock.

(NUBE secretary-general) Solomon said they could not agree to a counter-proposal by the MCBA by discounting the two-month contractual bonus, which works out to a 13 percent increase.

SBEU expresses disappointment with SCBA over delaying tactics

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) yesterday expressed their utter disappointment with the employers' association, Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) over their delaying tactics on the current collective agreement negotiation which expires on 31 Dec 2005.

In a statement issued here yesterday, SBEU President, Margaret Chin Sat Peng noted that both parties had a reconciliation meeting on Nov 23 2007 at the Industrial Relations (IR) Department.

Instead, SCBA has suggested to the IR Dept to refer the matter to the Industrial Court rather than to negotiate.

"SCBA has insisted on going for a performance based system on the bonus payment without proper guidelines."

"However, SBEU welcomes the system with proper guidelines so as to avoid creating a hostile working environment. Guidelines are essential to

remove any suspicion of favouritism and victimisation resulting from unilateral decisions of the management," she said.

To prepare SBEU members for this performance based system, she said SBEU had jointly organised a seminar with the National Productivity Corporation (NPC), an organisation set up by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry to promote and assist companies in the drawing up of performance/productivity linked wage system in Jun 05 and subsequently another workshop in Nov 2007.

From the workshop, it was discovered that transparency and sharing of information were fundamental and essential for the implementation of such systems.

SBEU also came across one of the major local banks in the country which did not give job descriptions to their clerical workers, the reason being that it is private and confidential.

Margaret said delegation



UNITED WE STAND... Margaret (3rd from left front row) with staff of from other commercial banks who are also the SBEU exco members

of jobs is done by verbal instructions and this gives rise to a lot of doubts and suspicions.

Nevertheless, SBEU is seeking assistance from the Minister of Human Resources in giving a clear direction that

employers should discuss the system before implementation.

This is in view that SBEU

is answering the government's call to move towards a performance based system," she said.

No people, no profit, bank employers told

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) has urged employers from the Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) to appreciate the contribution made by the lower ranking bank employees.

SBEU president Margaret Chin Sat Peng reckoned that the employers should share with the lower ranking staff the profits that they have contributed to the banks.

She said that banks have been making historical profit year after year and yet the salary of these groups of workers does not reflect the sterling performance of the banks.

"One clear example is Affin Bank Berhad, where the CEO was paid RM4,487,000 in 2006 (2005: RM2,825,000). The increase of

58.84% in a year was justified even though the bank suffered a slight dip in their profit before tax of RM218.459 million in 2006 (2005: RM225.324 million) as per 2005 and 2006 financial report," Margaret said yesterday.

She said SBEU's request for a 30% pay hike for three years for non-clerical and clerical staff where the basic salary ranges from RM662 to RM2,930 per month was countered by the banks with the removal of the two months fixed contractual bonus.

The banks wanted to implement a performance related remuneration system (PRRS) for bonus, where parameters cannot be discussed and is at the banks' absolute discretion.

"Over the past few years, SBEU

has been monitoring the banks' current performance appraisal systems, where many complaints were received from members as there are no clear guidelines on how the banks reward performers. "For example, most staff are not given job descriptions at all, too many bosses to report to, conflict between banks' policies and staff efficiency and etc," she said, adding that in fact, the fundamental elements for any performance related remuneration systems are transparency, sharing of information and mutual agreement in setting guidelines.

On the other hand, Margaret pointed out that SBEU is open about the PRRS and this is proven by the inclusion of an article in the SCBA/SBEU Collective

Agreement more than 10 years ago. "Sadly, none of the banks have come forward to discuss about the implementation of this system."

According to her, SBEU does not wish to see a hostile working environment being created by rushing into a system which has not even been discussed.

"Not only will all the employees in the banking industry suffer, but the customers of the banks will also become victims in the process."

"If the banks are serious about their corporate social responsibility, SBEU urges them to share their profits with the lower ranking staff because at the end of the day, no people, no profit," she added.



SBEU members want their employers to appreciate their contributions.



BONUS DEMAND ... Maybank staff who are members of NUBE taking part in a peaceful picket to demand for bonus in front of Menara Maybank at Jalan Tun Perak in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. - Bernama Photo

Bank employees picket to demand bonus payment

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was held to protest the retraction of the bonus payment.

He said that through negotiations held previously, the Malaysia Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) had agreed to increase the workers' salary by 30 per cent, but withdrew the payment of the annual two-month bonus.

"I'm disappointed that the banks' chief executive officers, who receive very high salaries, don't care about the wellbeing of their workers, some of whom are

receiving only RM662 a month," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) president Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud said the picket was in line with the demand by MTUC for employees in the private sector to be paid a minimum wage of RM900.

"What the workers are demanding is not much but commensurate with the current increase in the prices of goods," he added. - Bernama

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Sabah bank staff get 17% salary increase

They will also get two months' bonus, better housing loan

By Ripin Mintow

KOTA KINABALU: After more than two years of intense negotiation, the Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) and the Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) finally inked their Collective Agreement (CA) for 2006-2008.

The SCBA was represented by its President Felix Lo and SBEU by its President Margaret Chin Sat Peng during a ceremony here witnessed by National Industrial Relations Director-General Haji Md Yunus Razzaq and Malaysian Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) President Hamidah Naziadin yesterday.

Under the CA, both sides reached

a mutual agreement of giving a 17 per cent salary adjustments and two months of contractual bonus for clerical and non-clerical staff in Sabah. There will also be improvement to the housing loan entitlement and medical benefits for family members of the workers.

The salary arrears will be paid within one month from yesterday which was regarded as a timely windfall in conjunction with the forthcoming Hari Raya Aidil Fitri celebration.

With the recent intervention of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and their peers in Peninsular Malaysia, Margaret said the SCBA and SBEU finally reached a mutual understanding after 30 months of negotiation for their 11th

Collective Agreement.

She said SBEU chose an amicable way to settle the matter despite losing four per cent in their salary adjustment, compared to their peers in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak.

The previous SCBA/SBEU Collective Agreement expired on Dec 31, 2005.

While noting that the existing agreement would expire by Dec 31, this year, Margaret said the Association would fight for better working terms and conditions for its members in their forthcoming CA negotiation.

"In fact, it (the negotiation) was tedious and tough, especially when SCBA offered a 30% salary adjustment, with a condition of diluting the two months' contractual



SEALED ... Felix (right) and Margaret exchanging documents, witnessed by Haji Md Yunus (third left) and Hamidah (second right).

bonus into the salary, and future bonuses will be totally based on performance," she recounted.

Stating that SBEU has been looking positively on the performance-based system, Margaret reckoned that clear guidelines, transparency, sharing of information, clear and updated job descriptions were essential elements to ensure the successful implementation of the system.

In addition, she said clear guidelines were also required to

remove suspicion of favouritism from any unilateral decision of the management.

"A performance-based system without any clear guidelines is like a country without proper law.

"As the banks are moving in the direction of performance-based system to further enhance their profits, we would like to highlight that workers at all level should have a fair share of the profits," said Margaret.

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Banks sincere in implementing performance-based bonus system

KOTA KINABALU: Bank managements are sincere on the implementation of a performance-based bonus system for all clerical and non-clerical employees, said Malaysian Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) President Hamidah Naziadin.

Nevertheless, she said MCBA respected the wishes of the unions in wanting to maintain the existing

contractual bonus systems.

She said MCBA was hoping that the Collective Agreements (CAs) for all three regions of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak would one day be the same again.

"We would like to have a uniform system for similar categories of employees in our industry," said Hamidah at the Collective Agreement signing between Sabah Commercial

Banks Association (SCBA) and Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) here yesterday.

Towards this end, she said whilst there was similarity in the CA between MCBA and the National Union of Banking Employees (NUBE) and in the CA between SCBA and SBEU, the position in Sarawak was significantly different in terms of the salary ranges and bonus payment.

She said this would cause major administrative concern for movement of staff between Sarawak and Sabah and Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia.

"Having said this, I believe this is the challenge that all human resource practitioners will have to deal with," said Hamidah, urging both the banks and unions to work together to solve such issue.

US paying close

KUALA LUMPUR: The United States Embassy here has expressed hope that the rule of law will be applied fairly and transparently in the process of prosecuting Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) Advisor Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In a statement yesterday, the Embassy said that transparent and impartial application of the law in this case was critical to continue

Collective agreement for Sabah banking sector sealed

Larry Ralon

KOTA KINABALU: A two-and-a half year wrangle for better working terms and conditions ended with the signing of a collective agreement for 2006-2008 between the Sabah Banking Employees' Union (SBEU) and the Sabah Commercial Banks Association (SCBA) here Thursday.

The 11th SCBA/SBEU Collective Agreement was sealed by both parties in a ceremony at Hyatt Regency Kinabalu, witnessed by the Director-General of Industrial Relations Haji Mohd Yunus Razzaly.

Clerical and non-clerical bank staff who have been in service from December 31, 2005, will get among others a 17 per cent salary adjustment, less the 7 per cent interim adjustment that had been paid in February this year.

The salary arrears will be paid within one month.

Under the agreement their two-month contractual bonus was retained and there is to be an adjustment of about 5 per cent for various types of allowances.

There will also be an improvement to their housing loan entitlement and medical benefits for family members.

The signing of the CA, involving SBEU President Margaret Chin Sat Peng and SCBA President Felix Lo, was also witnessed by Malayan Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) President Hamidah Naziadin, Bank Negara Malaysia Sabah Division's Assistant Branch Manager Khatijah Madom, Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) Sabah Division Chairman Simon Yayun Lamadas, National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) General Secretary J. Solomon, and Sarawak Bank Employees' Union (SBEU) Chief Financial Officer Bong Lok Then, among others.

Hamidah said the conclusion of this agreement reflects for the first time, since their relationship began some three decades ago, a situation where the collective agreements in the three regions –

Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak – are not similar.

"Whilst there are similarities in the CAs between MCBA and NUBE and that between SCBA and SBEU, the position in Sarawak is significantly different in terms of the salary ranges and bonus payment," she said.

This will certainly cause major administration concerns for movement of staff between Sarawak and Sabah and that of Sarawak and the peninsula, she added.

"I believe this is the challenge that all HR practitioners will have to deal with and I am certain both the banks and unions will have to work together to solve such issues as and when they arise," she added.

Hamidah also said the management of banks is sincere in wanting to see the implementation of a performance-based bonus system for all clerical and non-clerical employees.

"Nevertheless, we respect the wishes of the unions in wanting to maintain the existing contractual bonus system. It is our fervent hope that the collective agreements for all three regions will one day be the same again as we would like to have a uniform system for similar categories of employees in our industry," she said.

Although negotiations between parties especially where there are differing objectives would never be an easy task, she felt such differences can be overcome based on the mutual objective of protecting the interest and welfare of the organisation and employees.

"Discussion, persuasion and merits of the issue at hand will go a long way towards resolving issues," she said, certain that both parties will continue to maintain the healthy and mature relationship that has been developed and nurtured through the years.

Meanwhile, Chin said SBEU viewed positively the performance-based system and anticipates the banking industry is moving towards implementing it.

She said due to this reason they had tried initiating a tri-par-