

## Employers' group fears 'outbreak of strikes' under new law

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A protest by bank employees in Johor Bahru in March. Proposed changes to union law may create an 'outbreak of strikes', says an employers' group.

PETALING JAYA: The country's largest employers' group has called for a balanced approach in changes to the law on trade unions, saying there could be a "risk of an outbreak of strikes" if the government isn't careful.

The Malaysian Employers Federation claimed there was a lot of anxiety among trade unions and employers over the government's

intention to allow more than one union at workplaces.

The federation's president, Syed Hussain Syed Husman, said proposed amendments to the Trades Unions Act have the potential to cause a nightmare for businesses.

"If workers at any workplace were free to establish and join any trade union of their choice, then employers would be left to manage multiple unions at the workplaces," he said in a statement.

Having too many unions in a workplace would repel investors and could potentially spark "industrial disharmony on a national scale with severe economic consequences", he said.

"Under the new proposed laws, the risk of outbreak of strikes nationwide is real and could disrupt public order," Syed Hussain said.

The proposed amendments would also render the director-general of trade unions powerless in determining the number of unions that could be formed. He said it was critical for a director-general to be empowered to refuse the registration of a trade union.

The Trade Union (Amendment) Bill was tabled for the first reading in the Dewan Rakyat in March.

It seeks to amend the Trade Unions Act 1959 to remove restrictions on the formation of trade unions based on certain establishments or similarities in trade, occupation or industry to allow for the diversity of trade unions.

The bill is expected to be debated at the next Dewan Rakyat sitting.