

Maid talks delayed

Friday, 31 July 2009

http://www.straitstimes.com/print/Breaking%2BNews/SE%2BAsia/Story/STIStory_402472.html July 13, 2009 Maid talks delayed KUALA LUMPUR - MALAYSIA said on Monday that talks with Indonesia over its ban on sending maids to work here, imposed in response to a recent abuse case, have been delayed until month's end. The ban was put in place last month after a 43-year-old Malaysian woman was charged with causing grievous bodily harm after beating her Indonesian maid and scalding her with boiling water. Malaysian human resources minister S. Subramaniam told reporters the talks due on Wednesday had been 'deferred to a later date sometime (at the end of) July at Indonesia's request,' adding the delay was over logistics. Malaysia - one of Asia's largest importers of labour - depends heavily on domestic workers, mainly from Indonesia, but has no laws governing their working conditions. The government in May announced plans for new laws to protect domestic workers from sexual harassment, non-payment of wages and poor working conditions. Mr Subramaniam said the government would introduce a compulsory day off for maids - who often work seven days a week - and have their wages paid into bank accounts to deter employers from withholding salaries. Malaysian officials said an average of 50 maid abuse cases were reported each year out of 300,000 Indonesian maids working here. Indonesia says 1,000 maids experience violence and mistreatment annually. -- AFP