

**LABOUR**

# Absentee factory owner to be charged

**PENCHAN CHAROENSUTHIPAN**

The labour minister has ordered the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare to press charges against the owner of Grand UB Co, a furniture factory in Chon Buri, after its closure resulted in its 63 workers being laid off without payment.

Factory worker Somchai Suksamran, 55, said Grand UB Co announced its closure suddenly on Tuesday, effective the next day.

Mr Somchai said the owner had not visited the factory for a long while, leaving the manager to supervise the operation. However, the employees have not been able to reach the manager after learning of the factory's shutdown.

He said his salary was 13,000 baht per month, and his compensation should be 170,000 baht.

The company cited in its announcement that it had faced a liquidity crisis over the past three years, resulting in the layoffs. All 63 workers were reported to have experienced delays in being paid.

Another worker, Prapan, 49, said the

company had not paid him or any of his colleagues since last October.

He said none of them had a clue that the factory was about to shut down. Now they are concerned they may never receive the unpaid wages.

The workers have lodged a complaint with Ko Chan Police in Chon Buri, according to reports.

Labour Minister Suchart Chomklin has ordered the Department Of Employment, Social Security Office, Department of Skill Development and Department of Labor Protection and Welfare to offer help to the laid-off workers.

On Wednesday, he posted on his official Facebook page that he had sent aid such as food, stipends and other essentials to the workers' families.

"I have drafted a new bill to establish a fund for workers in case of sudden layoffs. It is a joint project among labour leaders, company owners and government officials," he wrote.

Mr Suchart added that he hopes the next labour minister will continue his effort and pass the law in parliament.