

NASI LEMAK SELLER

FINED RM50,000 OVER KOOTU FUND

Case involves RM100,000 from 5 victims but scheme is likely larger, says prosecutor

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A NASI lemak seller yesterday was fined RM50,000, in default a year's jail, by the Sessions Court here after admitting to running a kootu fund.

The prosecutor said Nor Jaimah Kamarudin, 38, was the first person to be charged under

the Kootu Funds (Prohibition) Act 1971 since it was amended in 2011.

A kootu fund is where participants make periodic payments to a common fund. A participant can win a large sum of money through a method — usually a lottery mechanism — set by the group leader.

The offence carries a maximum 10 years' jail or RM500,000 fine or both upon conviction.

The mother of three pleaded guilty to organising a kootu fund for five people through Facebook between January and August 2018, before judge Norhayati Mohamad Yunus.

Nor Jaimah was charged in Kuantan in 2020 and the case was transferred here.

Dr Shamsher Singh Thind, who

represented Nor Jaimah, urged the court to take into consideration that this was his client's first offence.

He said his client's admission of guilt had saved the court's time and resources.

"Although she pleaded guilty to the charge, she did not gain any profit from the kootu fund. Since a jail term is not mandatory, I urge the court to impose a reasonable fine as she is a mother of three boys, aged between 4 and 8."

Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM) prosecutor Mohd Iqbal Mohd Yusoff said Nor Jaimah organised a kootu fund for a group of five people.

"Investigations were carried out by CCM in September 2018 based on police reports made in Kuantan, which led to oral tes-



Nor Jaimah Kamarudin is the first person to be charged under the Kootu Funds (Prohibition) Act 1971 since the law was amended in 2011. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

timonies and documents implicating Nor Jaimah.

"Based on the evidence presented by the five, Nor Jaimah was responsible for organising a kootu fund from January to August 2018.

"The evidence also showed that she had used a personal bank account for receiving and paying the proceeds of the money collected from the participants," he said, urging the court to mete out a sentence based on public interest and safety.

"This is not a traditional kootu this offered profits. It has economically impacted the five women, who are housewives.

"The punishment needs to be in accordance with the offence to serve as a lesson to her and the public."

Outside the courtroom, Iqbal said this was the first case since the act was amended in 2011.

He said other cases were investigated but were never brought to court.

He said this case involved more than RM100,000, but the exact amount in the scheme was unknown as only five people reported the matter.

"But based on our knowledge, there may be more people affected," he added.

Nor Jaimah paid the fine.

Developing talent for the future

MALAYSIA is en route to becoming a high-income nation, and leading its journey is Greater KL.

Malaysia's talent pool is known for its future-ready edge as it moves up to 26th position out of 88 countries in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020 (GTCI 2020) — two spots higher than its 28th ranking in 2019.

InvestKL, an investment promotion agency under the International Trade and Industry Ministry focused on attracting multi-nationals and fast-growing companies into Greater KL, has introduced Fit4Work, a programme that aims to increase the quality and competitive-



Muhammad Azmi Zulkifli

ness of Malaysian graduates, with potential job placements with multinational companies, government-linked companies, and large corporations within the services industry.

Launched on April 6 last year, the programme aims to nurture a quality, innovative and knowledgeable workforce to drive the country's economic growth to a higher level while creating highly skilled employment opportunities.

Participants will undergo a curated three-month programme that prepares them for the regional services industry, equipped with essential skill sets which include leadership skills, global knowl-



The Fit4Work programme prepares local fresh graduates with essential skill sets required by the services industry.

edge, and exposure to new industries, such as IR4.0, digitalisation, and automation.

InvestKL chief executive officer Muhammad Azmi Zulkifli said: "Fit4Work was designed to support the nation's agenda towards building a pool of globally competitive Malaysian talent. We have active collaboration with industry players and work very closely with public and private local universities.

"It is also positive to note that as of last year, 76 per cent of the Fit4Work graduates have been employed by top corporations.

"It is hoped that with the existence of these various talent pools, global companies will be able to leverage these

talents and capabilities to expand their services in Greater KL, thus making the city a regional centre for business growth and development in Asia."

Participants praised the programme as the training sessions provided them with much-needed skills to set themselves apart in the job market.

Universiti Putra Malaysia graduate Fatin Ahza Rosli, 26, was among the first batch of participants. She said the unique programme taught her many essential skills.

"The training provided was very relevant for young graduates. This is the platform where we can make ourselves better skilled. I hope that this programme will be continued in the future so that more young talents out

there can grab this opportunity."

Woo Jiun Hiao, 24, from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman said Fit4Work had an excellent programme structure that encouraged active participation and discussions. "The trainers are all professionals with years of industry experience under their belt."

Another participant, Navintran Vadivelu, 23, from Nottingham University said the programme strengthened his confidence in communicating and taught him how to convey ideas eloquently to an audience. "These skills are necessary for my career pathway that involves governance and governmental policy".