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Man gets 15-year jail, caning for sexually assaulting 12-year-old girl

KUCHING: A 24-year-old coffee shop assistant was sentenced to 15 years in jail and four strokes of the cane by the Sessions Court here yesterday after being found guilty of sexually assaulting his wife's 12-year-old cousin in 2022.

Judge Shafiza Datu Abdul Razak Tready handed down the sentence after finding that the prosecution had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt following a full trial.

The man was convicted under Section 14(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 (SOACA), with the prison sentence to take effect from Nov 13, 2026.

According to the charge, the offence took place at about 8pm in November 2022, in the kitchen of a house in a village at Jalan Kuching-Serian.

Based on the facts of the case, the victim was referred by her school counsellor to a medical officer at Siburan Health Clinic for a mental health assessment on Sept 11, 2024.

During the assessment, she disclosed that her cousin's husband had molested her and attempted to pull her into a room, but she managed to escape.

The medical officer subsequently lodged a report to facilitate a hospital referral for further examination, leading to investigations and the man's arrest on Sept 12, 2024.

Further investigations revealed that the man was married to the victim's cousin, with the victim having lived with her cousin since childhood. At the time of the incident, the victim was 12, while the man was 20.

The man had allegedly hugged the victim from behind before putting his hand inside her trousers and rubbing her genital area. He then attempted to pull her into a room, but she managed to flee.

The victim was also told to keep the incident a secret. Deputy Public Prosecutors Mohd Fadzri Azham Zainudin and Asmawi Nur Haqim Mokhtar prosecuted, while the man was represented by National Legal Aid Foundation lawyers Chai Yuen Hui and Manisha Kaur Toor.