

# Five teens plead guilty to convenience store robbery

**KUCHING:** Five youths aged between 14 and 18 pleaded guilty in the Sessions Court here yesterday to a charge of committing gang robbery at a 24-hour convenience store on Jalan Tun Jugah on June 1 this year.

Two accused aged 18 are awaiting their social reports, while the three younger ones will need to wait for Welfare Department probation reports before they are sentenced.

Judge Noorhisham Mohd Jaafar fixed Sept 7 for the presentation of the reports and sentencing.

According to the charge, the five teens, together with another person who remains at large, committed gang robbery at around 4am by robbing the store employee of about RM1,000 and various brands of cigarettes while armed with a steel machete and a wooden rod.

They were charged under Section 395 of the Penal Code for gang robbery read together with Section 397 of the same Code, which carries a prison term of up to 20 years and caning upon conviction.

The court granted each accused bail of RM10,000 with one surety pending the presentation of the

reports.

It is understood that the group entered the premises armed with a steel machete and wooden rods and threatened two shop workers.

They forced one of the workers to hand over about RM1,000 and various brands of cigarettes.

The boys also damaged the shop's closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitor, cash register, and other equipment before fleeing the scene.

The final suspect, believed to be the group's leader and mastermind, remains at large.

Deputy public prosecutor Adriana Maisarah Mohd Farid appeared for the prosecution, while the five were unrepresented by legal counsel.

The case stemmed from the arrest of the five youths in several police raids conducted around Kuching and Serian between 12.15am and 3am on June 6.

Kuching police chief ACP Alexson Naga Chabu had said then that a team from the district's Criminal Investigation Department also seized a car believed to have been used during the robbery.