

# Cops probe sex slavery claim

## One of rescued girls said to be exploited by male suspect

By **IVAN LOH**  
ivanloh@thestar.com.my

**IPOH:** Investigations into human exploitation and child labour at an oil palm estate in Pengkalan Hulu has widened with one of the rescued 18 said to be a sex slave of the male suspect. It also led to the rescue later of a 14-year-old girl who has been sexually abused at another house in Kedah.

In an SMS sent out to the press here, Perak CID chief Senior Asst Comm Datuk Gan Tian Kee said the sex slave claim was made by a 23-year-old victim when police recorded her statement recently.

"She is still being assessed and treated at the Sungai Petani Hospital (in Kedah). The male suspect has been remanded for a further seven

days until March 16 while the female suspect has been released on police bail," he added.

The 18 were rescued during a police raid on Feb 26 at the 202ha estate following a tip-off.

The group - comprising five men, six women, two teenagers - aged 13 and 17, and five children - aged two to 12 - was believed to have been trafficked in and exploited by the male suspect, 43, and his 24-year-old wife.

The couple managed the estate in Kampung Tasek, Pengkalan Hulu, which borders Kedah and Thailand.

The 14-year-old, from Negri Sembilan, was found at a house belonging to the family of the female suspect in Pokok Sena on March 5.

Sources said the girl, whose family was among the 18, had claimed to

have been sexually abused at the house.

They said the girl claimed that she was initially taken in by the female suspect three months ago as a foster child.

"We managed to rescue the girl after getting information from her mother," the sources said, adding that the child would be placed under police protection.

It is learnt the teenager has been discharged from the Sungai Petani Hospital after an examination.

Pengkalan Hulu OCPD Deputy Supt Raduan Mohamad, when contacted about the girl's rescue, said the case was being investigated under Sections 13 and 14 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants (Atipson) Act.

In an unrelated case, SAC Gan said a team from Bukit Aman rescued 19 Myanmar women and a 17-year-old Vietnamese girl from a "health centre" that was allegedly prostituting them in Jalan Kampar here at about 5.45pm on Thursday.

He said police also found 175 condoms, bottles of lubricant, baby oil, four mobile phones and RM6,670.

"Other items seized were two remote controls for secret doors, two walkie-talkies, two monitors, two CCTV decoders and a business operating licence," he added.

Also arrested were five men - a sentry, a cashier, a supervisor and two customers. A remand order has been obtained for the suspects.

The case is being investigated under Sections 12 and 14 of the Atipson Act.

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