

Shahrizat: Women being enticed with luxury to become drug mules
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KUALA LUMPUR (Aug 18, 2011): While socio-economic factors are among the main reasons women resort to transporting drugs, many are also enticed by the promise of luxury.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil noted that material wealth was used as bait for many of the women who become drug mules.

"Socio-economic factors also play a role but some of the women who are lured into becoming drug mules have jobs," she said at a press conference after the launch of the AZAM aid programme at Pandan Indah today.

Commenting on foreign nationals who lure women to serve as drug mules, Shahrizat said the women are given money, branded goods and also taken on holidays.

"The women then neglect their conscience and fall prey to transporting drugs," she added.

She said the ministry conducts advocacy work to alert families on the issue.

"There are foreigners who come here with ill-intent to make use and fool our Malaysian women into becoming drug mules," she said.

"I urge parents, neighbours and community leaders to alert women on the issue," she added.

It was reported in Malay daily Berita Harian that a woman, Rosna Shariff, 43, was courted by a Nigerian man and later worked as a drug mule after being promised RM60,000 in payment.

In 2007, she was caught in Santa Monica, Lima for transporting five kg of cocaine and spent two years and eight months in jail.

She was released on Oct 29 last year and returned to Malaysia on March 23 this year.

Meanwhile, the ministry has allocated RM43 million for distribution to 8,568 people under its AZAM Niaga and AZAM Khidmat programmes.

Shahrizat said the ministry will distribute the allocation through equipment to support businesses established by hardcore poor, single mothers.

"We are targeting women who are the breadwinners of the family," she said.

She said each recipient will obtain between RM3,000 to RM5,000 worth of equipment to support their cottage businesses.

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