

Duo admit neglecting cats

Pet hotel owners say there were too many animals to look after

By MAIZATUL NAZLINA
nazlina@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Two owners of animal care centre Petknode who allowed eight cats under their care to die of hunger and dehydration during the Hari Raya holiday period last year pleaded guilty to neglecting the cats.

Shahrul Azuwan Adanan and Yushairi Khairuddin, both 29, were jointly charged with 30 counts of neglecting their responsibility and the welfare of the cats sent to their Damansara Damai animal centre.

They had failed to give food and drinks and provide clean cages to 30 cats, causing them to suffer pain, with eight dying due to their negligence.

Shahrul and Yushairi had claimed trial when they were first brought to the court in December last year.

They were accused under Section 44(1)(d) of the Animal Act 1953 which carries a RM200 fine or a maximum jail term of six months or both, upon conviction.

Counsel for the two, Syariful Nizam Shahruddin, said in mitigation that the incident was not intentional as both were animal lovers and that most of the customers were regulars. He said the cats could have also died



Cry for justice: One of the cat owners, Juriah Wat Abdul Wahid, 39, crying as she shows a picture of her cat outside the court in Petaling Jaya. (Right) Yushairi (front) and Shahrul walking out of the court yesterday.



due to other factors.

He said Shahrul and Yushairi had also openly apologised after the incident.

Magistrate K.B. Elena Hong Tze Lan then asked the duo to explain what had happened as the post-mortems revealed that the cats had been neglected for a long period.

Shahrul explained that they just could not cope as there were too many cats to look after.

Prosecuting officer from the Selangor Veterinary Department, Jamadi Badri, in asking for a deterrent sentence, said Shahrul and Yushairi should have limited the intake of animals instead of accepting over 100 cats.

"Their act has tarnished the names of other companies which carry out similar business activities and that of the country as the matter was reported on the Internet," he said.

Hong adjourned the case to June 28 pending a decision and sentencing.

On Sept 4 last year, Shahrul and Yushairi came under heavy fire after some of the cats under their care had to be rescued as they were starving, dehydrated and left in filthy conditions at the pet hotel's premises.

Several of the owners have lodged police reports against the duo.