

Female Muslim workers in Kelantan must cover 'aurat'

STARTS NEXT YEAR:

Ruling applies to staff of fast-food outlets and supermarkets

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IT is now compulsory for Muslim women working at fast-food outlets and supermarkets in Kelantan to cover their *aurat* (parts of the body that must be covered in Islam), including wearing long-sleeved uniforms, by next year.

Most female workers on such premises currently don short-sleeved T-shirts, although Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) had recently introduced a long-sleeved uniform for its staff.

State Local Government, Housing, Youth and Sports Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Fattah Mahmood said non-Muslim staff were not included in the new ruling by the state government, but they were advised to dress decently.

"The committee had a discussion with several supermarkets and business operators over the issue recently.

"We want them to plan a proper uniform for Muslim workers and they have agreed in principle to our proposal.

"The ruling is a must for Muslim women workers, but non-Muslims are encouraged to wear proper clothes.

"I would like to thank the non-Muslim community in the state for their support of the state govern-

ment's policy," he said after a Hari Raya gathering at JKR 10 here yesterday.

Fattah said the ruling was imposed only in Kelantan and hoped it would not receive brickbats from outsiders.

"We want outsiders to recognise Kelantan as a state with a difference.

"The ruling will bring a good image for business operators and, at the same time, it can promote the tourism industry in the state."

Fattah said the state government also encouraged food traders operating at night markets and food stalls to introduce long-sleeved attire for their workers, which would help in the campaign to promote hygienic practices on their premises.

"We want them to look good rather than just focusing on their profit alone. We encourage (Muslim workers) to cover their *aurat*," he said.

Kelantan is the only state that implements such Islamic laws, but it was learnt that enforcement was previously hampered by logistical issues.

The move for Muslim women workers to cover up was well-received by some.

Shop assistant Mohamad Hafiz Shukri, 22, said some female workers had been seen wearing tight and "sexy dresses".

"I support the move by the state government. It will stop men from gawking at the workers and committing sin."

Housewife Siti Aisyah Saifuddin, 30, said the state government should have enforced the ruling a long time ago.

"After all, it is in line with the state motto of moving forward with Islam (*Membangun Bersama Islam*)."



Kelantan Local Government, Housing, Youth and Sports Committee chairman **Datuk Abdul Fattah Mahmood** showing an example of a suitable uniform for female Muslim workers in fast-food outlets and supermarkets, in Kota Baru yesterday. Pic by Zaman Huri lsa

A convenience store worker, who declined to be named, lauded the ruling, saying that currently, workers at the store had to put on arm sleeves to cover their *aurat* as the uniforms

provided were short-sleeved.

"It is not only troublesome to wear the arm sleeves, but we have to fork out our own money to buy them," she said.