

# Man, 74, on 10 rape charges

## Religious teacher accused of molesting two sisters – and maybe more

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**BUTTERWORTH:** The 74-year-old man stood calmly in his sarong, pastel shirt and songkok as he was slapped with 17 charges of rape and sexual assault against two minors over the course of seven years.

Ashaari Ibrahim, a religious teacher was charged with raping and sexually assaulting two sisters in two separate Sessions Courts here.

He faces 10 charges of rape and seven charges of sexual assault.

The girls, who lived not far from his house, were believed to have attended his classes at his home when the assaults occurred.

He was not offered bail in both courts as the Deputy Public Prosecutor said there were another 10 minors who have claimed to be victims of assault by the accused.

"There are at least 10 more children who are victims," said Aisyah Al Humayrah Kamaruzaman.

"If the accused is granted bail, there is a possibility that he may disturb the victims," she said.

The accused, however, appealed for bail to be granted.

"My wife is unwell," he said.

In the first Sessions Court before judge Noor Aini Yusof, he was charged with three counts of raping a minor (the younger of the two sisters) between Jan 1, 2018, and Dec 31, 2020, (one charge each year



**The accused:** Ashaari being led to the Sessions Court in Butterworth, Penang where he faces multiple counts rape and sexual assault of two minors. — ZHAFARAN NASIB/The Star

between 2018 and 2020) when she was between the ages of seven and nine.

The charge, which was read out in Bahasa Malaysia, said the rapes took place at his home in Kampung Setol, Jalan Baru, in Prai.

He was charged under Section 376(1)(e) of the Penal Code for committing rape against the victim. He faces a jail term of up to 20 years and whipping, upon conviction.

In the same court, he was charged with three counts of sexually

assaulting the same victim during the same period of time and at the same location.

He was charged under Section 14(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 that carries imprisonment for up to 20 years and a whipping.

The man pleaded not guilty to all six charges.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Muhamad Syeql Che Murat said no bail was offered.

Noor Aini set July 29 for mention

pending documents and for the accused to appoint a lawyer.

Ashaari was then produced at another Sessions Court before judge Norhayati Mohamed Yunus where he was charged with seven counts of rape and four counts of sexual assault on another minor (the older sister) between Jan 1, 2014 and early March 2021.

The rapes allegedly happened between Jan 1, 2014, and Dec 31, 2020, when the minor was between the ages of five and 11.

The incidents took place at his home in Kampung Setol, Jalan Baru, in Prai, Butterworth.

He was charged under Section 376(1)(e) of the Penal Code for rape, which carries a jail term of up to 20 years and whipping.

He was also charged with four counts of sexually assaulting the same victim between Jan 1, 2018, and early March 2021, at the same location.

He was charged under Section 14(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 that carries imprisonment for up to 20 years and a whipping.

The man again pleaded not guilty to all 11 charges.

Norhayati also set July 29 for mention.

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