

The Star : Scratch-and-win banned

Written by Administrator

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PUTRAJAYA: Scratch-and-win contests, normally used by direct selling companies to deceive consumers into buying their goods, have been banned with immediate effect.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Shafie Apdal, in announcing this today, said the trade gimmick, which has spread to the rural areas, was banned because it was harmful to consumers, many of whom had been deceived into buying substandard goods.

Speaking to reporters after attending the ministry's monthly assembly here today, he said a total of 6,903 complaint cases were filed with the Consumer Claims Tribunal in the first 10 months of this year.

The highest number of 1,393 cases were related to scratch-and-win contests, followed by 529 cases which involved vehicle purchases.

One of the scam's victims Satilah Mahmood, who lost RM27,000 this year, welcomed the move.

My family is now saddled with debts. It is not that I can get back my money, but at least other people will not fall victim to such scams anymore,

said the 42-year-old civil servant from Johor Baru.

The syndicate had called Satilah's home in February telling her that she was in the running to win home theatre systems, massage chairs and even cars.

Her family deposited money in instalments to the company, and they received the home theatre system and a massage chair. Both broke down within weeks of delivery.

She never saw her money again, nor the people who took her money as they had moved out of their rented office lot.