KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	THE STAR			
TARIKH	:	5/1/2022 (RABU)	MUKA SURAT	:	3
JABATAN	:	TNB			

Billed RM695,598 for electricity

Bitcoin mining op suspected behind shockingly high power usage

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KUALA LUMPUR: An elderly man was shocked when he received a notice from Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) claiming that he owed nearly RM700,000 for electricity usage.

Wu Tuan Chiang, 71, said TNB claimed that the meter of the shoplot he had rented out had been tampered with.

"I have been renting out the shoplot at Bandar Puteri Puchong to an IT solutions company since 2019, and the company was supposedly registered in Ipoh, Perak.

"On Dec 16, TNB sent me the notice claiming that the meter had been tampered with, and they were claiming RM695,598.10 in electricity charges," he told reporters at the MCA Public Services and Complaints Department yesterday.

He said they suspected that the shoplot had been used in a bitcoin mining operation.

"I have been trying to contact the tenant since Dec 16 last year but to no avail thus far.

"When I visited the property, it had already been cleaned out," he said, adding that he had lodged a police report on the matter.

Meanwhile Ch'ng Yi Quan, 24, said he received a letter on Dec 22 claiming he owned a TNB account for an address at Teluk Panglima Garang.

"They claimed that the meter at this address had also been tampered with, and were demanding RM77,033.25 in electricity charges.

"The only problem here is that I have never registered any shoplot for electricity," Ch'ng said, adding that he suspected someone had misused his personal details to register for electricity supply.

He claimed that he lost his identity card last year, and suspected that the person who found it had used it for this.

MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head Datuk Seri Michael Chong said they received 10 similar cases so far involving at least RM1.75mil in losses.

"In some of these cases, the syndicates use bogus real estate agents to secure the tenancy so that they cannot be traced.

"Our advice is that all landlords must be proactive in ensuring their property is used for only legitimate business.

"They must also only deal with registered real estate agents," he said, adding that they would contact TNB in order to hold a dialogue on the matter.

His legal adviser, Datuk Theng Book, said TNB meter readers must be alert and thoroughly check meters monthly.

"It does not make sense that they read these meters every month, but only detect meter tampering after long periods of time," he said.



Huge bill: Wu (left) and Ch'ng showing the police report and a letter from TNB during the press conference in Kuala Lumpur. — LOW LAY PHON/The Star