

RM589,450 BRIBE TO GO TO TREASURY

Bitcoin miner fined for paying bribes to cover up illegal activity

ALOR STAR: The Sessions Court here fined a rubber wholesaler RM250,000 after he admitted to a charge of paying over half a million ringgit in bribes to cover up his illegal cryptocurrency mining operation.

Judge Harmi Thamri Mohamad passed down the sentence on Th'ng Kean Kai, 33, after he pleaded guilty to the charge filed under Section 214 of the Penal Code.

The charge carries up to 10 years' imprisonment or with a fine, or both upon conviction.

The father of two had paid RM589,450 in bribes to an undercover Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officer.

The bribe was paid as an inducement not to prosecute him, after the accused was caught stealing electricity to carry out illegal bitcoin mining activity.

In February last year, Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) and MACC had detected an electricity theft for illegal cryptocurrency mining activity.

TNB had informed MACC that the person behind the activity was willing to offer a bribe to its staff to cover up the activity.

Acting on the information, an officer with MACC was placed undercover in the TNB's special unit dealing with electricity theft.

The accused had subsequently set up the first meeting with the undercover MACC officer at Emerald Putri Hotel in Sungai Petani on Aug 26, 2021, where he paid RM42,000 as a bribe.

The next day, the accused paid another RM28,000 cash as a bribe to the undercover officer at the same hotel.

Th'ng admitted that he paid the bribes in four other separate occasions between Sept 29, 2021, and Feb 28, 2022, in Sungai Petani.

During the separate meetings, he had paid RM87,600; RM121,250; and RM215,800 with the last payment worth RM94,800 made to the officer on Feb 28, 2022.

Lawyer Tengku Hezrul Anuar Tengku Abdul Samad, who represented the accused pleaded for leniency as it was his client's first offence.

"The accused is the sole breadwinner for his family. He has two young children and is also supporting his father who suffers from diabetes and hypertension.



Th'ng Kean Kai arriving at the Alor Star Sessions Court yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

"My client has been cooperative since he was detained. He is fully remorseful and pledged not to get involved in such activities ever again."

MACC deputy public prosecu-

tor Ahmad Akram Gharib who appeared for prosecution, urged the court to impose a hefty sentence as a lesson to the accused, as well as the public.

Judge Harmi Thamri passed

down a fine of RM250,000 on the accused.

The court also ordered for the RM589,450 bribe paid by the accused to be surrendered to the National Treasury.