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Suspected electricity thief found dead

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KOTA KINABALU: The body of a suspected power thief was found in a drain behind a factory at Inanam near here, prompting a reminder from the authorities that such activities are both illegal and dangerous.

Police said he was believed to have been electrocuted on Sunday.

Kota Kinabalu Acting OCPD Supt George Rakman said the body of the unidentified man was found amid wire cables, holding on to live wires.

"According to witnesses, they heard shouts from behind the factory at about 3am but did not go to check," he said.

He said factory workers only saw the body in the drain later, which prompted them to inform their supervisor.

Supt George said an inspection at the site found many wires hidden in the ground and in the drains, believed to have been used by squatters from the nearby Kg Lembaga Padi settlement.

"We are investigating the cause of death and awaiting the forensic report," he said.

Meanwhile, Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) appealed to the public to inform them of illegal power connection activities due to continuous power thefts despite various efforts to counter it.

SESB senior general manager

(asset management) Norhizami Abu Hasan said SESB has been conducting scheduled checks for power thefts and integrated crackdowns at high-risk areas and places where such activities were known to be rampant.

"But we still get reports of power thefts," he said in response to the electrocution incident.

Norhizami said such acts did not only affect SESB but also disrupted power supply to thousands of customers.

"We will continue our operations against power thefts but we are also appealing for more public assistance, so that we can better combat this crime," he added.

He said the public could file com-

plaints or provide tip-offs to SESB's toll-free number at 15454.

Norhizami said power theft was not only confined to squatter colonies but also done by factory operators, hotels and individuals.

"There are also homeowners 'supplying and selling' electricity illegally through their own power supply," he added.

He said SESB would continue to have more awareness programmes on the issue through corporate social programmes via the print and electronic media and other means.

He reminded the public that power theft was an offence under the law and offenders could be jailed or fined upon conviction.