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Duo accused of bribing for Bitcoin mining raid secrets

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SHAH ALAM: An IT company manager and assistant pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court here to 10 bribery charges for allegedly obtaining confidential information on raids against illegal Bitcoin mining.

Lai Chung Lam, 40, and Lee Chee Yong, 43, pleaded not guilty before Judge Awang Kerisnada Awang Mahmud after all charges were read out to them jointly.

They are accused of jointly offering RM56,000 in cash bribes to an individual through an intermediary at several restaurants and boutiques in Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya, on Aug 28, Oct 2, Nov 17, Dec 16, 2020, and May 10, 2021.

The bribes were allegedly given in exchange for information regarding raids conducted by Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) against premises suspected of carrying out illegal Bitcoin mining activities through electricity theft.

For the first five charges, both men were charged under Section 16(b)(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009, which provides for a maximum prison term of 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the amount or value of the bribe, or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

The accused also face five alternative charges of continuing their joint criminal intent by offering RM56,000 in cash to a nominee, on the same dates, locations, and for the same purpose.

These charges were brought under Section 214 of the Penal Code, which provides for a maximum prison term of 10 years, or a fine, or both upon conviction.

MACC deputy public prosecutor Noorhani Muhammad Ayub offered bail at RM60,000 with additional conditions of surrendering their passports, reporting to the MACC office, and not interfering with prosecution witnesses.

The men's lawyer, Shahidah Muslimah Roslan, requested the court to consider a lower bail of RM20,000, citing that his clients have families to support.

The court subsequently allowed bail of RM25,000 for each accused, along with compliance with the additional conditions. The case has been set for further mention on Aug 14. – Bernama