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60 in dilemma over huge power bill after properties used for bitcoin mining

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IPOH: More than 60 home and shophot owners in Perak are facing electricity payment claims from Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) after their properties were used by tenants for illegal bitcoin mining involving unauthorised wiring.

Gopeng Member of Parliament Tan Kar Hing said his service centre received over 30 complaints regarding such cases in his parliamentary constituency and that further investigations revealed an additional 30 cases in other districts, also reported to representatives' service centres.

He revealed that the claims range from RM30,000 to RM1.2 million per premises, imposed on property owners through lawyers appointed by TNB, along with legal action in court.

Tan stressed the need for relevant parties to take this issue seriously, particularly concerning the plight of property owners who are mostly unable to pay such high claims.

"There needs to be an amendment to the Electricity Supply Act 1990 to ensure shared responsibility between property owners and tenants in electricity usage, instead of blaming one party alone," he said at a press conference here yesterday.

Tan also suggested enforcing an e-KYC (Know Your Customer Through Digital Platforms) process at TNB and the Inland Revenue Board to prevent identity misuse and establish a centralised database to record or monitor tenant behaviour.

He called on TNB to offer structured repayment plans to affected victims to ease their financial burden.

According to Tan, this is a case of injustice, as property owners were unaware of the illegal activities, yet are held liable for hefty claims when the matter is reported.

"This issue will be raised at the upcoming Parliament sitting in February to push for amendments, enforcement, and upgrades so that building owners are not unfairly penalised in such situations," he said.

Meanwhile, Yen Pit Yun, 43, a salon owner, shared her ordeal of renting out the upper floor of her shophot in Panorama Lapangan Perdana to a tenant for RM700 a month from July to August last year.

"I remember on August 30, the tenant brought in a large quantity of thick wires, which prompted me to file a police report. During the police operation, the tenant fled and could not be contacted.

"Despite this, I am still being sued for the damages caused by the tenant and the losses incurred by TNB, with a claim amounting to RM1.2 million. I am at a loss," she said. - Bernama