

Malaysian charged in Singapore sex scam
The Rakyat Post
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JOHOR BARU, A 22-year-old Malaysian man was charged in a Singapore court today for his alleged involvement in a S\$1.25 million (RM4.63 million) credits-for-sex scam in the island republic.

Singapore's Today Online reported that Liew Yii Tern was charged with allegedly helping to cheat two men into making payment for sexual services that were not going to be delivered and dishonestly receiving another's ATM (automated teller machine) card.

The online news portal reported that the three charges could be the tip of the iceberg and more charges could be brought against him.

Liew is believed to be part of a credits-for-sex scam worth more than S\$1.25 million for which over 500 police reports have been made this year.

"The scam involves women befriending male victims online to purchase shopping credits or the victims being asked to hand over their ATM cards and to reveal their PIN numbers," reported Today Online today.

Liew will be remanded for a week for his alleged offences, committed in May and June.

He had also allegedly allowed his bank account to be used to receive S\$38,600 (RM107,300) from one victim, and collected the automated teller machine (ATM) card of another man whose bank account was used to receive S\$2,600 (RM7,200).

Liew is also said to have dishonestly received a stolen ATM card.

For each charge of abatement to cheating, Today Online reported that Liew faced up to 10 years in jail and a fine if convicted. For dishonestly receiving stolen property, he faced up to five years in jail and a fine.

In a separate, but related story, the online portal also reported that Singaporean men had been cheated of more than S\$1.25 million (RM4.63 million) in sex scams in the first five months of the year.

"The scams involved women befriending male victims through social media platforms such as WeChat, and offering dates or sexual services in exchange for online shopping credits," said Today Online, quoting a Singapore Police Force (SPF) media release yesterday.

The article described how the scammers would usually ask their victims to purchase cards from AXS machines, and send images of the receipts together with the personal

identification numbers (PINs) for the cards to designated email accounts for them to claim the credits.

“In some cases, other members of the syndicates would contact the victims and ask them to make more purchases.”

Earlier this month, Today Online also described a variation of the scam where victims were asked to hand over their ATM cards and their PINs before they could meet the women.

“They were instructed to leave their ATM cards at public locations, and told that their cards would be returned to them after they met the women.

“The cards were then collected by unknown persons and the monies in the accounts linked to the cards were pilfered,” said the report, adding that on some occasions these accounts were used to receive funds from other victims of crime.

Cybercheating cases in Singapore have been widespread in recent years, with a three-fold jump in the number of such cases between 2009 and last year.

E-commerce cheating or extortion on cyberspace crimes continued to rise from 510 cases in 2013 to 1,659 cases last year.

Most of the cases were shoppers who were duped into making multiple payments for purported online bargains.

Suspects would put up advertisements for products at low prices but ask for payments repeatedly on the pretext that the goods would be delivered eventually.

Internet scams also emerged in the form of fake gift cards or virtual credits being peddled online.

Today Online also said the latest credits-for-sex scam appeared to originate from overseas and police were working with foreign counterparts to trace the perpetrators.

However, it did not mention which country.

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