

INVESTORS UNCONCERNED

Business as usual at raided virtual currency mall

GEORGE TOWN: Despite being raided, financial scheme company MBI Group International and the mall it runs at Penang Times Square here are operating as usual.

An employee at the mall, who declined to be named, said there had been no problem with the operation of MBI or the mall.

“Even the use of the virtual currency M-coin is going smoothly. Our customers are here shopping as usual using M-coins.

“The raid did not affect operations and there was no arrest. The officers only took documents,” she told the *New Straits Times* at the mall here yesterday.

On Monday, the MBI International office in Penang at level five of the mall here was raided by authorities.

A task force consisting of 30 uniformed enforcement officers from the Companies Commission of Malaysia and Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry, as well as police and plainclothes officials, believed to be from Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), raided the premises.

The company was one of the 302 companies under BNM’s financial consumer alert list.

The task force was also seen inspecting several outlets at the mall, including MBI’s telecommunications services outlet and the service centre for MMspot, MBI’s

shopping and barter system management platform.

They left with four sealed suitcases, two large cardboard boxes, three reams of paper and two plastic bags with paper.

A similar raid was conducted at MBI International outlets in Ampang.

The company was allegedly being investigated under the Direct Selling and Anti-Pyramid Scheme Act 1993, Financial Services Act 2013 and Companies Act 2016.

An investor, who wanted to be identified as Chong, said he was not concerned about the raid as he believed the financial scheme was legitimate.

“This is a legitimate financial scheme, where investors get returns and virtual money, with which we can use to shop for food or household items.

“There is nothing wrong with this. There are more dubious schemes and crypto currency schemes out there that should be investigated instead,” he said at the mall.

It is learnt that members of the scheme get a sum of virtual coins after investing.

After a year, members can convert coins into points to spend in several services and retail establishments under MBI by downloading a mobile application and using it to make payments.

Investor Andy Tan, who re-

cruits members for a percentage of the investment amount, said the returns from the scheme were substantial.

“The returns are very lucrative, even for sleeping members who invest USD\$100 (RM427.70) and do not recruit members.

“That is why people are confident of this scheme, not to mention it has been running for a long time.”

Meanwhile, a source from Bank Negara told the *New Straits Times* that they would not be issuing any statement regarding the raid in the near future.

“The raid was by a team of regulators, including the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry. At this point, there are no updates.

“Once everything is settled, we will issue a statement.”

M Mall complex manager Teoh Jin Aik said business was as usual at the mall and that there was no panic between the customers.

“It’s a routine check only, they didn’t take away our computers and our bank accounts were not frozen. Nothing is affected. Everything is business as usual.

“Even the members are not concerned and there was no panic withdrawals.

“They also raided our headquarters and in both raids, took only some files. All our systems are working fine,” he said.



Financial scheme operator MBI Group International and its affiliated business at a mall in George Town operating as usual yesterday. PIC BY SHAHNAZ FAZLIE SHAHRIZAL