



Syndicate issued 21,378 fake foreign worker permits, had inside help

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myIMMS

# EX-IMMIGRATION PERSON HELPED HACKERS

Suspect played key role in issuing more than 21,000 falsified employment passes to foreign workers

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**A** FORMER Immigration employee is believed to have played a key role in issuing more than 21,000 falsified Temporary Employment Visit Passes (PLKS) to foreign workers.

The suspect, who was among five people arrested in a major swoop called Op Hacks on Tuesday, was instrumental in helping a syndicate infiltrate the Malaysian Immigration System (myIMMS) since a few years ago.

Immigration director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud said the former employee allegedly used two remote routers placed at the department's office.

"The routers were linked to the main system, and this allowed the hackers to easily obtain the identification (ID) and passwords of the department's staff.

"With these ID and passwords, the syndicate could easily access myIMMS," he said at a joint press conference with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission here yesterday.

He said the hacking granted the intruder access to almost everything, including removing a barred person's name from the database, or allowing a person to be reinstated with a clean status to enter the country.

Asked whether the syndicate managed to override other databases in the department, Khairul Dzaimie said: "Fortunately not. Preliminary investigation showed there was tampering only in the PLKS module. The other modules were untouched."

He said the syndicate had operated for several years and caused the government to lose about RM4.7 million in unpaid levies.

He said the department initiated an investigation into the unauthorised issuance of PLKS in the middle of last year following the arrest of a Bangladeshi worker.

"We were working hard trying to track down those behind the unauthorised issuance of passes.

"We learnt that a former department employee was among those involved in hacking myIMMS to obtain the PLKS.

"We began tracking down the syndicate and its operations since last year, and it took some time for us to crack the case due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Investigations reveal the syndicate is headed by a Datuk with the help of the former department employee who's familiar with the department's operations and systems."

Other than the Datuk and for-

mer Immigration employee, the three others arrested helped to run the syndicate's operations and sold the falsified passes for thousands of ringgit.

"We believe the syndicate is responsible for issuing at least 21,378 PLKS passes over the last few years. These passes were mostly issued to foreigners allegedly working in the plantation, manufacturing and services sectors.

"The levy charge for each worker is between RM600 and RM1,400, depending on the employment sector."

He said the syndicate raked in hundreds of millions of ringgit in these past few years, as it also charged between RM5,000 and RM6,500 for each pass.

He said in the raids jointly conducted with the MACC, they seized RM25.5 million worth of assets, 66 vehicles, including 12 luxury cars, 34 branded watches and more than RM500,000 in cash.

He said the case was uncovered following leakages in government revenue, which had been raised in the 2018 Auditor-General's Report.

Page 1 caption: Immigration director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud (second from left) and MACC Chief Commissioner Datuk Seri Azam Baki (third from left) with the seized equipment used to make fake Temporary Employment Visit Passes, at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM