



Headline: Cleaning service scam's tactic to snare victims
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Cleaning service scam's tactic to snare victims

KUALA LUMPUR: A house cleaning service at a much cheaper rate in addition to the promise of sanitation for the entire home prompted a woman in Shah Alam to reach out to an online cleaning service, especially as her family members were infected with the COVID-19.

Speaking to Bernama, Hariyati Arifin, 61, said in last week's incident, she spotted an advertisement for the 'Easymaid' service on Facebook without realising it was a clone of the real service application, Maideasy.

This was her first experience dealing with a scammer and she totally unexpected it as she knew there are legitimate applications such as Maideasy, Grabmaid and several other applications and her contacts also shared positive experiences using such services.

"I came across the 'service' on Facebook and was intrigued by the set price, then clicked on the advertisement before being taken to the WhatsApp application. Then, I got in touch with an individual who introduced himself as Alex.

"Alex communicated well in

Malay and English which didn't raise any alarms. He also told me that he understands the current economy and offers a much cheaper charge rate of RM16 per hour and RM30 for two hours including sanitation," recalled Hariyati as she was comparing the costs for the same service provided by Indonesian women in her residential area is at RM30 per hour.

Alex then sent her a link, but due to lack of skill, Hariyati asked her son's help to make a reservation with an advance payment on the Maybank2u application of RM20 as Alex taught through a phone call.

"Alex promised the maid would come the next morning. Coincidentally, that night my son read several cases of online maid fraud on social media. As we started to feel uneasy, we then checked my bank account and found that thousands of ringgit had disappeared without receiving any notification," she said.

Hariyati said a police report was lodged at the Seksyen 6 police station in Shah Alam and

Maybank informed her that as many as three transactions had been made within an hour on the night of the incident.

Confirming the report lodged by Hariyati, Shah Alam district police chief ACP Mohd Iqbal Ibrahim, when contacted by Bernama, said as many as four reports had been received related to cleaning services throughout this year and advised the public to be more careful as this was one of the latest tactics of the scammers.

"Scammers use phishing methods by creating fake websites and links before asking the victim to make a payment online. The application (cleaning service clone) has malware that can steal the victim's bank ID and password information," he said.

Not denying that scam syndicates are now getting more creative, crime analyst Kamal Affandi Hashim warned the public against being easily duped, especially when techniques such as deception, spoofing and phishing are becoming more common these days.

"It is the same with this scam involving cleaning service when

the payment has been made but the service is not provided and then cannot be traced," he said.

Therefore, in order to avoid becoming a victim, he recommended the public to check the bank account and phone number provided first on the Semak Mule application by the Royal Malaysia Police before making any transactions.

"The public, especially users, are advised to use this Semak Mule as a way to detect scammers by checking the account number or phone number given to see if there are many reports.

"Secondly, it is also advised to check the company's website. If he has a company, of course, he has a website. So, this is the steps that we all should do," he said.

Recently, through postings on its Instagram and Facebook accounts, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) advised the public to be careful and not become a victim of cleaning service scams by listing eight applications that are suspected of being involved in scam activities. – BERNAMA