

Penalty increased to check online cheating by traders

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Picture for representation only. — AFP

SUNGAI BULOH: To curb the rising trend of online cheating by business, the Tribunal for Consumers claims can now impose a fine of up to RM50,000.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the decision to raise the fine from RM25,000 to RM50,000 is to curb such cheating.

“The online cheating has now become the number two most complaints received by the ministry on a monthly basis, averaging about 27% of all complaints.

“Complaints about over priced goods still take the top spot with about 31% of all complaints.

“The ministry receives about 2,500 complaints from consumers a month,” he told reporters after the closing ceremony of the Student Entrepreneurship Programme, 1Step, organised by the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM).

Saifuddin said if no action is taken to curb online cheating then it would overtake complaints about over priced goods.

He said one of the reasons this was a growing trend was because as long as person had an electronic device, they could easily start an online business and this is a growing phenomenon worldwide.

He pointed out that some of the companies involved don't have a proper business registration.

Saifuddin advised consumers to check the background of the online companies before making a purchase.

“Under SSM, registered companies with online business can apply for a biztrust certification which is free until 2021.

"Action can easily be taken against such companies if they attempt to cheat the public because SSM will have all their details," he said.

On the 1Step programme, Saifuddin said this is to expose youngsters especially those from technical and vocational schools to the business world.

He said 10,000 students had taken part in the programme and out of those 2,019 had registered a business with SSM.

He said before they can register, they need to undergo a one-day intensive course to understand the business world and what is required of them.

Saifuddin said the students can register a business for free under the One student One Business programme as SSM had set aside RM10 million for it.

He said since the programme started in 2018, over 40,000 students had registered a business.

He said SSM still has RM7 million balance in the fund and this programme is opened ended until the fund is fully utilised.

