

The Star - Deputy minister: They're out to cheat you

Written by Administrator

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ACCORDING to industry sources, the government is to embark on a nationwide anti-scratch and win campaign in a few months' time to rid the country of the perennial nuisance.

Once it is launched, we are going after these unscrupulous people and put an end to the problem once and for all," said one of the source.

He said the ministry was unable to stop them from operating currently because the Direct Selling Act did not spell out in detail how such businesses ought to be run.

It allows one to approach people, to market products but of course there are time limits when you can approach the public and how you market the products," he said.

Since it is not specified, this is where the abuse occurs. And, you have all sorts of gimmicks being implemented to convince people to buy," the source said.

Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Veerasingam said the ministry could not just revoke the licences of all businesses that use the scratch and win coupons as their marketing tool as genuine companies did the same.

Some of the companies do give out the prizes listed in the tickets without additional payments or 'tricks'," he said.

And, this is not against the law.

Veerasingam said the problem arose when some companies used it as a gimmick to get people to buy other products before getting their prizes.

He said the ministry had carried out programmes to advise the public against falling prey to such tactics, but cases continued to surface.

Veerasingam said the problem was similar to that of the "Get-Rich-Quick" schemes which the government had repeatedly warned people to stay away from.

Check before you invest or make large payments and be wary because there are people trying to cheat you out there," he said.

He urged anyone with information on such scams to report them to the ministry's hotline at 1800-886-800.