



Headline: Retiree loses RM180,000 life savings to Macau scam Language: English
scam

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IPOH: A retiree lost her life savings of over RM180,000 after falling prey to a phone scam, known as the Macau Scam, where she was told she was suspected of being involved in a drug offence.

The 66-year-old, who only wanted to be known as Madam Ang, parted with her fixed deposit savings when told the money must be transferred to another account as it was considered “dirty money”.

"I received a call last Wednesday (Aug 15) from a man claiming to be Sjn Arif from the Narcotics Investigation Department in Jelutong, Penang.

"He mentioned my name and MyKad number correctly and said I was suspected of being involved in drugs. He also said I had an outstanding loan of RM50,000 in Penang, which I denied.

"He said I needed to transfer my savings to another account for the investigation and to ensure my money would not be suspected as dirty money," she said during a press conference with Perak Barisan Nasional Public Service and Complaints Centre chief Mohd Rawi Abdullah here Tuesday (Aug 21).

Ang, from Kampung Simee here, said she was specifically reminded by Sjn Arif not to tell anyone about the matter, including her family and the bank staff, as the case was confidential.

"He told me that I would risk being locked up in jail and my money seized by Bank Negara Malaysia if I did not follow his instructions.

"I was really scared when I heard the word 'drug' and 'lock up'. So I just did what he asked and took out my savings," she said.

Ang, who worked as a school janitor prior to her retirement, transferred RM181,000 to three separate accounts in five transactions on Thursday (Aug 16).

Recalling the incident, Ang said she was even adamant when a bank staff asked her if she was certain she wanted to cancel and withdraw all her FD savings.

"I was fearful of running afoul of the law as I believed what the man told me.

"Come to think of it now, I was really foolish. How could I just believe what the man said?" added Ang, who admitted that she did not follow the news and had not heard of similar scams in the past.

She said she only realised something was amiss when no one contacted her after the transfers.

"It was then that I realised I did not have Sjn Arif's number. After some asking around, I called up the Jelutong police station, only to be told there was no such person," she said.

Meanwhile, Mohd Rawi said he would liaise with the Commercial Crime Investigation Department to help Ang.

"We have received similar cases before this, where unsuspecting senior citizens, especially pensioners with some savings, were targeted.

"The culprits often used scare tactics to prey on their victims.

"I suspect there are insiders who leaked such information to scammers. I will bring this up with the police later," he said.