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Wasting no time

It has only been little more than a month since he was appointed the director of Bukit Aman's Commercial Crimes Investigation Department but Comm Datuk Mazlan Mansor is wasting no time tackling pertinent issues relating to white-collar crimes nationwide. The seasoned crime buster talks so Sunday Star about his plans for the department.

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TACKLING white collar crime, dealing with public perception, and sorting backlogged cases are among some of the issues being pursued by the newly appointed director of the Bukit Aman Commercial Crimes Investigation Department (CCID).

"It is not the case that everyone has been abuzz about for months, the 1MDB scandal!" Seasoned crime buster Comm Datuk Mazlan Mansor points out that it is far from the only thing on his new plate.

"Many people think that with the 1MDB investigations going on, that I had my work cut out for me as soon as I took office, but this wasn't the case."

"I took over from Datuk Seri Amar Singh earlier this year and he did a great job keeping the ship in shape. That being said, 1MDB is just one of the cases that we are investigating and business has have to go on as usual for us," he tells Sunday Star in an exclusive interview.

For one thing, Comm Mazlan aims to change the way people think when it comes to scams by making it instinctive for them to consult the police first before believing following instructions from a person at the other end of a telephone call.

"Our people lose between RM1bil and RM2bil yearly to telecommunications scams."

"The main reason I feel this happens is due to the fact that most victims fall into two categories, the ones who have no clue about what goes on daily, and the ones who do but think it couldn't happen to them," he says, adding that the ones that do not have a clue have to be educated about what could happen before they are duped, while the ones who don't think it could happen to them need to change their mindset.

He says when victims receive a call from a scammer, it sounds so real that they believe everything the caller says immediately and will transfer money out – and only then will they think to consult the police.

"This needs to change. They must consult us first before they do anything else," he says, adding that the fact that scammers tend to use technology such as voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) has been published in the media time and time again, along with these people's modus operandi.

In terms of evading cases Comm Mazlan says Macau scams are the most difficult due to its nature of dealing with at the moment.

"When I say Macau scam, you may understand me, but the layman might ask what it is. This also needs to change. We need to relabel these scams so the public can understand them better."

"Macau scams are basically scams that occur over a telephone line so why not we call them telecommunication scams instead?" he says, adding that he believes the language used is key to having more people understand what is going on around them.

He says transborder crime is also a major concern for his department when it comes to telephone-based scams.

"We know and realise the importance of cooperation with our foreign counterparts. Last year, together with our counterparts from China, we arrested 53 Chinese nationals operating a call centre in Brickfields (Kuala Lumpur) targeting victims in China."

"We also crippled a syndicate targeting victims in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia with the arrest of two Nigerian and two Malians here. And 13 other members of the same syndicate were also arrested in Hong Kong and Singapore," he says.

Comm Mazlan says the cooperation with other agencies will help deter foreigners from turning Malaysia into a hub for such scams.

"They have to know that even if they come here, swift and stern action will be taken," he says. Among his many other plans is one that will make it easier for complainants to access information regarding pending investigations; he is also pushing his investigators to solve cases swiftly.

"On my investigators side, I am looking at making it easier for complainants to find out details about their cases."

"In many instances, CCID cases can be lengthy and, in the blink of an eye, three or more years have passed and the case has been abandoned."

"When this happens, the complainant will come looking for me or my superior. Seeing this, I have instructed my investigators to keep their complainants updated and explain to them on how they are progressing in the cases. I have also instructed them to conduct their investigations swiftly and professionally," Comm Mazlan says.