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INVESTIGATIONS ONGOING

SPELLBOUND BY SCAMMERS

'Lover' takes girl for a ride, RM10,000 loan-seeker ends up losing RM45,000

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BEING unemployed did not deter a 21-year-old girl from looking for romance. Or so she thought, when she met "williampaul857" on Instagram.

Over time, she began to grow fond of her "partner", who claimed to be from the United Kingdom. The "foreigner" also promised to send gifts, including jewellery.

But instead of being showered with gifts, she realised that the man of her dreams had con-

vinced her to part with RM7,820 for nothing.

It is believed that "williampaul857" had sweet talked her with loving words and informed her on Nov 16 that he would be sending gifts and jewellery from the UK.

On Nov 18 at 1pm, the suspect contacted the victim to inform her that the gifts had been seized by the Subang Airport Customs Department and asked her to pay a tax of RM3,550 on the items.

Pahang Commercial Crime Investigation Department chief Superintendent Mohd Wazir Mohd Yusof said the victim managed to raise the money and transferred it to an account provided by the suspect.

"Some time later, he called the victim again and ask her to deposit another RM4,270.00 to allow for 'VIP scan charges' for the items to skip Customs check.

"Thinking that she was going to receive the gifts, the victim went

to a cash deposit machine at 4.30pm to deposit the money. She was later told that the gifts would reach her soon.

"Yesterday (Tuesday), the suspect called the victim at 8am and asked for another RM8,000 as insurance for the gifts. That's when the victim realised something was amiss."

Wazir said the victim immediately lodged a report at the district police station.

Meanwhile, a 31-year-old clerk who planned to take a RM10,000 loan from an online loan agency ended up losing RM45,900 of his savings instead.

Wazir said the victim, who came across the loan advertisement on Facebook, spoke to a man named "Brian" from Loan Resources Sdn Bhd.

"The victim provided a copy of his MyKad and payslip to check if he was eligible for the loan. After three days, Brian called back to inform him that he was qualified

to borrow up to RM10,000.

"However, he was told to make several payments, including processing and legal fees, insurance, stamp duty and fees to open a new bank account.

"He received several calls between Nov 11 and Nov 18 requesting to make payment. He ended up making 19 payments amounting to RM45,900 into two bank accounts provided by Brian.

"When he was told to pay another RM5,000, the man refused and lodged a police report yesterday," he said.

Wazir said both cases were being investigated under Section 420 of the Penal Code for cheating, which provides for a maximum of 10 years' jail and whipping, and a fine if convicted.

In **Kota Baru**, a pensioner in his 60s lost RM23,000 to a Macau scam syndicate.

Kelantan Commercial Crime Investigation Department chief Superintendent Ahmad Azizul

Mohamed said the case was the latest scam recorded by the state police this year.

"It happened on Monday in Kota Baru. The victim was at his home when he received a call from someone claiming to be a TNB officer at 10am, who informed him that his wife had outstanding bills amounting to RM600.

When he told the caller that his wife had died, he was passed to another person who claimed to be a police officer, Azizul said.

"The 'officer' him that he was found to be involved in the criminal and drug activities and was told to pay the amount as part of the case. The policeman also promised him that the money would be returned in 24 hours.

"The victim then transferred the amount to the caller in the evening. He then realised he was cheated when he failed to contact the caller and lodged a police report," he said.