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WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

MORE PEOPLE FALLING VICTIM TO SCAMS

109 cases involving RM3.97m recorded between January and August, says Pahang CCID chief

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AS the old saying goes, curiosity killed the cat. Curiosity can sometimes get the better of us. And when it involves too-good-to-be-true financial schemes, it normally ends up with the victims losing hard-earned cash.

The modus operandi of scammers is all too familiar, yet there are still those who become easy prey, simply because they are curious to know more about how to get rich the fast and easy way, without having to go through the hassle of dealing with licensed financial operators.

Reminders issued by police seem to have fallen on deaf ears as more people are becoming scam victims by the day.

Pahang Commercial Crime Investigation Department chief Superintendent Mohd Wazir Mohd Yusof said white-collar crimes had been a major concern in the state as many were losing thousands of ringgit daily.

He said 109 cases were recorded involving losses to the tune of RM3.97 million in the first eight months of this year.

From January to August last year, 111 cases were recorded with losses amounting to RM3,973,709.61 compared with 109 cases involving RM3,970,243.41 in losses this year. We arrested 70 suspects last year, while 32 were arrested this year," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Wazir said last year, the num-

ber of scam cases reported stood at 181 involving RM5,178,207.09, with 31 suspects from Kuantan, Temerloh, Raub, Pekan and Maran arrested.

"It is a worrying trend as sometimes, we get 10 reported cases in a day," he said, adding that many who were duped admitted that they never bothered to read media reports of how these scammers operated.

Wazir said the best way to avoid falling victim to scams was to never entertain calls from unidentified people who ask for personal details including bank account numbers.

"The public needs to understand that authorities like the police, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the courts will never call to inform you that you are being investigated and there is a warrant of arrest waiting for you.

"And there is no such thing as transferring your call to another person, purportedly a police or bank officer.

"The police do not have a direct transfer line to banks."

Wazir said most victims would panic after getting calls from scammers, who identified themselves as policemen, and claimed that the victims were involved in a drug investigation, criminal activity, or money laundering.

"Scammers will hit the jackpot when the victims respond to their requests."

Wazir said non-existent loan schemes and financial investment programmes were used by scammers to trap their victims.

He said such scammers would start by informing their victims the details of the "process".

He said they would then ask their victims to pay in stages.

"Such scammers promise to pay a lump sum once you finish paying all the small fees, but before you realise it, you would have given them more than what you have requested to borrow in



Scammers from China being held at the Immigration Department headquarters in Putrajaya on Thursday following a recent raid on an investment and foreign exchange scam syndicate in Cyberjaya. PIC BY LUDJAMAN HARIN (2/11/19)

the first place.

"By the time you realise it, all your money is gone."

On whether the bank accounts used by scammers were traceable, Wazir said it was difficult as the criminals used third-party or stolen bank accounts of dead persons.

He added that in most cases, account holders did not know their names were being used in the scams.

Wazir urged the public not to entertain calls from suspicious individuals who identify themselves as representatives from the police, court or bank to avoid being duped.

"If you are desperate for money, go through the proper channels."