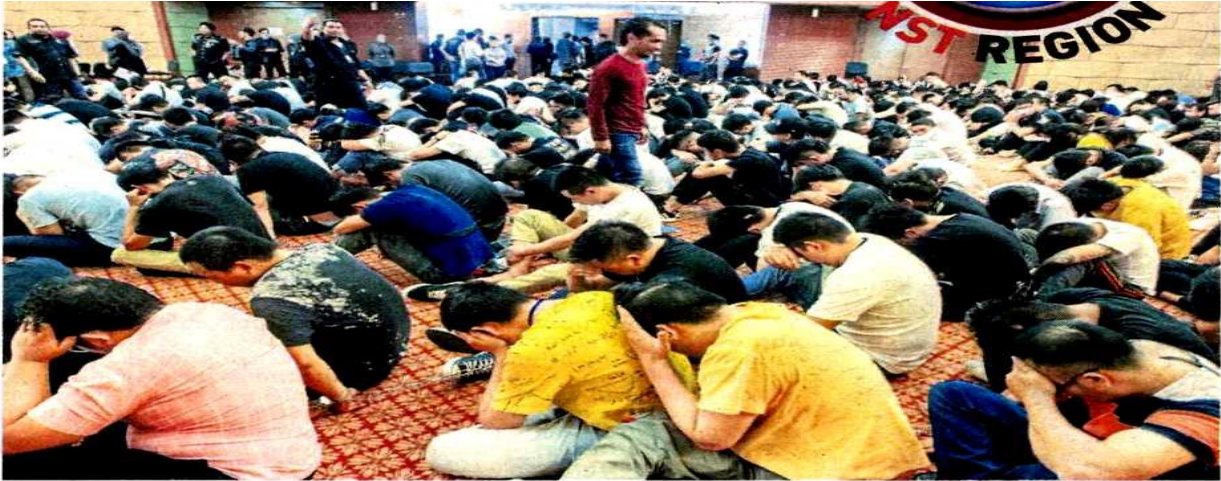




Headline: Scammers challenge authorities globally
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Scammers are held during a raid in Cyberjaya on Thursday last week. More governments are forced to boost enforcement to curb scamming. PIC BY LUQMAN HAKIM ZUBIR

EXPANDING OPERATIONS

SCAMMERS CHALLENGE AUTHORITIES **GLOBALLY**

Fraudsters targeting people from English-speaking countries

SINGAPORE

A RECENT raid that saw nearly 1,000 scammers from China nabbed in Cyberjaya was the latest of a long line of busted scams, which happened all over the world.

More governments are forced to intensify efforts to nip the problem of scamming in the bud though it is a huge challenge.

A Channel News Asia (CNA) report early this year revealed how scammers become so successful in Taiwan, where there have been various forms of phone scams.

At the peak in 2009, the authorities handled over 18,000 reported cases, which is two people scammed every hour, said CNA quoting Anti-Fraud Command Centre section chief, Paggy Chiu.

"In a raid, the authorities discovered a training centre for scammers. Among those arrested were a teacher, a translator and 17

people from Thailand who had travelled to Taiwan to learn how to become phone scammers."

Online reports are full of stories about scammers, which should have been a lesson to the public at large but based on past experience, won't be the last to be heard about.

A Taiwan prosecutor told CNA that scammers have expanded operations to target a much larger population in English-speaking countries including the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan.

The 10 most common scams include the advance fee fraud, lottery, sweepstakes and competition scams, dating and romance scams, computer hacking, online shopping, classified and auction scams, banking, credit card and online account scams, small business scams, job and employment scams, golden opportunity and gambling scams and lastly, charity and medical scams.

From here to the United Kingdom and the United States, scammers leave a trail of losses worth millions.

Last year, fraud cases involving impersonation of Chinese officials rose by 61 per cent in Singapore, compared with 2017, with victims cheated out of

S\$12.7 million.

In September, 324 Chinese nationals were arrested in an immigration operation in Puerto Princesa City on Palawan due to unauthorised online gaming activities, cyber fraud and investment scams, said *Japan Times*.

A few days ago, British Customs was forced to warn the public about scam emails, texts and calls that appear to be from the agency after almost 900,000 people complained.

"Hundreds of thousands of people are being contacted by thieves pretending to be from inland revenue and customs departments making claims about tax refunds," said *The Mirror*.

A few days ago in Pittsburgh, the United States, a couple lost US\$18,000 after scammers claiming to be with the federal government used information to drain the couple's bank account, said CBS Pittsburgh, quoted by PR newswire.

According to 2018 Scam Call Trends and Projections Report by Orion First, over 15 per cent of those surveyed received a personalised scam call.

"Of those who experienced financial loss, 75 per cent said the criminal knew personal information about them prior to the call."