

Media Title : The Borneo Post Sarawak
Headline : Kuching businessman loses RM136,000 to phone scam
Date : 10 September 2023
Section : Home
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Kuching businessman loses RM136,000 to phone scam

KUCHING: A local businessman was made RM136,000 poorer after falling to a phone scam back in July 6 this year.

Sarawak Police Commissioner Datuk Mohd Azman Ahmad Sapri, in a statement yesterday, said the victim, in his late 50s, was contacted by a person claiming to be from the Ministry of Health.

"During the call, the scammer claimed that the victim had lodged a report to the ministry. The victim denied ever doing so, but he was later referred to another caller claiming to be a police personnel from Perak police contingent headquarters.

"The scammer then said the victim was involved in money-laundering activities and a warrant of arrest against him had been issued," he said.

Mohd Azman said this caused the victim, who at the time was in Lachau, Sri Aman, to panic.

On July 7 at 3pm, the victim opened up a new Bank Rakyat account at the Jalan Tun Jugah bank, under the scammer's orders.

"The victim was also told to provide them with the banking details, delete all their WhatsApp conversations and to also destroy the new ATM card that came with the account," he said.

The victim also made four online transfers of his savings, totalling RM136,000, to the new bank account. He only realised he had been scammed after checks on his balance inside the new savings account revealed that the money had been transferred out in eight transactions to two unknown bank accounts.

"We advise everyone to never entertain unknown

phone calls and to immediately notify their partners, friends or family members should they receive such phone calls as well as to check with the police, banks or related agencies for confirmation," said Mohd Azman.

"You must never provide bank details to unknown individuals or parties, and must refrain from registering the suspects' phone numbers for their online banking," he added.

Contact the National Scam Response Centre on 997 if you are a victim of cyberscams (phone scam, love scam, fraudulent e-commerce or loan offer), and if you have just made a money transfer to a suspect's bank account or e-wallet.

The public can also download the 'Whoscall' app via the Google Play Store or Apple Store to identify numbers listed in the Semak Mule System database, or scan the QR Code on the Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID)'s social media accounts and commercial crime e-books to get the latest information on commercial crime modus operandi.

Contact the CCID Infoline 013-211 1222 via WhatsApp or SMS to receive advice or provide information on online criminal cases, or check suspected phone numbers and bank accounts via Check Scammers CCID app, or <http://semakmule.rmp.gov.my>, before making any transactions.

Visit the CCID's official social media accounts (@JSJKPDRM and @CYBERCRIMEALERTRMP) on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to get latest information about the latest modes of scam operations.