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O&G retiree left RM449,200 poorer after believing he was crime suspect

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KUCHING: A 69-year-old retiree here lost RM449,200 in total after he was scammed into believing that he was involved in several criminal activities since November last year.

Sarawak Police Commissioner Datuk Mohd Azman Ahmad Sapri said in a statement yesterday that the victim, who had retired from an oil and gas company, received a call on Nov 19, 2022 from someone claiming to be 'Diana Abdullah' from the Ministry of Health.

The suspect told the victim that he was on the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission's radar for being involved in a defamation case.

"The call was then forwarded to three bogus police officers claiming to be from Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. During that phone call, the victim was told that he was involved in money laundering and drug trafficking activities," said Mohd Azman.

The victim was then instructed to open a new bank account here on Nov 21, 2022 for the 'authorities' to keep track of his transactions.

He was then told to provide the scammers with the account number, ATM pin number, email address, and online banking account link via a phone number provided.

"The scammers then ordered the victim to transfer the money from his ASB account totalling RM390,000 and to sell his shares amounting to RM59,263, before all of the money was transferred to the new bank account," said Mohd Azman.

On May 30 this year, the victim discovered that there was only RM63.77 left in the new savings account.

When he went to the bank to check, he was told that RM449,200 had been transferred in stages to two unknown bank accounts between Nov 21 and Dec 2 last year.

The victim finally lodged a police report on June 6.

Mohd Azman stressed the public should not entertain calls from strangers and to inform their family members should they receive such calls.

"The public are also advised to contact the nearest police station or banks to confirm anything that was mentioned by the scammers," he said.