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Public reminded to always be vigilant as fraud, scam cases go rampant

SIBU: Fraud and scam cases remain rampant, and thus, everyone must always be alert so as to not fall victim to them.

In highlighting, Stanley Chiew, the private secretary to Deputy Dewan Rakyat Speaker and Lanang MP Alice Lau, said the parliamentary service centre had been receiving requests for assistance from many scam victims who had suffered financial losses.

He said the cases included impersonation of government officials via phone calls, online investment scams, and Ponzi schemes.

"I urge everyone not to rush when purchasing any financial product. Seek third-party opinions from family, friends or professionals in the field; compare the options; and make the most informed decisions to avoid future disputes or lawsuits with the financial institution, which could be time-consuming and costly," he said in a statement.

Chiew said recently, a woman from Sibu reported receiving a call from someone claiming to be a government official who

accused her of being involved in money-laundering.

He said the woman was instructed to transfer money to a designated account to 'assist in the investigation', with a promise that it would be returned to her later.

"She followed the instructions. After two weeks without any further contact and being unable to reach the person who called her, she came to my office to help her find out when she could claim back the tens of thousands of ringgit that she had transferred.

"I advised her to report the case to the police immediately because she had not only lost the money, but had also revealed her personal information, including her MyKad details, which might be misused by certain irresponsible parties."

Chiew reminded everyone that the police would not accept reports lodged online, as all police reports must be lodged at the station.

"Therefore, do not be intimidated by calls from individuals claiming to be bank officers, police officers, customs

officers or court personnel instructing you to report online if you think they are involved in money-laundering or other crimes.

"Government departments, especially the enforcement agencies, will never privately contact anyone to demand fines or request money to be transferred to any personal bank account.

"If you realise that you have been scammed after making a money transfer, you must call the National Scam Response Centre (NSRC) hotline 997 within 24 hours, and provide clear details, such as the bank where the money has been transferred to, the account details, the transfer time, and the amount, so that the centre could trace and freeze the funds, increasing the chances of recovery."

Additionally, Chiew advised the public never to believe any online promises of high returns, guaranteed profits, or zero-risk investments offering returns much higher than legitimate financial channels, which often led to complete financial losses.

"If you want to invest, you must go through financial institutions authorised by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). People must realise that all investments come with risks; the difference is whether the risks are high or low."

Chiew believed that it was necessary for the public to continuously educate themselves about frauds, scams and many other related risks, and to always stay vigilant.

"Should you receive any intimidating calls or messages from individuals claiming to be government officials or enforcement officers, or if you're unsure whether you have fallen victim to a scam, go seek assistance at YB Alice Lau's service centre."

Chiew added that even when purchasing financial products from legitimate financial institutions, everyone must uphold the responsibility of ensuring that they fully understood the benefits and terms of these products, and one must avoid situations where hidden contract terms could put one at a disadvantage.