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Scams amidst festive cheer

Biscuits and tarts offers online could also be a trap, warns cop

KUALA LUMPUR: The police are warning customers to be wary of scams involving the purchase of biscuits and goods associated with the festive season as the Year of the Dragon approaches.

"It is important to stay vigilant and not be fooled by the tactics of scammers, particularly those using social media, to dupe victims," said Bukit Aman Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) director Comm Datuk Seri Ramli Mohamed Yoosuf (pic).

"The festive season is a golden opportunity for scammers searching for victims."

He said police have not received any reports of such scams so far this year, but the public must not let their guard down.

"There have been numerous cases in the past of people buying goods such as pineapple tarts or biscuits and ending up losing thousands of ringgit from the transactions."

"In other cases, payment was made but the goods were not

delivered and the sellers nowhere to be found," he said.

Comm Ramli advised the public to verify the sellers' authenticity before proceeding with any transactions.

"There were cases of victims being instructed to reveal their bank details, including the Transaction Authorisation Code (TAC) or One-Time Password (OTP)."

"There were also cases where people would click on an advertisement and be directed to a chat application where they could converse with the seller."

"They would then be instructed to download an Android Package Kit (APK) file and fill in their bank details. And before they knew it, scammers would have already siphoned money from their bank accounts," he said.

Comm Ramli said the public



should never divulge their financial and bank details to unknown individuals or click on suspicious links.

"Divulging bank details or clicking on such links will lead to people being scammed, more often than not," he said.

Comm Ramli said the public should also be wary of fake online shops and only purchase from reputable sellers.

"Scammers would take advantage of the festive season by offering goods such as ang pow packets, cookies and other festive items at low prices."

"If the prices are too low, don't let your guard down," he advised.

In some cases, it would be more appropriate for the public to purchase festive goods at physical premises or outlets, he added.

"We are not discouraging online purchases as there are still

reputable sellers and sites.

"However, to be on the safe side, it would be more prudent for the public to make their purchases at well-known retail outlets such as supermarkets," he said.

Comm Ramli also urged those with information on any scams, especially during the festive season, to contact the National Scam Response Centre (NSRC) hotline at 997.

"The public can also check whether a seller's account is legit or a mule account via the CCID's SemakMule portal," he said.

It was reported recently in Singapore that five individuals lost more than S\$167,000 (RM587,140) since September last year after being duped by scams on social media sites.

Most of the cases involved promotions of Chinese New Year goods. A scam involving the sale of mooncakes on social media platforms last year cost at least 27 victims around S\$325,000 (RM1.11mil) in August alone.