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**KUCHING:** The number of reported phone scams in the district has increased by 191 cases compared to last year.

Kuching police chief ACP Ahsmon Bajah revealed alarming statistics for the year 2023, reporting 556 cases with an estimated loss of RM29 million in the Kuching district.

He said this was a marked increase from 2022, when 365 cases accounted for losses of approximately RM12 million.

"The police have successfully resolved 134 cases until this year.

"The scammers use various tactics. They are also adept at disappearing, making it difficult for us to track down and catch them.

"Our main challenge here is combatting technology. Given the increase in the reported number of cases and the losses experienced by victims, it demonstrates how

# Significant increase in phone scams

critical phone scams conducted through technology have become," he said.

He said this during a press conference after the Telekom Malaysia (TM) Berhad Networking Session with the Kuching district police headquarters here yesterday. Ahsmon noted that various scams, including fraudulent investment schemes, fake purchases and fictitious loans, had been prevalent here.

Unfortunately, he lamented, many victims had fallen prey to these scams, such as non-existent investments promising

high returns. He highlighted the deceptive tactics deployed by the syndicates, which exploited individuals' eagerness to improve their economic situation.

"Cases of fraud involving non-existent products and services are on the rise, with scammers imitating legitimate companies and even sending one-time passwords (OTPs) and type-allocation codes (TACs) to deceive victims," he said.

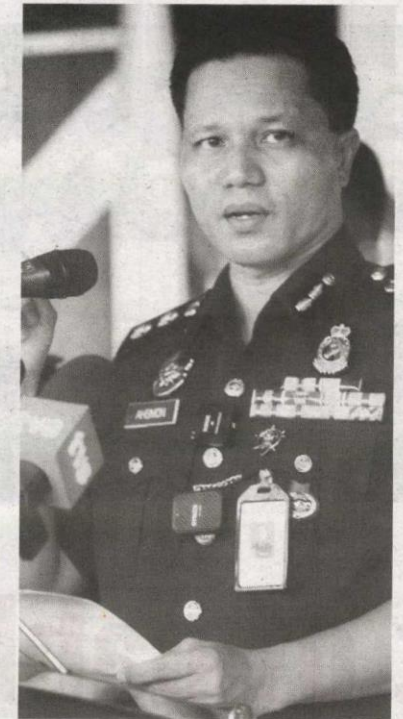
While law enforcement is actively working on resolving cases, Ahsmon urged the public to exercise caution when encountering lucrative, romantic or

suspicious offers.

He stressed the importance of verifying offers through existing systems provided by the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and other relevant agencies before engaging in any transactions.

"Public awareness is crucial to avoid falling victim to scams. I would like to encourage individuals to scrutinise the legitimacy of offers before proceeding with any transactions.

"We need to be aware before engaging in any service whether it is legal according to the law. That is crucial," he said.



**AHSMON** during the press conference at the Kuching district police headquarters.