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Senior citizens lose RM383,000 to scams

KUCHING: Two senior citizens here lost a total of RM383,000 after falling victim to separate phone scams recently.

Sarawak Police Commissioner Datuk Mohd Azman Ahmad Sapri said the first victim, a retiree in his 70s, was contacted by someone claiming to be from a courier company on Aug 24.

"During the conversation, the suspect claimed that the victim had received a parcel containing identification card and bank cards. The victim however denied the matter.

"The call was then connected to a 'policeman' from Ipoh, Perak who identified himself as 'ASP Moktar'. The 'policeman' claimed there was an arrest warrant issued in the victim's name for committing money laundering," he said in a statement.

Following that, Mohd Azman said the victim was instructed transfer money to several bank accounts for 'investigation' purposes.

"The victim proceeded to transfer money in four transactions totalling about RM103,000 to two different bank accounts at the end of August 2023.

"The victim was also instructed to delete all the WhatsApp conversations and to discard the money transfer receipts," he added.

Mohd Azman said the victim

only realised that he had been scammed after informing his family members about the matter, and subsequently lodged a police report for further investigation.

The second case involved a clerk in her 60s who received a phone call from an unknown woman claiming to be from the Ministry of Health (MoH) on Aug 10.

"During the conversation, the suspect claimed the victim had taken painkiller medications in a large quantity, which she denied.

"Following that, she was connected to a 'Sgt Azlan' – purportedly from the Perak police contingent – who told the victim that there was an arrest warrant issued in her name for committing money laundering," said Mohd Azman.

He said the victim was then instructed to make money transfers to several accounts, again for 'investigation' purposes.

"The victim transferred her money in nine transactions totalling about RM280,000 to three different bank accounts from mid-August until early September.

"She only realised she had been scammed after the individuals failed to be contacted after the last transfer was made. She then lodged a police report for further investigation," he added.