



Headline: All are a target for scammers
Publication/Portal: The Star
Date: 17 October 2018

Language: English
Section: Nation
Page: 16

All are a target for scammers

Even MCA's Michael Chong not spared by these conmen

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KUALA LUMPUR: Even Datuk Seri Michael Chong, who has helped expose many cons, is not safe from phone scammers.

Like many people, the MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head said he had received WhatsApp messages claiming that he had won prizes from a telecommunications company.

However, a quick check on the address listed in the messages for the company showed multiple errors.

"The scammers forgot that the office for the company has already moved. They were still using the old address," he told reporters during a press conference at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

To convince the potential victims, Chong said the scammers even used a fake profile picture on WhatsApp.

Chong, who has held numerous press conferences on phone scams as well as Macau Scam, said he was exasperated by the growing number of cases despite ample publicity



Many just fall for it: Chong speaking on how scammers operate during the press conference at the Wisma MCA.

on the matter.

"I regret to tell you that many victims still fall for it.

"This year alone, I have 12 cases similar to my own experience as well as Macau Scam. Losses are estimated to be around RM3.7mil.

"I've already made four press conferences on this topic. I don't

know how else to raise awareness. It's to the point where news like this is nothing new already," he said.

However, he noted the difficulty in catching these scammers due to their constant changing tactics.

"They use mule accounts and technology. It's not easy to catch them.

"And many of these mule accounts belong to students who are paid a commission. We have to continue exposing these scammers," he said.

Statistics from the Communications and Multimedia Ministry showed that telecommunications fraud cases involved some RM162.6mil this year alone. Macau Scam is among the most commonly used.

A Macau Scam often starts with a phone call from someone pretending to be an officer from a bank, government agency or debt collector.

The scammer will then claim that the potential victim owes money or has an unpaid fine, often with a very short window of less than an hour to settle the payment or face "dire consequences".

These unsuspecting victims will then be asked to make payments to get them off the hook