



Headline: Phone scams: Housewife, two others lose over RM80,000 Language: English

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Phone scams: Housewife, two others lose over RM80,000

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KUCHING: Three individuals lost over RM80,000 after falling victim to Macau and parcel scams this week, while six other targets avoided being deceived during the same period.

Sarawak Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) chief Supt Mustafa Kamal Gani Abdullah said the first case involved a 43-year-old housewife from Miri who reported the loss of RM50,000 on Wednesday.

"The victim received a phone call on Nov 12 from an individual who accused the woman's company of owing the government RM50,000 in Goods and Services Tax (GST).

"She subsequently made two transfers of RM41,000 and RM9,000 to two different accounts, before realising later that she had been conned," he said in a statement yesterday.

The second case, he revealed, involved a 26-year-old audit supervisor from Bintulu who lost RM12,000 in a Macau scam.

The victim was contacted by

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Supt Mustafa Kamal Gani Abdullah, CCID chief

someone claiming to be a bank officer, and told she had a credit card debt of RM3,000.

"When she told the caller that she did not own a credit card, he 'transferred' her to a 'Mr Farish' who claimed to be a police officer from Labuan, who then accused the woman of being involved in money laundering," he said.

Mustafa Kamal said the victim was told to transfer the contents of her account to an account provided to her, with the assurance that the money would be returned within four hours once she was cleared of any wrongdoing.

After transferring her savings of RM12,000, the victim waited for about four hours before contacting the Labuan police station and asking to speak to 'Farish'.

When told that there was no officer by that name, she realised she had been swindled and lodged a report at the Bintulu police

station.

The third victim was a 47-year-old clerk who lost RM18,850 in a parcel scam perpetrated by her Facebook 'friend'.

Mustafa Kamal said the woman had on Oct 26 befriended a person on Facebook by the name of 'Hanson Cheng', who claimed to be from Australia.

He said a few days after becoming acquainted, 'Hanson' told the woman he would be sending her gifts from Australia as a sign of their growing friendship.

"On Oct 30, the victim received a call from a woman who claimed to be from a courier company, informing her that a package had arrived for her but that she had to pay a service charge of RM4,500.

"She performed the transfer on the same day but was contacted again on Nov 2 and told that she had to pay additional charges of RM14,350 in order for her package

to be released.

Mustafa Kamal said despite having transferred a total of RM18,850, the so-called package never arrived and the woman finally realised something was amiss after 'Hanson' continuously pressured her to transfer more money.

On the six individuals who did not fall victim, he said two are from Bintulu, three from Sibul and one from Miri.

"They received calls from persons claiming to be either from the MACC, courts, or banks. Meanwhile, the six who managed to evade from being cheated said Mustafa is a 34-year-old man from Bintulu, a 16-year-old student from Sibul, a 60-year-old from Sibul, a 24-year-old technician from Sibul, a 30-year-old marketing executive from Miri and a 63-year-old from Bintulu.

"They were accused of offences such as money laundering and fraud, and having outstanding credit card or GST debts or bank loans. However, none of them were duped and they lodged police reports as a precautionary measure."