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Cops need cross border support to nab Malaysian scammers

BANGKOK — As more Malaysians involved with the call centre scam or “Macau Scam” syndicates languished in Thai prisons, authorities in the two countries have called for more cooperation and joint action in nipping the problem in the bud.

“The call centre scam involving Malaysians (in Thailand) needs to be given focus. Before, the scam was run by Africans, Chinese or Taiwanese, but now Malaysians come to Thailand to cheat people,” Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department chief Datuk Seri Wan Ahmad Najmuddin Mohd told Bernama.

He said this in response to the Royal Thai Police seeking Bukit Aman’s help in hunting down remnants of a call centre

scam syndicate members related to six arrested Malaysians by the Thai authorities in Bangkok this month. According to a police source, they are hiding in Malaysia.

The source also said some of the Malaysians arrested in Thailand were part of a call centre syndicate masterminded by the Taiwanese mob, as evident from a raid conducted by Thai police in October last year where they rescued three Malaysians who were beaten and held captive by the syndicate.

The Thai police also arrested four other Malaysians in that raid, including a 19-year-old from Melaka who the authorities suspect played a big role in the syndicate, along with the Taiwanese mobsters.

The three rescued Malaysians — two men and a woman — were sent back to Malaysia on Sunday.

According to the Malaysian police liaison officer at the Malaysian embassy in Bangkok, Supt Ridzuan Abdul Aziz, the number of Malaysians arrested for turning Bangkok as their call centre scam base has been on the rise.

“Last year, the Thai police conducted four raids on call centre syndicates headed by Malaysians in Bangkok and Pattaya,” he said.

He said the Thai and Malaysian police would need to come up with a holistic approach to tackle the problem which had caused losses amounting to millions of baht.

Deputy tourist police chief Maj Gen Surachet Hakpal, who was appointed to head the Thai police efforts to clamp down on the call centre scam in Thailand, told Bernama the cooperation from the Malaysian police in tackling the problem was important.

He said a multi-nation effort was needed to uproot the syndicates which operated in a transnational nature, spanning several countries.

“Call centre syndicates have been operating in Thailand for a long time and have networks in many countries. We will have to coordinate with that country’s police, such as the Malaysian police,” he said.