



Headline: Cops call for vigilance as online scams increase Language: English

Publication/Portal: New Sarawak Tribune

Section: Home

Date: 20 April 2022

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# Cops call for vigilance as online scams increase

**KUCHING:** E-commerce fraud and telecommunication fraud cases in Kuching increased drastically in 2021 with 181 cases more than the previous year's figure.

Kuching OCPD ACP Ahsmon Bajah in a press conference, said police reports from 2020 and 2021 showed an increasing trend of e-commerce fraud (online purchase) and telecommunication fraud cases.

"In 2020, there were 90 cases reported involving losses amounting to RM4,873,091.62.

"Last year, a significant increase was seen where the number of cases increased to 271 cases involving losses amounting to RM5,997,858.49.

"Meanwhile, from Jan to Apr 17 this year, we have recorded a total of 74 cases involving losses totalling RM1,733,634," he told the media here yesterday.

On whether increase was due to lack of public awareness or due to economic challenges which

led to desperation, Ahsmon said both were factors as at the time, the country was under a lockdown and it was a challenging time for everyone.

"Of course, it was also due to lack of public awareness as these victims were not aware that they had been conned when they were informed by the scammers that they are involved in a criminal case.

"The second is regarding economic challenges which led to desperation where, the suspect is the one who is desperate to look for money and will target and scam their victims," he said.

With the rise of scam cases, the public are advised to be cautious and vigilant against the modus operandi used by the suspects.

The public are also urged to cross check information with the police or other relevant agencies because these scammers pose as the authorities investigating a certain case and instruct the victims to make payments so as to solve the case

that they were said to be involved.

"Be careful if you receive dubious phone calls or text messages that claim that you are involved in a criminal case, traffic case, court case or immigration cases.

"Always verify the information with the police or relevant agencies before making the next action as these are the modus operandi used.

"I also want to emphasise that the police and other enforcement agencies in the country will never call or ask the public to make payments in order to solve a case. Whatever is being said are lies, we will never do such a thing," he said.

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