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# Businessman loses RM200,000 to scam

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**JOHOR BARU:** Labuan island is well known as an offshore financial centre and tax heaven but a local syndicate has used it to scare a local businessman into paying thousands of ringgit.

The businessman in his 40s was duped into believing that several of his bank accounts had been used to launder millions of ringgit in Labuan.

The victim's nightmare started when he received a call from a "policeman" from Labuan alleging that his accounts had been used for money laundering for some time.

Sources said the policeman directed the victim to empty his accounts to enable the authorities to investigate or risk having them frozen.

"The policeman suggested that the man transfer the money into several accounts for safe keeping until the investigation was

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done," the sources said, adding that the businessman, who was initially reluctant, agreed when the policeman threatened to arrest him and close down his business.

It is learnt that the businessman then emptied his accounts and moved the money to the accounts provided by the policeman.

The businessman only realised he was duped when he did not get back almost RM200,000 despite repeated calls to the policeman for a week.

Meanwhile, in a similar scam, a teacher in her 30s lost about RM40,000 after she got a call from several "policemen" and court staff from Terengganu alleging that she was involved in a drug case and money laundering.

"The suspects threatened to arrest her if she did not cooperate," the sources said, adding that the frightened teacher then gave the username and password of her bank's online account.

The teacher suspected something amiss after discussing with her colleagues and then rushed to the bank after school.

But it was too late. RM40,000 had been withdrawn from her account.

A police official confirmed both cases and said that investigations were ongoing.

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

Police have repeatedly cautioned that no law enforcer or bank officer will call someone up and ask them to transfer money into another account on suspicion the person is involved in a crime.