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Chong: Even highly educated people fall for scams

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PETALING JAYA: Lonely doctors and lawyers are not spared from losing their money to “precious parcel” scammers masquerading as sweethearts despite many such cases being highlighted in the media, says MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head Datuk Seri Michael Chong.

He said the department had received complaints from 14 victims, including three males, so far.

Last year, more than 20 complaints were received.

The scammers, mostly believed to be Africans masquerading as wealthy Caucasian hunks or Malay-

sian yuppies, would claim to have sent a parcel full of cash or jewellery to the victims.

They would later claim that the parcel had been withheld by the authorities and would ask the victims to transfer funds to settle the matter, he told a press conference yesterday.

“Many people, including professionals, have fallen victim to such scams,” Chong said, reminding people to be aware of such scammers.

He added that the department had also received complaints from victims from Japan, China and Indonesia.

In one case, a wheelchair-bound Japanese victim waited for an entire day and night at Kuala Lumpur

“Even if you have known someone for years, you still shouldn’t readily trust him or her.”

Michael Chong

International Airport for her “sweetheart” whom she had never met before but had transferred money to, he said.

Chong also said two local Chinese

victims lost RM1mil each while an Indian woman lost RM500,000 to such scammers.

He said the scammers would wait for months or even more than a year to make their potential victims fall deeply in love with them.

Once the scammers knew they had gained the victims’ trust and love, they would claim to have sent a parcel full of cash or jewellery to the victims.

The parcel would be “conveniently” withheld by the authorities and the victim would be asked to transfer seed money for documentation and clearance, or money to bribe enforcement personnel.

“In some cases, divorcees yearning for a ‘ready-made’ family were

duped into paying hefty ‘medical bills’ of the scammers’ sick children,” he said.

Chong said two months ago, he sought help from the police to track down a scammer with the female victim’s cooperation.

“I pretended to be the woman’s father. She enticed the scammer to meet her by agreeing to have sex with him.

“When the man finally appeared, the police nabbed him. He was an African,” he said.

Chong urged people not to transfer money to people they had never met before.

“Even if you have known someone for years, you still shouldn’t readily trust him or her,” he added.