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PHONE SCAMS

SCARE TACTICS USED TO CHEAT VICTIMS

Scammers pose as bogus cops or those in authority in govt agencies to dupe callers

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AS part of their elaborate plan to cheat unsuspecting victims, scammers often employ scare tactics by claiming to represent the authorities, government agencies or the police.

Lecturer at Multimedia University's Faculty of Management, Dr Abby Ashraff Saprudin, 38, said he almost lost RM5,000 to a syndicate in 2017 after being told that he had an impending court case in Kedah.

Abby, from Shah Alam, said he received a call from an unknown number claiming to be an "op-

erator" and was told to attend a court case in Kedah for an unpaid credit card with bills totalling RM36,000, which he had never applied for.

"I received a call at 10am and was told to attend the court proceedings in Kedah at 11am. The operator told me that my name was used by an individual to apply for a credit card which was used for drug trafficking.

"When I told them I had never applied for any credit card, I was told to lodge a police report," he said, adding that the call was later transferred to an individual claiming to be a police officer.

"The 'sergeant' gave me a case number and told me that it was a serious case because I would have to pay back the overdue bills. He then transferred the call to his 'superior'."

He said he was asked to address the "high-ranking police officer" as "tuan".

"The officer said I must quickly transfer my money to a bank account to allow an investigation and prevent Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) from freezing

my account."

Abby said the officer stressed the severity of the case and urged him to transfer the money.

He was told not to end the call until he had transferred the money.

"I was told that the bank account belonged to an officer working for BNM."

He said when attempts to do an online banking transfer failed, the man insisted that the money be transferred manually at the cash deposit machine.

"After the transaction was done, the man asked if I had another account and told me to make subsequent transfers."

Abby said that was when he suspected something was amiss.

"I decided to do a quick search online about the modus operandi employed by scammers. That's when I realised I had become a victim."

He said he was advised to lodge a police report immediately.

Prior to the incident, he said he had been cautious of unknown callers, but had no idea the extent of lies and deceit by syndicates in

trying to dupe their victims.

A journalist, who wished to be known as Kay, also had a similar experience when he received a call from an individual claiming to be from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

"On July 16 at noon, I received a call from a random number and was told by an operator that I had a notice from MACC.

"I knew something was wrong, so I hung up. Out of curiosity, I decided to call back and another person, a woman, took the call.

"I played along and said I received a missed call from the number.

"She told me that I had a notice from MACC and she demanded for my MyKad details."

Kay refused to give in and ticked the caller off by saying that he would lodge a report on the matter. The woman ended the call abruptly.

He later verified the matter with MACC and was told that the call was a hoax.

For retired teacher Nik Karimah Nik Daud, 58, her ex-

perience with scammers took on a new level when her daughter's identity was used.

She said she received a WhatsApp message from an unknown number bearing her daughter's image as the profile picture last week.

"I received a WhatsApp message from a person claiming to be my daughter.

"She told me she needed RM200 for her business and another RM100 to donate to her friend's father who was sick.

"I wasn't too surprised with the new number as my daughter had a few numbers in the past to set up her business.

"I didn't suspect anything because the profile picture was hers."

After making her first bank transfer, she received another WhatsApp message from the "daughter" requesting for more money.

"This time, she gave a different bank account number.

"That's when I knew something was wrong and I lodged a police report immediately."