

# 150 fell for 'parcel trick'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** At least 150 Malaysians have lost RM3.7 million, over the last two years, to the so-called "parcel trick" syndicate.

The syndicate's 29 African members and three Malaysian women were arrested by police in Kepong on Thursday.

Commercial Crime Investigation Department Deputy Director I Datuk Noryah Md Anvar said the syndicate, which operated from four units at the Metro Kepong apartments, had mainly targeted women who chatted on the Internet.

After chatting with them for months, they would convince them that they wanted to get married to them and wanted to give them a parcel containing US dollars and luxury items which include jewellery, handicraft, a camera and a laptop, supposedly worth hundreds of thousands of ringgit, No-

ryah said.

"They will then contact their victims to say that the parcel had arrived from abroad but was held up at Customs and several payments had to be settled before it could be claimed."

Noryah said the unsuspecting victims would fall for the trick and, as required of them, deposit money into bank accounts of local people recruited by the syndicate.

After the victims had deposited the money into the accounts, the syndicate would claim that the cash was insufficient and before they knew it the victims would have parted with up to as much as RM100,000 or more, she said.

"The victims will realise they have been cheated when there is no such parcel and the suspects will have disappeared."

Noryah said the syndicate had also

advertised supposedly high-paying jobs in Malaysia on Internet chat sites, such as that of marketing executive, telecommunications engineer and hotel manager when there were no such vacancies available.

Most of the foreigners abroad who responded to the advertisements were asked to pay RM10,000 as fees for processing, permit, visa and so on, Noryah said. The job scam, which started this year, has resulted in 30 reported cases of cheating so far.

Noryah said police detained the suspects, aged between 20 and 40 years, among them two African women, about 3pm yesterday and seized 21 laptops, scanners, fax machines, handphones, thumb drives and pornographic DVDs.

Nineteen of the Africans were found to have entered the country without valid entry documents. — Bernama