

# Spike in white-collar offences

RM158mil in losses recorded from January to May compared to RM68mil last year

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WHITE-COLLAR crimes such as scams have been on the rise in Johor with losses amounting to more than RM158mil within the first five months of the year.

State police chief Comm Datuk Kamarul Zaman Mamat said 1,377 commercial crime cases were recorded in Johor from Jan 1 to May 23, indicating an increase compared to 1,310 cases in the corresponding period last year.

"Last year, the police recorded RM68mil in commercial crime cases. Reports of cheating

were the highest at 1,242 cases while illegal moneylending came in second with 66 cases, aside from 32 breach of trust cases," he added.

Comm Kamarul Zaman said this after attending a dialogue session on crime awareness with industry players and community representatives at the Taman Mawar Multipurpose Hall.

He said the breakdown of losses in commercial crime cases this year were cheating (RM139mil), breach of trust (RM18mil), cyber crime (RM545,470), illegal moneylending activities (RM349,321) and property misuse (RM49,000).

He urged the public to be vigilant, especially when receiving calls from unknown numbers and people claiming to be enforcement agency representatives.

"Their *modus operandi* is simple; they would claim to be officers from the police, Customs, Inland Revenue Board or any other government agency to scare potential victims.

"They usually call their victims on the weekends and people should know that government offices close on Saturdays and Sundays," he added.

Comm Kamarul Zaman also said the police uncovered a Macau scam syndicate, which was in the midst of recruiting people to

become scammers.

He said this syndicate targeted job-seekers by offering lucrative salaries through various social media platforms.

"Those who apply for the job will then be brought to a premises before being handed over to another group to scam victims.

"Police uncovered this when reports were lodged by those who went for interviews in Johor Baru carried out by the syndicate," he revealed.

Comm Kamarul said following the reports, the police arrested five suspects to help with investigations and were in the midst of finding other members of the syndicate.