

# JB condos now scam bases

## Syndicates running illegal activities from luxury properties

By NELSON BENJAMIN  
nelson@thestar.com.my

**JOHOR BARU:** Scam syndicates are taking advantage of the booming high-rise property market in the city to hide their operations.

Their victims comprise wealthy folk who like investing in stocks and ordinary job seekers. It is learnt that all the victims are based overseas, mainly in China, Denmark or Poland.

Police uncovered these syndicates when they raided four luxury apartments here and rounded up 14 people, including five Malaysians, over the past few days.

A police official said they seized dozens of mobile phones, routers, name lists and other items worth over RM100,000 from the scam centres.

"Two of the apartments were used as centres to offer stock picks and other investments to

wealthy people abroad.

"The syndicate entices them with promises of 100% returns," the official said, adding that the other two apartments were used to carry out job scams.

At press time, the Commercial Crime Investigation Department was still trying to determine if all the scam centres are linked to a single syndicate.

The official said the police had raided more than a dozen apartments and nabbed more than 80 foreigners who prey on victims in China, Myanmar and other countries.

"The strange part is that most of the suspects did not have their passports with them. Syndicate leaders kept them," the official said.

"Some syndicate members were paid RM6,000 a month, excluding commissions."

Police are investigating all the cases under Section 420 of the Penal Code for cheating.

The officer advised the public to use the SemakMule mobile app or visit <https://semakmule.rmp.gov.my> to check if bank accounts or phone numbers are linked to suspicious activities.

He also urged the public who come across suspicious foreign nationals staying in an apartment to contact the police hotline at 07-221 2999.

In an unrelated case, two caterers lost RM8,800 after accepting an offer to supply food and "sponsored goodies" under the name of the Johor police contingent headquarters.

Johor police chief Comm Datuk Ab Rahaman Arsad said the victims, a 51-year-old local man and a 35-year-old local woman, suffered losses of RM3,800 and RM5,000 respectively.

"In both incidents, the victims received phone calls via WhatsApp from individuals claiming to be from the state police headquarters and seeking

their services to supply food for events scheduled on Jan 26.

"They were also asked to sponsor goodies and were directed to liaise with suppliers appointed by the suspects," he said.

Both victims believed the offer was genuine, as they were furnished with official-looking government-issued documents.

"They prepared packed food and made payments for the goodies to the bank accounts provided by the suspects.

"Both of them realised they had been scammed when they arrived at the police headquarters and were informed that no such order had been made, and the suspects could not be contacted.

"The documents provided by the suspects are fake and were not issued by our office," said Comm Ab Rahaman.

He urged the public to verify through official channels first before accepting such business offers.