

## Malay Mail : Lack of initiative to educate

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OVER and over again different scratch- and-win scams have been exposed by the media and yet, many still fall for the trap.

This is due to the lack of awareness among public as well as the lack of initiative by the Government, National Consumer Complaints Centre director Darshan Singh (picture) told The Malay Mail yesterday.

Darshan expressed his regret and dissatisfaction that no action has been taken by the relevant parties to curb these scratch-and-win scams although they have been around for 20 years.

I was in disbelief when some enforcement officers told me that scratch-and-win contests are practically legal and they can't do anything about the scams, said Darshan, describing such statements as unacceptable.

Nor do we see any strong or concrete effort from the Government to do anything to prevent such things from happening. As a result, people are being cheated daily.

Describing such scams as multi-million dollar business, Darshan explained that syndicates are the culprits and this might be one of the reasons why such cases are still happening today.

To handle this matter, the director urged the Government, especially the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, to follow the way they dealt with the get-rich-quick schemes, which is to launch a massive nationwide campaign to create awareness among the public about such scams.

The effort by the Government in tackling the get-rich-quick schemes, be it the launch of templates and TV commercials or seminars by Bank Negara, has proven to be successful in reducing such cases.

The same shall be done to eliminate the scams once and for all. The public must be educated on this issue, he said, adding that by then it will be easier for enforcement and the associations to monitor and eliminate such cases.

His advice to members of the public?

Learn how to say no when you are approached by direct sales people. Secondly, give a call to either the department or National Consumer Complaints Centre to double check.

Worse come to worse, do not pay by credit card as the transaction can only be terminated by the merchant, he said.