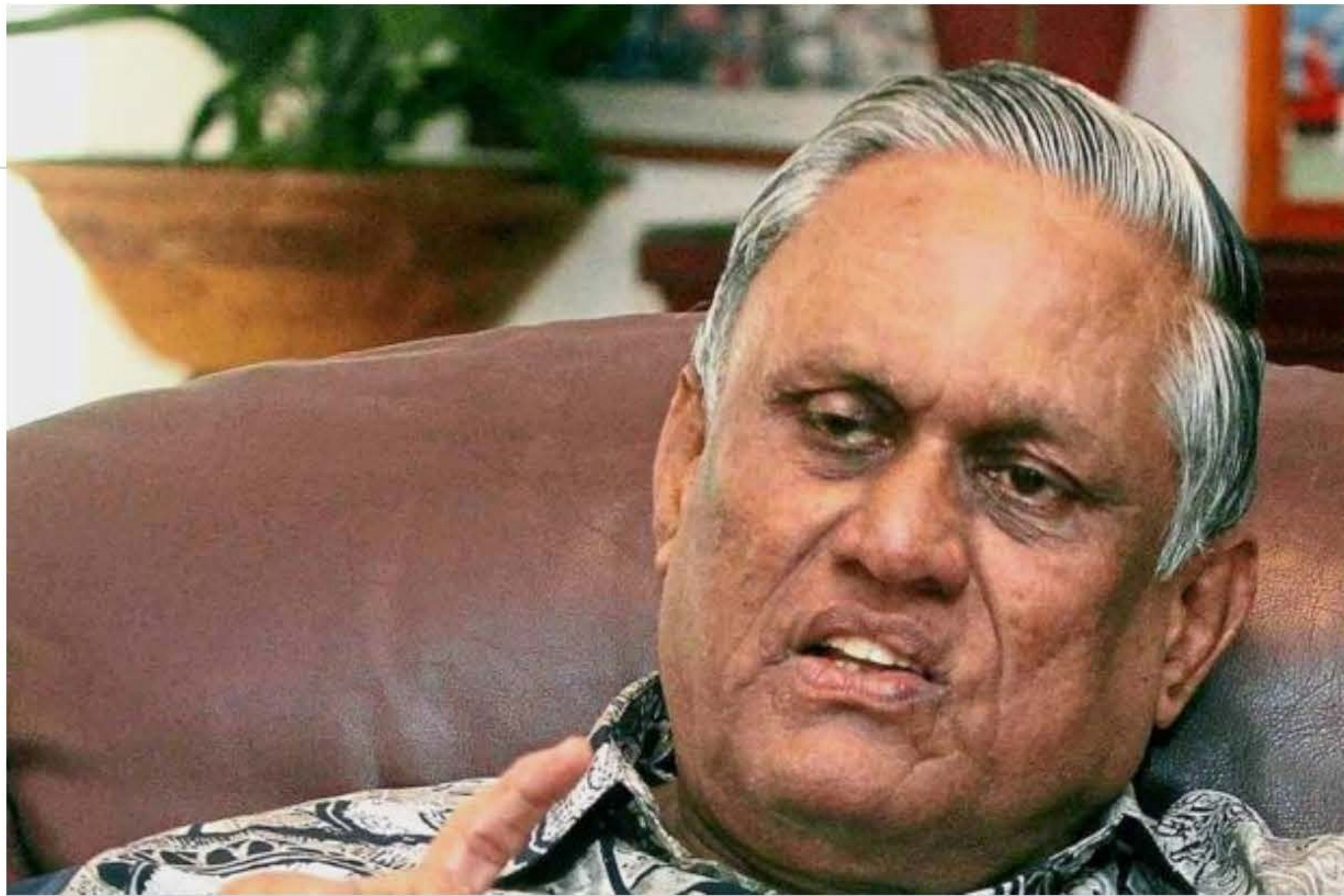


# Macau scammers duping professionals too

NATION

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S. Radhakrishnan

PETALING JAYA: In these days when scammers use every trick in the book, even seasoned professionals are not being spared.

Legal consultant S. Radhakrishnan said he received a phone call from a woman who claimed to be from the Alor Setar High Court.

The woman claimed that Radhakrishnan was involved in a money laundering scam and that the charges were serious.

“The call was then transferred to a person who claimed to be a police sergeant investigating the matter,” Radhakrishnan told *The Star* yesterday.

“The sergeant then said he had to refer the matter to a senior police officer with the rank of Senior Assistant Commissioner.

“These people sounded like they knew what they were doing because they were quoting the relevant Penal Code sections.”

He said the “sergeant” claimed that his namecard was found at a scene where a drug trafficker was arrested.

“They told me it would be very embarrassing if I were to be arrested as the news would be splashed across the newspapers.

“The SAC said if I co-operated, they would not arrest me. He also told me to report my movements to him,” he added.

Radhakrishnan said he almost fell for the scam until he was asked by the “SAC” to open a savings account at a specific bank.

“He told me not to tell anyone about it and send a Whatsapp image of the bank account passbook and number,” he said.

The lawyer said he consulted a friend who confirmed this was an outright scam.

“I then messaged the SAC that I had reported the matter to Bukit Aman. The phone calls stopped,” he added.

Radhakrishnan, who lodged a report at the Sri Petaling police headquarters, urged the police to get to the root of the matter.

“The scammers seemed to have my details and called me on my house phone.

“How did they get my details?” he asked.

An accountant, who declined to be identified, also revealed that he had received a call from a “police officer” on his handphone who accused him of being involved in money laundering.

The accountant said he was threatened with arrest if he did not follow orders.

“I panicked and called a friend who told me it was a scam,” he said.

Phone scams, otherwise known as Macau scams, often starts with a phone call from someone pretending to be an officer from a bank, government agency or debt collector.

The scammer will then claim that the potential victim owed money or has an unpaid fine, often with a very short window of less than an hour to settle the payment, or else they will face “dire consequences”.

Selangor police chief Comm Datuk Mazlan Mansor said recently that 523 such cases were reported as of August, with losses estimated at about RM29mil in the state alone.