

04:21 PM: Bombay HC order on women's entry in Mumbai Durgah aft...
04:10 PM: Vinay Tendulkar re-elected as Goa BJP president
04:09 PM: Oil-rich nations are not so rich anymore: That's a pr...

Fixing basics will put India on road to rapid growth

Dominic Barton



Industry

Market stats table with columns: MARKET STATS, SENSEX (24,188.37), NIFTY 50 (7,351.00), GOLD (MCX) (Rs/10g.) (26,060.00), USD/INR (67.68), MARKET DASHBOARD, CREATE PORTFOLIO, LIVE TV.

You are here: Home > Collections

Spy Game: India readies cyber army to hack into hostile nations' computer systems

Tweet

Harsimran Singh & Joji Thomas Philip, ET Bureau Aug 6, 2010, 03.15am IST

NEW DELHI: Borrowing a page from China's art of cyber war, the government is giving shape to an IT infrastructure setup manned by a small army of software professionals to spy on the classified data of hostile nations by hacking into their computer systems.

IT workers and ethical hackers who sign up for the ambitious project will be protected by law, says the proposal being discussed by senior government administrators. The expertise of these professionals will be used to go on the offensive or preempt strikes by breaching the security walls of enemy systems.

Advertisement for Dell and Intel Security. Text: 'Get up to 4x faster performance and 3x battery life.' Includes Dell logo and Intel Security logo.

RELATED ARTICLES

Germany prepares special unit to tackle cyber attack

June 6, 2012

Cyber attacks on government websites: India goes on...

December 3, 2011

Hostile agencies trying to steal defence secrets from India

September 7, 2010

The strategy of taking the fight to hackers was drafted at a high-level security meet on July 29 chaired by National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon. The meeting was attended by the director of Intelligence Bureau as well as senior officials of the telecom department, IT ministry and security agencies, documents seen by ET show. Departments whose officials were present at the meeting did not respond to ET emails.

The government is worried about spying and sabotage from neighbouring countries, particularly China and Pakistan, after a spate of assaults on its computer systems in recent times. The Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto said in April that a clique of hackers based in China had conducted extensive spying operations in India, pilfering confidential documents from the defence ministry.

Though Beijing strongly denied any role in the attacks, the investigation pointed to the Chinese government's tacit approval of the spying operations. The technical reconnaissance bureau of the People's Liberation Army that is responsible for signals intelligence collection is headquartered in Chengdu, where the hackers had set up base.

According to the government proposal, the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) along with Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) will be responsible for creating cyber-offensive capabilities. NTRO is a key government agency that gathers technical intelligence while DIA is tasked with collating inputs from the Navy, Army and Air Force.

The NTRO will also suggest measures to ensure legal protection to recruits, a move that is expected to coax software professionals into joining the government group because under the Indian IT Act, hacking is punishable with imprisonment up to three years, or carries a fine up to `2 lakh, or both.

"Even if the offense is done on a computer on foreign soil, it is punishable under Indian laws," says cyber lawyer Pavan Duggal, adding that the IT Act will have to be changed for "patriotic stealth operations".

Mr Duggal welcomed the efforts to establish a hacker group, pointing to the explosive growth in assaults on Indian systems recently. Last year, 600 computers belonging to the external affairs ministry were hacked, allegedly by Chinese groups. The hackers also managed to steal crucial documents from the computers of the defence establishment then.

SPOTLIGHT

That sinking feeling!



Oil will turn into a new bull market, says Goldman Sachs

Oil will turn into a new bull market before the year is out as the price rout shuts down sufficient production to erode the global glut.

- Crude oil slump sets energy stocks abuzz. Here's what to do
- Oil slides to lowest since 2003 as Iran sanctions are lifted



Vikas Desai, lead technical lead of network security firm RSA, said the government's efforts can be classified as ethical hacking. "Many countries and organisations in the world already have this kind of infrastructure," he said.

Monthly SIP Investments

myuniverse.co.in/ZipSIP

Invest as low as Rs 1000 in Top SIPs in just 2 Mins. ZipSIP Now

FEATURED ARTICLES



10 best tax-saving investments



Top 10 companies that pay more than 25% dividend



Top 5 stocks which could be multibaggers in the next 2-7 years

More:

India's first e-reader Wink unveiled, supporting 15 languages

Top 5 stocks which could be multibaggers in the next 2-7 years

How Cyrus Poonawalla's son, Adar Poonawalla is boldly changing course of the family business

Tableau Software, Atlassian prepare for IPO amid market woes

Hyundai: Price war under way in US car market

BF Utilities rise on court verdict report

Readers' opinions (10)

Sort by: **Newest** Oldest

RR (Udaipur)
06 Aug, 2010 11:09 AM

Is this a joke....i mean how officals can disclose this and our media is ridiculous who is publishing this....

sanjay (Singapore)
06 Aug, 2010 07:11 AM

Notice the difference, China just does it and we make big announcement and do nothing ...

Mohan (Chennai)
05 Aug, 2010 02:46 PM

Believe TOI should restrain from publishing these kind of sensitive and confidential issues in public forum. Its a good job in identifying these kind of data. But it shouldn't be published. Thumbs down to TOI !! For playing around with national security.

H.R. Sreepada Bhagi (Erbil)
05 Aug, 2010 02:20 PM

The decision is good and to be put in place on priority. How come such a confidential issues are leaked to the media and become a news item. Is the government not bothered about the nature of work the IT professionals do? Why not such issues treated, matters of national interest and such information is limited to the inner ring of the country's managers? Should the whole world know that India is building a team and allow them to build counter strategy?

banudas (Bangalore)
05 Aug, 2010 01:03 PM

Why is this coming in News? Is that not Classified.

[» READ ALL COMMENTS](#)