



Ministry of Home Affairs

Cyber-dependency has increased vulnerability to attacks against civilian and military infrastructures: Shri Rajnath Singh

Union Home Minister inaugurates the two-day International Police Conference on Cybercrime & Terrorism

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The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh has called upon the Police Forces and Security Agencies of various countries to collaborate and defeat the threats posed by cyber crimes. Inaugurating the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Shri Rajnath Singh said the Indian Government has taken digitalization to a new level by providing digital based services in many sectors to its countrymen. Across the world cyber-dependency has become widespread today. This has increased vulnerability to attacks against both civilian and military infrastructures, he added. Following is the text of the Union Home Minister's address on the occasion:

"I extend you all a very cordial and warm welcome. I deem it a privilege to address you today on the occasion of this prestigious two-day Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. It is heartening to note that the theme of this Conference: "Challenges to Policing in 2020: How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime & Terrorism, How do we perform with it and take advantage of it," is indeed apt, relevant and most befitting, considering the current challenges the Police fraternity is facing day in and day out.

In the backdrop of the above theme, I have identified few essential key drivers, such as threats through Internet, Cyber Security, Cyber Crimes, etc., which are relevant and I am sure this Conference will deliberate on them. Let me now draw the attention of this gathering to each of the above factors, separately.

Internet, today, has become a favoured mode for communication. It has evolved as a backbone for financial transactions, social activities and is a bridge between the people and government. Internet's potential mass reach has driven many Governments across the world to evolve Digital programmes. Indian Government has taken digitalization to a new level by providing digital based services in many sectors to its countrymen.

In the fast changing technology world, computer based technologies are being increasingly used in various activities ranging from simple home security system to complex nuclear power plants or space programmes. The cyber-dependency has become widespread today. This has increased vulnerability to attacks against both civilian and military infrastructures.

Network outages, data compromised by hackers, computer malware and other cyber related incidents and crimes have affected our lives. As the number of computers, mobile users, digital applications and data-networks are increasing day by day, so do the opportunities for exploitation.

Governments, Defence forces, corporations, financial institutions, utility services, hospitals and other businesses collect, process and store a great deal of sensitive information on systems and transmit data across networks. With the growing volume and sophistication of cyber attacks, each one of us is required to protect sensitive information, as well as safeguard national security.

There are many risks, some more serious than others, like viruses, computer hacking, pilferage of data, stealing of credit card information, etc. Unfortunately, there's no 100% guarantee that even with the best precautions some of these things won't happen to you, but there are steps you can take to minimize the chances.

I am afraid, cyber attack would occur very often. Tools already exist to mount cyber attacks and they'll be improving over the next decade. We have already witnessed an increase in the number and severity of such attacks.

Cyber Crime has become an industry and many cyber crimes related tools and techniques are being offered as services. Even novice criminal with limited investments of money can afford to have such services at his disposal. The increase in digitization of the financial services with inadequate attention to setting up of robust process, controls and monitoring mechanisms has given new age fraudsters the opportunity to exploit these gaps leading to new types of financial crimes.

With cashless transactions on the rise and increased use of online by the citizens, this is another new area that has opened the eyes of the adversaries. We have to develop fool-proof software, particularly in the Banking Sector and effectively address the loopholes that have recently come

New technologies like Internet of Things, Virtual Currencies, Advanced Malware, Artificial Intelligence, etc. are fast spreading its tentacles. The Police are now expected to cope with such rapid changing technologies, as well. Across many countries many cyber criminals uses technologies like darknet, proxy servers, The Onion Router (TOR) services to hide their identity. Extensive use of VoIP, caller ID spoofing, use of crypto currencies, encrypted channel for communication, use of social media have virtually created syndicates of criminals irrespective of their nationality.

I would now like to delve into a very important issue that deserves your careful attention. Online radicalisation, self radicalisation, etc. have further added to the woes of Law Enforcement Agencies. Online radicalisation is just not a Law and Order or Extremism problem. Continuance of availability of such radicalised materials on Internet is likely to have drastic change in society and subsequently to humanity.

On the other hand, social media has also posed serious challenge to policing. The three main issues are:

- (i) Law & Order
- (ii) Cyber Crimes, Fake / Imitating Accounts, Financial Frauds, Malware delivery, drug and other illegal article sales, victimisation of Women & Children; and
- (iii) Terrorism

We are making giant strides and improving business-connectivity with the outer world. We need an environment to instil confidence and create a congenial climate for this. The police has to make a paradigm shift to make this happen. Serious crime develops because the police and citizens do not work together to prevent decay of social norms and social disorder. The community policing faces a huge trust deficit. Level of trust is particularly very low amongst socially weaker section, economically poor, minority groups, women, elderly and children. Police forces need to be more democratised.

In conclusion, let me state that I anxiously look forward to the deliberations and recommendations this Conference would be making on the different agenda it has identified; and I am sure, we would be immensely benefited by this. As you will all appreciate, security and safety are twin issues the whole world is concerned about and no progress can be made, when the pillars of peace and safety are in danger, by elements that wish to thwart progressive developments.

I convey my best wishes to all the delegates, officers and all others associated in putting together such a wonderful Conference. I wish the proceedings a grand success.”

BB/NK/PK/SS

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