Cyber attacks inevitable; businesses should have response plans in place: Experts

SINGAPORE - Business owners and organisations need to have quick and comprehensive response plans for cyber attacks as breaches are inevitable, experts at a panel discussion on cyber security said on Tuesday (Sept 18).

Held during the Singapore International Cyber Week event, the panel discussion involved five cyber security experts and Mr Warren Fernandez - editor of The Straits Times and editor-in-chief of Singapore Press Holding's English, Malay, Tamil Media Group - as moderator.

Replying to a question on best practices for responses to cyber breaches, Mr Kevin Manda, chief executive of American cyber security firm FireEye, said: "You have to do the dry runs, you have to do live fire drills.

"You have to get hands-on experience with the whole team, operating from event to fix."

Agreeing with him, Singapore's Commissioner of Cybersecurity and chief executive of the Cyber Security Agency David Koh said the inevitability of cyber attacks makes it even more important to have response plans ready to go.

"The issue, what people have said, is not about if you will be targeted, but when you are going to be targeted. So if you know you are going to be targeted, then the question is do you have a response plan, and have you practiced the response plan?" he added.

The other three panelists were Professor Lam Kwok Yan from the Nanyang Technological University, Director General of the National Agency for Security Information Systems in France Dr Guillaume Poupard and Md Shah Nuri, chief executive of the National CyberSecurity Agency in Malaysia.

During the hour-long discussion held at the Starec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre, experts emphasised the need for collaboration between nations and the sharing of best practices internationally, amid the mounting threat and scale of possible cyber attacks.

Mr Md Shah said that information sharing between nations would help cut response time to mitigate cyber attacks, as countries could work together to share analysis and work out actions that could be taken faster.

Said Mr Koh: "We are learning from each other, we are all making it up as we go along, so there is a lot of room for sharing of best practices."

It was announced on Tuesday that Singapore will be setting up an Asean-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence to strengthen Asean members' cyber strategy development, legislation and research capabilities.

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