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`Monitoring of Internet traffic vital'

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Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: Absence of monitoring of Internet traffic will not only pose a threat to the nation, but also individual privacy, former Director of Central Bureau of Investigation R.K. Raghavan said.

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Addressing a faculty development programme on `Cyber Security' at the Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, he listed spam, phishing and child pornography as areas of concern for cyber security.

On terrorism across the world, he said: "The current situation does not permit any complacency. Cyber terrorism still remains a possibility, requiring extreme vigilance. Terrorists consider it an easy way to operate through cyber space. It becomes essential to protect our air traffic control space and vital installations."

Citing many instances after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, he said it was communication technology that aided terrorists in their designs. They were "able to break all barriers and make terrorism as innovative as possible with the limited resources they have."

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Elaborating on the trends in cyberspace, he said that 2006 saw a spurt in cyber crimes and cyber terrorism, thanks to the prominent presence of international collusion.

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"Crime on the Internet is becoming more sophisticated, and this increasing sophistication is becoming a cause of worry to law enforcement agencies" he added.

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Though there were systems like firewalls, Intrusion Detection System (IDS) and virus protection software, it was the human element that was vital in preventing the illegal intrusion into cyber space. There was a need "to combine technology with user-discipline" to protect cyber space.

On the efficacy of the Information Technology Act, Mr. Raghavan said: "The Government is trying to strike a reasonable balance between being not too weak and not too stringent. Our country still has a small number of computer users. If the laws become too stringent, there will be less number of people who will be attracted towards becoming computer-savvy. With time, there will be more amendments that will make it (the Act) on a par with other countries."

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