Japan holds cyber security drill ahead of Olympics

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Japan held a government-wide cyber security drill in a bid to improve coordination among public agencies and major businesses, as Tokyo prepares to host the 2020 Summer Olympics

Japan held a government-wide cyber security drill Tuesday in a bid to improve coordination among public agencies and major businesses, as Tokyo prepares to host the 2020 Summer Olympics.

The mock [cyber attack](#) for the first time brought together 21 [government](#) departments and firms in 10 business sectors, including utilities, banking and aviation.

"Cyber attacks have grown increasingly sophisticated, highly developed and internationalised," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, the Japanese government's top spokesman, told participants in Tuesday's drill.

"It has become ever more important that the government strengthens its ability to counter attacks," he said.

The drill comes as Internet security comes back into focus after the spectacular failure of the Tokyo-based MtGox Bitcoin exchange following a half-billion-dollar theft of the virtual currency, which it blamed on computer hackers.

The exchange, which has filed for bankruptcy, had reportedly come under massive hacker offensives last month in an apparent attempt to steal Bitcoins. Unlike traditional currencies, the digital unit is generated by complex chains of interactions among a huge network of computers around the planet.

On Tuesday, about 100 people took part in the mock drill which saw various government ministries come under attack, including computer viruses. The government has said it faces a cyber attack every 30 seconds, on average.

The exercise had participants sharing information, gathering data and analysing the attacks as well as the extent of the damage. Others prepared press releases and statements from government ministers to keep the public informed.

In real-life cyber attacks, private experts are also hired to carry out investigations and assess the damage, officials said.

Earlier this month, Minister of Technology Policy Ichita Yamamoto cautioned that Tokyo must beef up its preparedness ahead of the 2020 Games.

"In the area of cyber security, various measures are possible as we prepare for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in six years' time," he said.

"We have to make serious efforts."

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