

Shaolin of cybercrime fighters

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Pune: The city seems to be fast-becoming the final answer to Asia's quest for low-cost training in cyber-crime.

While a five-member team of police officials from Mauritius is undergoing a special, month-long course in cyber crime investigation, a few months ago, a four-member state team from Malaysia attended a two-week crash course at the city-based Asian School of Cyber Laws (ASCL).

Another team from Mauritius is expected soon, said Gautam Sharma, head of education and consultancy at the ASCL.

During the last year alone, around 140 individual and corporate-sponsored students from Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Mauritius, among other countries, have taken correspondence courses from the ASCL, to learn about cyber crimes. In all, 3,000 students took courses from the ASCL so far, of whom 600 are foreigners.

In July-August, nearly 150

individual and corporate-sponsored students from various Asian countries are expected to train at the institute.

Rohas Nagpal, president, ASCL, said his institute offered courses in both cyber-crime investigation and cyber laws. In the last one year, the school has been working closely with the Union ministry of IT and communications. It even helped the ministry frame rules under the IT Act 2000, besides drafting the code of conduct for cyber cafes in the country.

Ever since it was founded in 1999 by a group of lawyers working in the field of information security, the ASCL has been assisting law enforcement agencies in India and many Asian countries in the investigation of multi-million dollar cyber crimes.

These crimes involve cyber terrorism, cyber forgery and attacks on health-related IT systems. The \$-1.5-million Bangalore source code case and the Gian Carla Balestra case of cyber stalking, are among the dozens of cases the school



A batch of police officials from Mauritius undergoes training at the city-based Asian School of Cyber Laws.

has helped crack.

In view of the growing use of the Internet and various IT initiatives taken up by countries like China, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines, there is a growing need for local officials in these countries to understand the implications and improve their skills in handling related crime, said Sharma.

The training programme addresses issues such as investigation of email crimes, hacking attacks, denial-of-service attacks, tracking

viruses, web-jacking and web-defacement, network crimes, cyber terrorism, and false authentication using digital signatures etc. A special module on ethical hacking is also to be included.

The school is also looking at working in the US and Europe as well. Among its future plans is developing best practices in cyber crime investigation for law enforcement agencies and evolving common standards, at least for Asian countries.