

my paper 叻報

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SINGAPORE

Govt sets up cyber-security agency

It will rope in experts to counter online espionage and cyber-crime

DAWN TAY

A GOVERNMENT agency has been set up to safeguard Singapore against terror attacks and espionage through the Internet.

The Singapore Infocomm Technology Security Authority (Sitsa), which starts operating today, will be the national specialist authority in securing the country against infocomm-technology (IT) threats.

It will come under the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) Internal Security Department.

Its creation comes in the wake of crippling cyber-attacks in recent years on websites of governments and major organisations in countries such as Estonia, Georgia and the United States.

In some cases, these attacks **disrupted** government correspondence and online banking.

For example, in July this year, 11 South Korean websites, including those of its presidential office and Parliament, crashed after a barrage of cyber-attacks that appeared to be linked to North Korea.

They underscore the need for the agency, said an MHA spokesman. The agency will beef up Singapore's cyber-defence capabilities by roping in private-sector professionals to toughen the existing national infocomm infrastructure.

It will also improve Singapore's response against cyber-attacks through holding regular **simulations** that test the country's ability to respond and recover from online attacks.

Terrorism and IT experts

lauded the launch of the new agency as "timely", as governments, **criminal syndicates** and terrorist groups are wielding increasingly advanced IT capabilities, which pose greater threats to online security.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna, who heads the Nanyang Technological University's International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, said that the main threats to Singapore's IT security are governments seeking out state secrets, and global criminal syndicates out to steal personal and corporate information.

This could include credit-card information, financial data and commercial secrets.

He added: "The Government understands the growing threat and wants to stay a step ahead."

Mr Ilias Chantzou, a director

of government relations at IT-security firm Symantec, said that cyber-security is a global problem, with a "mature and thriving underground economy" dealing in various Web services used to launch cyber-attacks.

These include vandalism, disruption of services and information theft.

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HELPDESK 我的字典

🔍 **Espionage:** 间谍活动
jiàn dié huó dòng

🔍 **Disrupted:** 扰乱 rǎo luàn

🔍 **Simulations:** 模拟 mó nǐ

🔍 **Criminal syndicates:**
犯罪组织 fàn zuì zǔ zhī

Why S'pore can be puzzle-makers' hub

KENNY CHEE

DOCTOR Mark Nowacki created number puzzle Shady Puzzle in 2005 to teach his students here logical thinking.

But a surprise awaited the 40-year-old Singapore Management University assistant professor and founder of the LogicMills School of Thinking.

So many students and their parents asked him for more puzzles that he decided to release a book of the puzzles here last December. Another volume is expected to be released this month.

Shady Puzzle is one of several made-in-Singapore logic puzzles that have been developed in the last 10 months.

On the appeal of logic puzzles in Singapore, Dr Nowacki said: "These days, when so much of our lives are out of our control, puzzles provide welcome relief. We know that there is an answer and we know that it is something that we can find for ourselves."

Former NTUC Income chief executive Tan Kin Lian, 61, said that Singaporeans enjoy solving logic puzzles because many are good in mathematics and science.

He has his own line of puzzle books, the first of which was released in 2006.

The book contained Logic9, his version of the popular Sudoku number puzzle.

Asked why he had written



GET YOUR HEAD ROUND THIS: Mindstrat Puzzles' Krystalledron has to be tilted to get the puzzle pieces inside to match by colour. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

that book, he said: "As Sudoku was popular in several places then, such as Britain, Australia, India and Hong Kong, I was quite confident that it would catch on in Singapore."

This year, he released two puzzle books.

Another logic puzzle made here - Rubik's Cube-like puzzles Cubedron and Cybedron - has been a hit overseas.

They were created by home-grown start-up Mindstrat Puzzles, founded by puzzle lover Siva Subramaniam, a Singapore permanent resident, and his

Greek friend, Mr Pantazis Constantine Houlis.

Mr Subramaniam, 38, said that they will hit major retail stores here within two months.

Singapore would serve well as a puzzle-makers' hub because it respects and protects intellectual property, so there would be less chance of the puzzles being bootlegged, he said.

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🔍 SEE B15 IN CHINESE SECTION FOR DEBUT OF SHADY PUZZLE IN MY PAPER

HOW TO PLAY

🔍 **Cubedron**

Players have to tilt a sphere containing a cube to align the cube's puzzle pieces by colour. An original puzzle concept.

How much: \$38 from www.mindstratpuzzles.com and \$34 at Comics Connection. See www.comicsconnection.com.sg for list of outlets.

🔍 **Shady Puzzle**

Players have to figure out how many squares in a grid they have to shade with the help of number clues. An original puzzle concept.

How much: \$16.90 from major bookshops and www.shadypuzzle.com

🔍 **Intelligence Quiz**

Players are presented with a scenario and have to figure out the solution with the clues given. Inspired by Einstein's Intelligence Quiz.

How much: \$7.90 from major bookshops and www.easyapps.sg

🔍 **Shape Quiz**

Players have to rearrange a given set of shapes into specific patterns. Inspired by the classic T puzzle.

How much: \$7.90 at www.easyapps.sg