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Hackers strike sites at will, govt helpless

SEBAN SCARIA, TNN, Nov 26, 2003, 02.58am IST

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HYDERABAD: The hacker is on the prowl and the government can do little to stop him in his tracks. At least, that's what the IT department — custodian of the government web **sites** and servers — says.

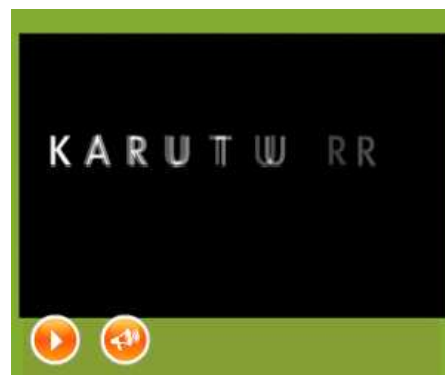
Hackers, sources say, have been having a field day. Working from remote locations, they've repeatedly broken into the Secretariat and other government networks at **will**. Making matters worse, these techno-wizards reportedly have access to the e-mail accounts of key government

officials, as well.

The government hasn't a clue to these intrusions. But department officers concede: It's likely that the **hackers** are feasting on its web **sites** and servers. "It's easy for anyone to hack the government servers since we (the government networks) don't have basic security features like a firewall," IT secretary J C Mohanty told The Times of India.

Darren Warren (name changed on request) — a US-based hacker working for a city-based e-security solutions firm — boasts he has hacked several government web **sites** and servers at the behest of his employer.

Asked about Warren's claim, Mohanty merely says: "The government is in the process of deploying security solutions to protect its network. However, the government has no intention of launching any investigation into the matter. We can't carry out any probe into this, since the network is not properly secured. Once we have proper security features, we'll have a strong case to fight these intruders." Warren says he hacked the government web **sites** and servers to download important data. In addition to **hackers**, a wide variety of viruses have been feasting on government-owned computers and servers. Mohanty insists the problem



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would soon be solved. "We have invited bids from security solution providers. The work will be complete by Jan. 15, 2004," he added.

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