

Government and Policy

China says Google 'no exception' to law

(Xinhua)

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BEIJING: A Chinese government official said Tuesday that Google was "no exception" in observing China's laws and shouldering its social responsibilities.

"Foreign companies in China should respect the laws and regulations, respect the public interest of Chinese people and China's culture and customs and shoulder due social responsibilities," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu at a regular press briefing.

"There is no exception for Google," said Ma.

Ma's remarks came just a week after Google said it might quit China, citing disagreements with government policies and unidentified attacks targeting Google's services in China.

Ma said China's Internet was open and managed in accordance with the law.

China had the most Internet users in the world, and it "encourages the use and development of the Internet," said Ma.

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He said China would continue to create a favorable investment environment for foreign companies, including Internet firms, and to protect their legitimate rights.

"China welcomes international investors conducting business within the country according to the law," said Ma.

In response to a question on hacker attacks, Ma said China itself was the victim country of cyber attacks.

"China's Internet is seriously threatened by cyber attacks like other countries," he said.

According to the Internet Society of China, the number of cyber attacks from abroad saw a year-on-year increase of 148 percent in 2008. The website of China's largest search engine, Baidu.com, had been temporarily paralyzed on Jan. 12 in the worst attack since it was established.

China firmly opposed and prohibited hacker attacks, Ma said.

Ma also refuted the report that the computer system of the Indian government was attacked by a Chinese hacker, saying the report was "groundless."

Also on Tuesday, Google China posted an entry on its own Chinese-language blog, www.googlechinablog.com, saying that Google China employees were currently working "as usual" in their Beijing offices.

"We have heard quite a number of rumors in the past few days saying that Google has already closed its China office. Some other rumors had it that Google China employees had been notified to leave their jobs in the near future," read the entry, "These rumors are not true."

Although the Internet giant had recently announced that it would negotiate certain issues with the Chinese government in the coming weeks, Google China's employees were still trying to provide the best products and services for their clients as usual, it said.