It is instinctive to want to see the unknown, to be curious and open attachments and e-mails from unfamiliar senders. But cyber security experts warn that such curiosity can result in dire consequences.

Just last year, cybercrime cost the global economy over US$450 billion ($620 billion), and this number is only expected to grow, with estimates that it will hit US$3 trillion by 2020.

The staggering figures were presented during the first dialogue at the Interpol World 2017 congress held at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre yesterday, which saw top security experts in the world gather to discuss topics such as cybercrime.

Speaking on the event’s sidelines, Mr Rob Leslie, chief executive officer of Ireland-based data privacy company Sedicii, urged the public to resist opening suspicious files and e-mails.

“The real world, if someone came to your front door and knocked and your first reaction is not to open the door and let them in,” he said.

“It’s to ask who are you, what are you there for... And once you’re satisfied, then you let them in.”

The event comes days after the NotPetya attack, which affected at least 2,000 individuals and organisations worldwide, including some here.

A survey released yesterday by security services provider Quann and research firm IDC revealed that Singapore companies are unprepared for cyber attacks.

The survey said that 91 per cent of the companies are in the early stages of security preparedness, and almost half have never conducted any form of IT security awareness exercise.

Second Minister for Home Affairs Desmond Lee said at the Interpol World 2017 event that Singapore is constantly enhancing its responses to cybercrime.

One such response is the National Cybercrime Action Plan that was launched a year ago.

The plan focuses on educating the public, enhancing government capabilities, strengthening legislation and stepping up partnerships.

Govt weeds out farms for misusing land

Amid the Government’s push for farms in land-scarce Singapore to be more productive, eight farms have been penalised in the last four years for repeat offenders and recalcitrant farm owners.

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) and the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) said The Straits Times: “Enforcement actions such as warning letters and composition fines were taken against these farms. When the lease/tenancy of the six farms expired in end-2014, AVA terminated their farm licences; and SLA did not renew their lease/tenancy.”

On top of the six that did not have their leases renewed when they expired, two fish farms—one in Lim Chu Kang and the other in Pasir Ris—had their leases terminated for unauthorised earthworks.

SOIL ST understands that this means the farmers had brought in large amounts of soil onto the farm land.

The lease for one of the two fish farms, at 40, Lim Chu Kang Lane 5, was terminated in July 2015.

During a visit to the site in May, ST saw an SLA signboard hanging on the gates, stating the land is state property.

The lease for the Pasir Ris fish farm was terminated in 2013. AVA said the licences of both farms were also terminated.

Its spokesman said its officers conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance with its regulatory and licensing conditions. Those who do not comply may receive warning letters or be fined.

She said farmland must mainly be used for agricultural production, adding: “For new farmland, farmers are allowed to develop visitor amenities such as cafes and farm education centres if they are kept within 10 per cent of the land area, subject to planning approval.”

“Farms must also rectify any non-compliances. If the farms are recalcitrant offenders and the non-compliances are severe, AVA may suspend their licences. The leases of such farms may also not be renewed.”

Less than 1 per cent of land here is marked for farm use. The local agriculture sector also produces less than 10 per cent of total food supply, but it is still considered vital for food security, serving as a buffer in case of food supply shocks.

As of May, there were 358 licensed farms here, of which 212 were food farms.

Grab out to GET errant drivers

A Grab Enforcement Team (GET) will ply the roads to ensure its driver-partners display the proper decals and follow its code of conduct.

The ride-hailing firm said its “small team” of enforcement officers, who have several years of experience in law enforcement and security, will be on “Grab-branded” motorcycles and cars to ensure its driver-partners obey the law.

Under new Land Transport Authority rules, all private-hire car drivers must display tamper-evident decals and obtain a Private Hire Car Driver’s Vocational Licence.

Drivers who fail to display the decals or tamper with them can have their licences revoked, be fined or even jailed.

A Grab spokesman said it is taking proactive enforcement to protect its driver-partners and prevent any breaches of the Road Traffic Act. Errant drivers will have their accounts suspended and be investigated.

Online pictures of the “Grab-branded” motorbikes sparked speculation about the launch of bike-hailing service GrabBike in Singapore.

But the spokesman said Grab has no such plans because Singaporeans do not have a habit of taking bikes.

LRT train cars did not collide

An incident on the Sengkang LRT system on Monday evening was due to a pair of train cars suddenly stalling and not a collision, said operator SBS Transit and regulator Land Transport Authority (LTA).

The sudden stalling of the train cars, which were coupled together, may have caused passengers who were not holding on to any grab bars or standing poles to lose their balance, SBS and LTA added. This “may have given the wrong impression that the trailing train car had hit the one in front”, they said in a joint statement yesterday.

A commuter had reported to citizen journalism website Stomp that a “collision” had occurred on the Sengkang LRT system at about 7pm on Monday.