Cyber attack disrupts Japan Airlines operations

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Tokyo: Japan Airlines (JAL) announced on Thursday (Dec 26) that it had experienced a cyberattack, potentially affecting both domestic and international flights. However, the airline later confirmed it had identified and resolved the issue.

Local media reported that at least nine domestic flights were delayed as a result.

JAL, Japan's second-largest airline after All Nippon Airways (ANA), stated on social media platform X,

 "We identified and addressed the cause of the issue. We are checking the system recovery status."

"Sales for both domestic and international flights departing today have been suspended. We apologize for any inconvenience caused," the post said.

Earlier Thursday, a JAL spokeswoman told news agency that the company had been subjected to a cyberattack, warning that there was a "a possibility that delays and cancellations may occur".

JAL said in an X post that it had been having network problems from around 7:24 am on Thursday (2224 GMT Wednesday) which could affect domestic and international flights.

But the cause of the failure had been identified by 8:56 am, it added.

JAL is only the latest Japanese firm to be hit by a cyber attack.

Japan's Space agency JAXA said in 2023 that it was likely penetrated by a cyber attack by unknown entities, but no sensitive information about rockets or satellites was accessed.

The same year, Nagoya Port, one of Japan's busiest, was crippled by a ransomware attack that was blamed on Lockbit, a Russia-based cybercrime organisation.

Japan's National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (NISC) -- the agency responsible for defences against cyberattacks -- was itself reportedly infiltrated by hackers in 2023 for as long as nine months.

In 2022, the government said a cyberattack was behind disruption at a Toyota supplier that forced the top-selling automaker to halt operations at domestic plants for a day.

More recently, the popular Japanese video-sharing website Niconico suspended its services in June because it was under a large-scale cyberattack, its operator said.

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