

# FORCENET E-ZINE

Magazine of the military veterans in the corporate



**Cdr Manish Tiwari (Retd)**

Global CISO- Bharti Airtel

**Lt Col Aditya Parida, PhD**

The Swedish Professor

**Monica Kacker**

Educationist Story Teller

**Isha Prabhakar**

The Recruiter

# RENAISSANCE



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## [A NOTE FOR THE READERS](#)

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For the ease of providing a feedback, such links have been provided at the end of the articles too.

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# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to another month's stimulating edition of ForceNet E-Zine. This month we have chosen the theme "Renaissance".

We all have heard about the Renaissance man Leonardo da Vinci, but what's a Renaissance? Renaissance is a French word meaning the rebirth. It can also be said to be "a revival of" or "renewed interest in something".

Last year has tested mankind like no other in the past 100 years. The whole world coming to a grinding halt was something completely unprecedented. The pandemic has altered the ways of living, working, playing, eating, shopping, travelling and more... With the pandemic now seeming to be abating after nearly 1.5 years it is time to get back to a "new normal". Things may not come back to as they were before the Coronavirus hit the world. We may have to learn new ways of doing things or doing old things in different ways. The situation if viewed from a prism of positivity provides us perhaps a once in a lifetime opportunity for revival or renaissance.

By putting the learning cycle in motion we maybe not only improve ourselves but maybe even reinvent ourselves completely. The opportunity ahead is immense - one is reminded of the roaring 1920s after the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. There would be new problems to solve, newer technologies to learn and master for these open new vistas in both entrepreneurship and as an employee. However, the future will belong to those who prepare themselves by way of upgrading their skills, knowledge and mindset just as it happened during the Renaissance in the middle ages.

So whether you like it or not change is coming - question is will you thrive or wither away in that change ? It is a choice that you need to make. In a manner it is an immense opportunity being offered by God to our generation, make the most of it.

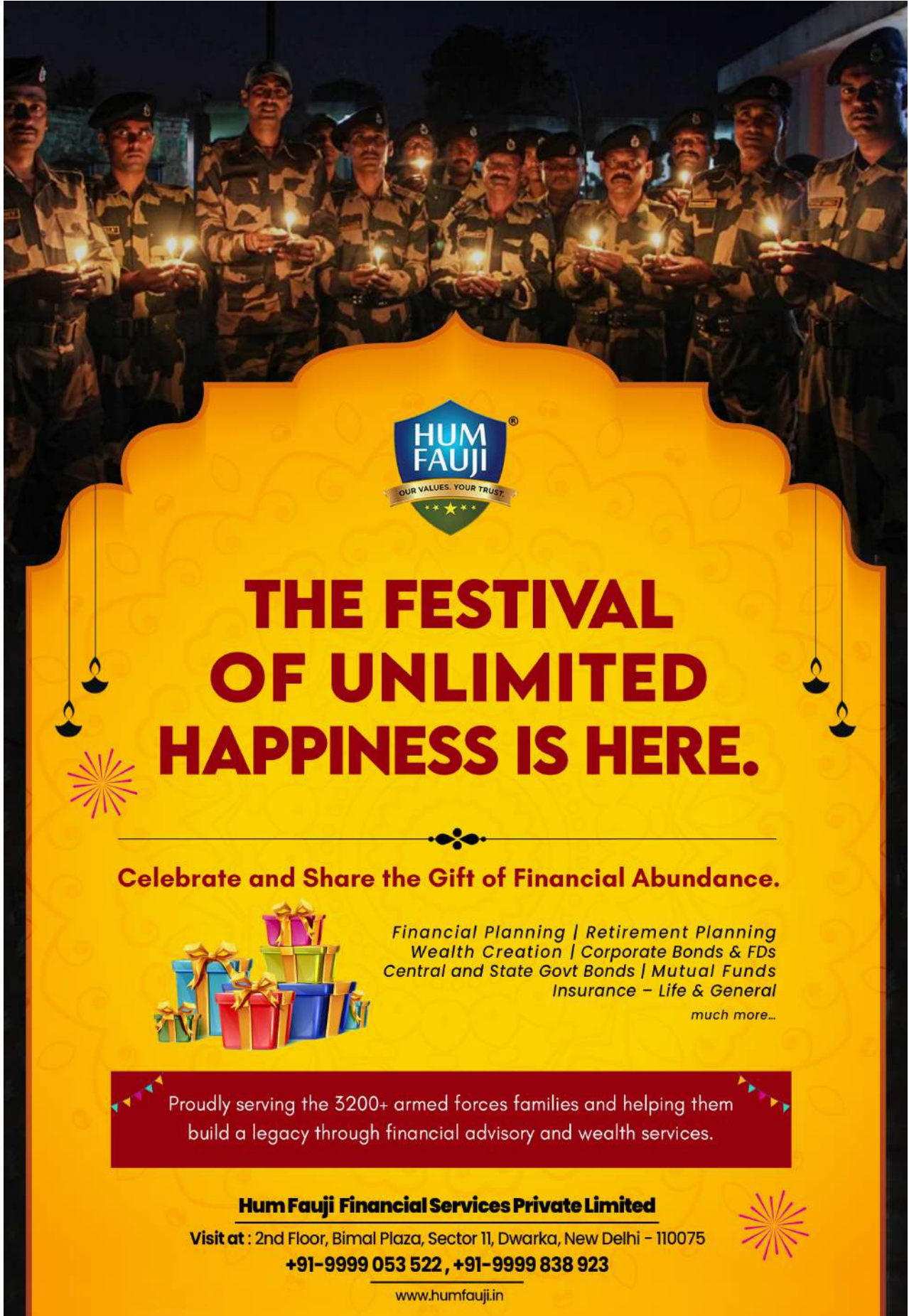
Here is raising a toast for the beginning of renaissance in your life!


Until next time, cheers to Forces Network - the 'Network that Works'!!!

Take care, and stay safe.




Regards,  
Capt. Rajesh Nair



  
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Mode	From - To	Time	Duration
Online / Class room	09 to 12 Nov. 2021	1000 to 1600 hrs.	4 days (22 hrs.)
	15 to 19 Nov. 2021	1000 to 1600 hrs.	5 days (22 hrs.)
	29 Nov. to 07 Dec. 2021	1730 to 2030 hrs.	7 days (22 hrs.)
	13 to 17 Dec2021	1000 to 1600 hrs.	5 days (22 hrs.)

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- Executives
- Heads of Departments
- General Employees and
- Graduates/Undergraduates (Freshers)

#### What are the Intended Outcomes ?

On successful completion of the training, Delegates will be able to:

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#### Curriculum Overview

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- Assessing risks
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- Understanding responsibilities
- Understanding hazards
- Investigating incidents
- Measuring performance

\* Post training, the delegates will be evaluated via an assessment (MCCs) and a Workplace Risk Assessment Project.



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- Security Management
- Security Investigation Management
- Security Intelligence Management
- Conduct of a Security Survey/ Audit and Case Study on Security
- Cyber Security
- Conflict Management
- Emergency and Crisis Management
- Managing health and safety
- Legal Aspects in Security Management and related issues

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#### Intended outcomes

- Understand concept of security management
- Risk identification, evaluation and management.
- Planning and designing physical security measures and integrating technology.
- Understand Information/cyber security and emergency/crisis management and business continuity management.
- Understand workplace health and safety.
- Knowing the legal aspects related to security.
- Intelligence and Investigation management
- Understand conflict management.

#### Who Can take part?

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- Security and Administration Officers in Educational Institutions, Banks, Hotels & Hospitals
- Security Training Facilities
- Managers handling Security in any business establishment
- Any retired uniformed forces personnel aspiring to join the security industry

#### Minimum Education Qualification and Experience

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**For queries, please connect with**  
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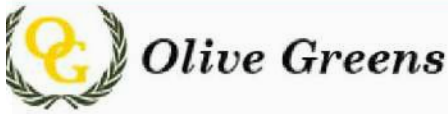
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# Star of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

## **IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS**

**Cdr Manish Tiwari (Retd)** is from the 73rd course of Naval Academy. He has more than 20 years of experience in Information Security and Information Operations, in addition to working experience in the Indian Navy as a Commander for 25 years. He has worked as the Director of CERT-Navy and Information Warfare in Indian Navy in 2008. He has represented Indian Navy at all National level Government forums on issues related to IT security and e-governance for the protection of the National Critical Information Infrastructure. Cdr Manish has worked with Microsoft, India, before joining Bharti Airtel as Global CISO.



### **Team: Tell us about your childhood, family life and growing up?**

**Manish:** Well, I am a second-generation naval officer. In addition to my father, I had several relatives in the Indian Navy, Army or the IAF. I grew up in a services background and spent my childhood growing in several naval and army stations across the country. But a significant number of my school years were in Mumbai.

### **Team: How did you get interested in cyber security? What experiences in the Indian Navy helped you later in your corporate avatar?**

**Manish:** I always had a reasonable amount of interest in technology. However, the interest in cyber security arose when I was posted as a DS in the Naval Academy in 1992. I have always been a voracious reader and it was clear to me that the world was moving towards a digital ecosystem and digital convergence. Another good aspect of services is that we have very good libraries in all units, stations and formations that helped me keep myself updated on the latest trends in the world. This is largely the pre internet period that I am referring to. The Naval Academy also had a very good Computer Centre at that time and I would practise there a lot. I would say my curiosity, my reading habit, and the opportunities arising from my service tenures gave me the depth in technology.

In IT, it was clear to me that, cyber security would emerge as a major risk and for some reasons held a certain amount of fascination. I had one or two more operational tenures when I had some setbacks with my health. Bad health resulted in prolonged periods of hospitalization and my medical category was downgraded. I have always believed in the dictum that when life gives you a lemon make lemonade. By the late

90s it was evident to me that cyber warfare was going to be very big. I started diving deeper into the domain. Indian Navy (IN) was the first org in India to set up a CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) that too in 2002, the National CERT came up only in 2004, soon the Army and the IAF also set up their orgs. I am very lucky to have been given an opportunity in these organisations early on and contribute to the Service.

It was a very satisfying experience being part of the initial Indian Navy CERT. We were a very small team, and started growing in capacity and scope gradually. We would create policies, doctrines and were also involved in skill development. We introduced the concept of cyber risk management in IN. 2002-2010 was a time for great expansion. In 2008 I was appointed the head of the Info Warfare cell and this is now a full fledged Directorate.

Towards the end of 2013 I took Premature retirement from the IN. Yes, my exposure in the IN certainly helped me a lot in my subsequent corporate stints. My first stint outside the Services was as Project Director Aadhar. Subsequently I was head hunted by Microsoft to be their NSO- National Security Officer, India. After a few years I joined Bharti Airtel as their Global CISO.

**Team: Between Jan 1999 – Aug 2003 as per your LinkedIn profile you were, in the QMG branch doing the Project Management of Army Rolling Stock Information & Tracking System & Armed Forces Railways quota Passenger Reservation System. Tell us a little bit more about your experience and learning in this role?**

**Manish:** Oh yes – that was an amazing experience that I enjoyed thoroughly working with the Indian Army. Not many people are aware that the Indian Army owns rolling stock even more than many countries! Most of the movement of troops is by rail. Here I was involved in a project where we did a Proof Of Concept (POC) in Delhi. At that time exchanging Warrants & Forms Ds was a big pain point. While Delhi has 3 MCOs i.e. New Delhi, Old Delhi & Nizamuddin, even to check a seat availability there was no seamless system available. We created a software based on distributed databases and linked the 3 MCOs together. If a soldier came to any one of the MCOs in Delhi with a warrant/Form D, he could book a seat from any of the 3 MCOs something which was not feasible earlier. The POC was a success and it was recommended that there be a country wide network of MCOs run on the Army WAN (AWAN). It was a very satisfying experience.

**Team: Tell us about the switch from an Indian Naval officer to becoming a very successful corporate honcho. What preparation did you do for your Transition? Also, do you think that military veterans need to undergo a mindset shift to be more successful in their corporate careers?**

**Manish:** While I have already covered some of it in my answer to Q 2 I must admit I was very happy serving in the Services. I always feel that the armed forces are more than a career it's a calling and a way of life. By 2011 I had headed the cyber security org of the



Navy for 5 years I felt that I had reached the zenith of what I could contribute to the service. I also felt the need to make way for fresh blood, that made me take the tough decision. My PMR was finally approved on 31 Dec 2013. I did the 6 months DGR MDI course however I felt that it was not of much relevance barring a few modules. Nevertheless, it was informative and a good break and hence fun.

I worked on enhancing my personal branding especially on LinkedIn to seek a suitable job. It is helpful if you can leverage your past experience for your job hunt. In my case I was lucky I had cyber security experience, a field that was in reasonable demand then and was lucky to get a break immediately on leaving service.

My advice to those planning to quit services is that please introspect and analyze, be clear on your expertise, understand what companies are looking for, decide your vertical and prepare yourself with market relevant skills. It is really crucial that military personnel understand exactly what the corporate seek. It is a brutal ecosystem, you need specialized skills, expect no exception to be made, as the companies have an obligation to hire relevant and the best talent. It is important to prepare yourself well before stepping out.

Many service officers think they can easily fit into roles like HR without any effort and that is not true. HR in the corporate is quite different and has several specific verticals. I suggest a full time MBA vs a part time MBA which in my view has lost its sheen. The DGR courses in my view have outlived their utility and they may not be the best use of your time, evaluate the opportunity cost that you maybe forsaking.

Mindset shift is equally important, please shed your rank & ego. However retain your value system of the services. The Services are highly hierarchical, whilst Corporates are more skill based and more fluid. You will be respected more if you get absorbed in the new corporate culture quickly – it is actually your new home!



*In Interview as the Global CISO*

**Team: While everyone has his own story of success based on their individual skills and traits, however, still in your opinion, what should be the roadmap or the blueprint for people wanting to transition from the armed forces to the cyber security field, especially for people with a technical background? What industry expects from them and what are the recommended certifications?**

**Manish:** Anyone with effort and discipline can make a career in any field. I would say certifications and courses are important but practical experience is also required ideally. In my case I was lucky that I was in a cyber security billet for more than a decade right before I left. I feel the key is starting early. It would be ideal to do at least one cyber security tenure in your service tenure before leaving.

**Team: With the sudden onset of pandemic and closing of office spaces, there was this shift from the secure on-premise environment to the remote work from home culture. What were the major security challenges that you and your team faced, how did you meet those challenges and what were the major learning?**

**Manish:** To start with, I would say that the world was highly unprepared . Whilst we were also surprised but were relatively better off due to our preventive preparations which included existing policies and responses for an eventuality like a pandemic,

Our Covid Response task force was put in place and it was a cross functional Team coming from all departments and locations across the country. The Covid support team was built from scratch. If I have to put it in our Defence Language then I must admit that it was almost like a War Room scenario. New protocols, Dynamic Reports, SOPs, report templates logs etc were created to ensure appropriate response.

Being part of the most critical infrastructure service providers, it was important to have functions running even though the offices were shut due to lockdown. We had to enable almost 55000 employees to work from home within 15 Days to ensure all functions were on full speed, with all necessary security and risk controls. This all this was achieved under the severe lockdown conditions.

Biggest challenge was to Keep a track of 1 Lakh Strong workforce (on role + off role) on ground. It was not just work but also it was about the health and well-being of all these people who were working day and night in the most demanding situations. And while all the pandemic related challenges were there, Airtel also braved the two worse cyclones in the same period. Damages to our infrastructure and repairing the same was a major challenge and it was a great team effort by our network field teams on ground that ensured the availability of Services and infrastructure is in place.

I must admit that the fundamentals of Armed Forces days have served me really well to handle such situations. There is a fantastic team at Airtel that whilst handling Covid support, kept the lights on and more importantly worked day and night for the welfare of employees, associates and even their families during the crisis.

**Team: What does the typical work day look like in the life of a CISO? How does a typical month look like?**

**Manish:** Mostly it's a Busy day with series of simultaneous events, activities and situations arising from nowhere sometimes. The day is in the top gear almost from 9 AM onwards and day is consumed in resolving issues, handling escalations and conducting reviews.

We have a great team and they're my biggest strength. I spend a lot of time to ensure the success of each member of my team, as part of the mentoring process.

**Team: What are the top qualities you look forward to in an employee while hiring?**

**Manish:** Let me put them like this, I would look at following points:

- Right Attitude, Right Aptitude and Right Skillsets are on top of the list,
- Honesty - Both personal and professional are of paramount importance. No compromise on this.
- Perseverance is a virtue that I feel is really critical, in cyber security.
- To be a great Team member, it is very important to have Good Communication Skills,
- When I am hiring, I look forward to on-boarding a person who is the best choice and fit for the organisation. I proactively try to hire Armed Forces veterans but only if it is the right person for the right job.

And we must remember that you can't predict everything - remember pandemic, so at times you must give benefit of doubt too,

**Team: What would be your message to military personnel planning to make a corporate career in cyber security?**

**Manish:** Let me share the experience I have gained after spending some time in corporate life.

- ·Just because Cyber Security is a booming area, it's not right to just jump in.
- ·On hands tenure of at least 2 to 3 years in recent appointment which involved technology, processes, nitty gritty of Cyber Security domain could be a wonderful start point. Then it would be absolutely appropriate to build credentials by getting certifications which go along with your on job experience. ISO27000, CISM, CISA and such certifications will really benefit.
- ·Robust On ground Experience combined with the best in the industry Certifications is the perfect combination for your future growth in this field.

- Try doing at least one service tenure in information security and data handling and if do get opportunity then give it your 1000%. It would be great to do 10 Years of work in this two years of your tenure.
- Choose a vertical wisely and do not hurry to pick up something just because everyone is doing it.
- Being realistic would really help. Explore different fields like Sales, Business Development, Customer Relationship Management etc. If you wish to enhance your learning then go for a Full Time MBA in a good institutions like ISB, IIMs(Top3) and why not even go to quality MBA programs abroad if you can afford it.

**Team: What is it that drives you?**

**Manish:** Hmmm, To be honest I would like to start by saying that I have been lucky. Now to answer the question, I really didn't aspire for leadership roles. As a person I love to be content, put my 100% to anything I have been given and be happy with whatever success that comes my way. I find a lot of satisfaction in helping and mentoring youngsters in the field of risk management.

**Team: Tell us something about your family.**

**Manish:** We are a Naval Family. My wife Meenu is from the first batch of Lady Officers. She is an educationist and is presently Principal of one of the leading schools in Delhi. We are proud parents of two wonderful kids. Our daughter is a budding economist and is studying in University of Waterloo. Our son has done his engineering and he went to Trinity College Dublin for pursuing Masters. He is now working as a Data Science Engineer with General Motors in Dublin, in their autonomous vehicle program.



*The Family having a Global footprint*

**Rapid Fire Round**

**Q1. Describe yourself in one word?**

**Ans:** Inquisitive

**Q2. If you could get a wish from God, what superpower would you like to have?**

**Ans:** None

**Q3. If we were to ask your friends as what is the one thing they dislike about you- what do you think most will say?**

**Ans:** Persuasive

**Q4. What keeps you awake at night?**

**Ans:** Nothing

**Q5. Experience/Learning working with cross culture people across the globe**

**Ans:** Truly Wonderful

**Q6. One regret in life?**

**Ans:** None

**Thank you Cdr Manish, we wish you success with all your future assignments.**

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*General  
Amol  
Amit Dalvi*

# Expatriate Interview

In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

## ***IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS***

**Prof (Lt Col) Aditya Parida, PhD** was commissioned into Corps of EME in Dec 1973. He took premature retirement in Sep' 1995. Lt Col Aditya is a M.Tech from IIT Kharagpur, and did his Ph.D from Sweden. He is the chair and a member of a number of committees. He has a number of rewards, publications in journals and books to his credit. Post his retirement he is busy as visiting professor, external examiner, Chairman of Indian association at Luleå and is also involved with the Division of Operation and Maintenance Engineering, Luleå University.



**Uday: Please tell us something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces and your subsequent Forces career and corporate career?**

**Aditya:** I had a hobby of reading, writing and teaching from my school and college days. I joined the Indian Army, Corps of EME, after my graduation in Mechanical Engineering. While in Army - 1973-95, I did my M.Tech (IM) from IIT Kharagpur, served in all echelons of workshops, recovery companies, NCC Unit and Director -IM&C, DDG Management Studies, Army HQs, from where I took pre-mature retirement.

Post Army period - 1996 – 2000, I worked as a Consultant, Production planning and control, GM, Director of Operation, and Advisor, Business Development. I taught Production and Operation Management -POM; 1996-2000 and Jt-Director at NILLM-CMS, New Delhi - 2001-2002.

I joined Luleå University of Technology Sep 2002 Sweden. After my PhD 2006, promoted to Asst Professor and Assoc. professor -2010 and Professor -2015. I taught several Masters and PhD courses; lead eleven Swedish foundations, industries and EU research projects. I was visiting Professor with Universities in Sweden, Finland, Iran, China, Japan and India.

I was member of the European Maintenance Assessment Committee, SMRP -USA, and Secretary, European Masters and PhD thesis award committee. I have authored two books, four book chapters, and over a hundred peer reviewed journal and conference papers with 130,000 plus reads worldwide. I have been International Chair and Keynote speakers to several International Conferences. I have been editor and editorial board members of four International Journals.

I was awarded with Outstanding Paper Award-2007, Supervisor of the Best European PhD Thesis Award (2015-16) and Eminent Alumni Award from VSS University of Technology, Odisha (2017).

**Uday: Please give us more details about what you are presently engaged in?**

**Aditya:** Currently I am externally involved with the Division of Operation and Maintenance Engineering, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden, since my retirement in May 2017, also involved in webinar and International Advisory member, International workshop and Congress; Industrial Artificial Intelligence 2021 (IAI2021), Luleå, Sweden, 06-07 Oct 2021. Also I am:

- Reviewer for GFMAM Global forum document revision for Asset management council of Australia -2020 and involved with them as an external member.
- Visiting Professor, Beijing University, teaching virtually during August 2021.
- One of the founding member and International Advisory Committee member of the Asset management Society of India since 2020.
- The external Examiner for the REAM Master Program, Manchester University, UK (2018-22).
- Chairman of Indian Association of Luleå registered with Luleå kommun and Indian Embassy and involved in Indian cultural activities, since 2019.
- I have Organized an Indian Cultural Festival as part of Azadi ki Amrit mahatsov post pandemic for the first time in Northern Sweden on 21 Aug 2021, with Indian Ambassador and the Mayor inaugurating it.
- Happy and lucky to spend time with my daily physical fitness, spiritual reading, writing, gardening; and spending time/playing with grandkids.
- Mentor for the expat Indians in Norrbotten Region of Sweden, nominated by the Indian Embassy, Stockholm for the COVID period.



*As Chairman, Indian Association of Luleå, during First ever Cultural Festival of India in Northern Sweden Aug 2021 conducting the Indian Ambassador for Sweden & Mayor of Luleå*

**Uday: What was the impetus for you to leave the uniformed service and then get into research and Academics?**

**Aditya:** Not being a yes man, following the code of conduct and ethics of an officer, I had difference of opinion with all most all of my commanding officers, and most of them appreciated my sincerity and straight forwardness and had an excellent relation later on.

In spite of my good career path in Army, I felt that I am not exploiting my knowledge, skills and full capabilities, and my hobby of reading, writing and teaching. I was involved in research work during my M-Tech at IIT Kharagpur, presenting and publishing my master thesis in a national Conference; and two path breaking projects at DDG, management Studies, AHQ, which reassured in my teaching and research capability.

**Uday: What subject inspired you the most and if you could tell us more about your research?**

**Aditya:** In India, I have been teaching Production and Operation Management -POM, Marketing management and Human Resource Management to the MBA students. In Sweden, I started with teaching Operation and maintenance engineering to Masters and International exchange students, besides Aviation Engg, Hydropower and mining Engg. I was teaching Asset Management, Performance measurement & management and Research Methodology besides Operation and maintenance engineering to the PhD students. My research areas has been Operation & Maintenance, and asset engineering and management, Maintenance performance measurement management and eMaintenance.

I have worked for several Swedish National research foundations, industries and European Union research projects, Supervised seven PhD students. My research work resulted in more than a hundred of research papers in journals and International conferences and Congresses with thousands of research citations.



*Conducting Visit of Indian Ambassador to University 16 Sep 2021*



**Uday: What were the challenges you faced in this new journey out of the armed forces? And, how did you overcome those challenges?**

**Aditya:** The post armed forces career in India was quite tough as there was a clash of values and ethics in the industry. Though, each one of us feels that we are quite flexible, yet the ground reality is different and very challenging. I was feeling suffocating with all my hard work, sincerity and performance. This is the reason, I shifted from industry to academic career in 2001.

At Sweden, the work environment is transparent and cordial, where performance is appreciated and awarded. An individual supported by a free hand to work and perform without any interference. Honestly, for my attitude and working style, I felt to be very comfortable and in my home ground without any challenge.

**Uday: Would you like to share the details of your experience as an Academician and which learning from Armed forces helped you in the field of education?**

**Aditya:** My two decades plus experience, knowledge and maturity as an operation and maintenance engineer and other appointments with the structured and systematic teaching and learning methodology of Armed forces helped me to teach, do research, supervise and work as project leader for various industrial, Swedish Govt and European Union research projects.

**Uday: How has been your experience working in different universities and with varied cultures? Specially your inputs about Indian Universities vis-a-vis Universities in Sweden?**

**Aditya:**

#### **In Sweden**

- Any University student (above 18 years) considered as a responsible individual and not controlled, rather given a free hand.
- Everyone follows guidelines, no spoon feeding nor controlling by teacher, supervisor or head.
- Students are not running after good grade and they are happy with the grade they get with the given input. This is also because of no mad competition nor parental or societal pressure.

#### **In India**

- As we are aware, Indian students are scared of the teachers, professors and supervisor or heads. The grading system plays a pivotal role.
- The parental, societal and peer pressure, besides stiff competition, directly and indirectly controls and interferes the students' performance/career.

**Uday: Which is your favourite topic within your field of teaching and why?**

**Aditya:** Being an EME officer, operation and maintenance engineering is my first choice. However, with my subsequent exposure to aviation, mining, hydropower and railway during research projects and teaching, I moved on to maintenance

performance measurement and management - my PhD topic, developing KPIS for industries, asset performance measurement and ISO 55000, e-Maintenance, maintenance cost and link and effect model etc.

The reason being, for becoming an Associate Professor, one need to do research equivalent second PhD substantiating with research projects, publications in a related area other than ones PhD topic, writing research application and getting research funding, supervising PhD students, undergoing supervision course, good pedagogic skill and international visibility etc.

Similarly, to become a Professor from Associate Professor, one need to do research equivalent third PhD substantiating with research projects, publications in another related area, writing research application and getting research funding, complete supervision of PhD students (start to finish), teaching and good pedagogic skill and international visibility etc.

**Uday: Based on your research and learnings, what would you advise our readers on challenges in this COVID-19 situation?**

**Aditya:** In Sweden, each individual is responsible and everyone follows the guidelines. Here, there is no need of police or others to ensure guidelines or rules. This is also because of one rule theory: the right way or the wrong way. Nothing in between like half-right or half-wrong etc, Chalta hai in India. Sweden is the only country where facemask is never made compulsory except crowded places.

My suggestions and advice to readers are; to follow and educate your near and dear ones and then others to create knowledge and self-awareness with societal value, besides the present laudable Govt. guideline.



*At Professor's installation during University Convocation 2015*



*With Vice-Chancellor after Professor's installation, 2015*

**Uday: How do you find your journey as an Academician so far? Any special mentions?**

**Aditya:** My journey as an academician is quite satisfying and rewarding; and I have achieved more than my expectations. I am grateful to my parents and family for support and imbining the value system.

I am grateful to my teachers for imparting the knowledge and guidance; and my instructors, seniors and colleagues in Army for their support, guidance and trust in me. I have performed very hard thinking outside the box while working in the Army where I commanded detachment, workshops and units from 2nd year of my service.

With these experiences, my sincerity, hard work and self-perseverance, I could achieve and reach here where I am today!

**Uday: What are your future plans going forward?**

**Aditya:** Post retirement, I moved away from active research, publications and journal editing and reviewing, focusing on guidance and support to future generations with spreading knowledge and expertise for the betterment of the society.

I am involved with few NGOs like public library, schools, universities and associations in India and abroad, besides show casing Indian culture to the Swedish society. I keep involving myself with Indian history, meditation and spirituality.



*As Chairman, Indian Association of Luleå, inaugural of First ever Cultural Festival of India in Northern Sweden Aug 2021 with Indian Ambassador*

**Uday: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous journey. Can you share a few from your experience?**

**Aditya: -**

- There is no short cut to hard work and sincerity.
- Believing and trust in self.
- Accommodating self with the changes of time, work environment and situational needs.
- Life is a never-ending learning process. So, "Never stop learning".

**Uday: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up Academics /Education as their second career ?**

**Aditya:** Academic/education is a very challenging career with ever changing technological advancement, especially when the new generation students are smart and their IQ level is high.

One need to do a genuine introspection and feel that he/she has the requisite skill, qualification, and liking for this profession. One should have:

- A habit or hobby of reading, writing and teaching.
- Preparing self with the required qualification, skill and knowledge.
- Keeping self-up-to-date with technology and technological developments.
- Never stop learning.



*Independence Day 2021 Celebration away from home*

**Uday:** Do you have any other hobbies or interests, which you pursue passionately? And how?

**Aditya:** Besides reading, writing and teaching, my hobbies have been; traveling and visit places. I have visited more than 40 countries and extensively northern Scandinavia, Social service, history, spirituality and culture, morning walk & trekking, gardening, spending time with grandchildren..

I could travel a number of countries participating in various International Conferences, Congresses as part of my profession and could visit Europe extensively, and northern Scandinavia by road due to my location in this part of the world.



**Capt Uday K Shriwas** was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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## ADVERTORIAL - From HUM FAUJI INITIATIVES



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### 5 Financial mistakes you just cannot afford to make!

All of us make mistakes knowingly or unknowingly. Financial mistakes usually occur when we take money matters for granted or when we ignore our finances for a long time. The after effects of committing such financial mistakes can be extremely detrimental to our financial health and can even deprive us of all the luxuries that we enjoy today.

And what could such major mistakes be?

**Making ad hoc investment decisions:** Many people invest their savings without proper planning or worse still, based on 'tips' from friends or relatives. As a result, most of these investments result in a mess. Although, investing your hard-earned money is imperative to achieve your financial requirements, only those investments should be done which suit your financial goals and risk appetite. Making ad hoc investments can erode your savings and create a mess of your finances. If you cannot do it yourself for whatever reason, take the help of a good financial advisor who is well qualified and understands financial markets. Also be careful to seek services from the one who is unbiased and would adopt as much care and prudence as he would to manage his own finances.

**Having more debt than one can handle:** One of the gravest financial mistakes that people usually make is increasing their debt obligations excessively. Due to the immediate gratification that one gets on purchasing things, credit cards are being over used. One must borrow money only if there is really a need to. For instance, if you have several crucial financial responsibilities (such as children's education, marriage etc.) for which you have not saved enough as yet, taking debt for other less important goals (such as buying a car) should be delayed.

**Lack of adequate contingency reserves:** Life can sometimes give us unpleasant surprises when we least expect them. Contingency reserves (or emergency funds) are a means to take care of you and your family's expenses during an emergency situation, such as a job loss, markets crashing, medical emergency or any other unfortunate event that comes with an economic loss for some time. For these reasons it is advised that you must keep about 3-6 months of your regular expenses in a savings bank account or liquid funds.

**Being under insured:** Remember that none of your dreams or wishes that you have towards your family might be fulfilled if something unforeseen happens to you, especially if you are the only earning member in the family. Most people do not give priority to their insurance needs and look at insurance as just another investing avenue. You need to have the right amount of insurance cover and the right policy so as to protect yourself and you family from financial losses or uncertainties. We believe term insurance policy is the only insurance to take - never mix your investment and insurance needs. Also remember to buy a suitable health insurance policy if you need it, as medical and hospitalisation bills can sometimes lead to a financial turmoil.

**Not doing estate planning:** Most of the people believe that they are too young to write a Will or they have a lot of time left to do it. While being optimistic is a good thing, it is important for you to know that dying intestate (without preparing a will) can lead to various complications and disagreements among your heirs or literally incapacitate your family. You can't even imagine the mess and inconvenience that might be caused to your loved ones because of your laziness in not drafting a will for them. It is prudent to make provisions to leave behind assets from the very first day you acquire one.

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ALREADY MORE THAN 3200+ ARMED FORCES OFFICERS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE DISCOVERING THE BENEFITS OF FAUJI NETWORKING

# Women Power

Spouses of Defence Officers as well as those who have donned the uniform of the defence services, have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such spouses of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

## **IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS**

**Ms Monika Kacker is an educationist, facilitator and storyteller. She has taught and trained in diverse environments in India and abroad for almost 20 years. A B.Ed, B.Com(Hons), Monika is also invested in many outreach programs and has been actively designing and integrating activities beyond the classroom. She has worked with DLF foundation, children cancer warriors, children of under privileged sections of the society. She is twice recipient of AWWA (Army Wives Welfare Association) Awards. A freelance trainer, she is an Army wife and is trying her hands at writing too.**



## **Uday: Please tell us about yourself and what you do?**

**Monica:** I get up every day with twinkle in my eyes and with a purposive belief in my heart. I am an educationist, teacher's facilitator and storyteller. My last assignment was as a teacher in Vasant Valley School - Delhi. I am a B.Ed and a graduate in B.Com(Hons) from Delhi University, and have done my Masters in Psychology, Diploma in Early Life and Education and Certificate in guidance and many other courses to which helps me to understand the early learners better. I have been trained in storytelling by Geeta Ramanujan of "Kathalaya" the International Academy of Storytelling, Bangalore (Affiliated to Tennessee USA, Edinburgh and Sweden). Completing seven years of association with Oxford University Press (OUP), I have developed an in-depth understanding of many programs and pedagogies and is presently intensively working on Oxford Advantage. Updated with the knowledge of NEP 2020, ECCE and other new educational policies, goals and its implementation, I have an understanding of CENTA standards and what goes into transacting these to prospective teachers and empowering them. I do conducts sessions on the topics like:

- Developing thinking Skills Through Story Telling
- Early life progression and intervention
- Second language acquisition
- Integration and Thematic Curriculum
- Components Of An Effective Lesson Plan
- Phonics And Activity Based Classroom



- 21st Century teaching learning skills
- The Art of Conscious Parenting
- Effective Communication
- Inclusivity in the classroom
- Positive Class Management
- Motivating teachers for change
- Components Of An Effective Reading Program
- Mind Mapping for comprehensive thinking and planning

I am also invested in many outreach programs and has been actively designing and integrating activities beyond the classroom. I have also worked with DLF foundation, children cancer warriors, children of underprivileged sections of the society. I am also a recipient of AWWA (Army Wives Welfare Association) Awards for my work.

I have led the Ganga Project with APS and APPS teachers, and children. This is based on experiential learning and cross curriculum connect is very close to my heart.

**Uday: What is it that inspired you to embark on the journey in the field of Education and Training?**

**Monica:** I have always been a loner and thinker and have always had many WHYS in my system. I think it's my childhood and insecurities in my growing up years that led me to this field.

I wanted to simplify the system and pedagogies for the teachers to run a stimulating class for the children. Developing Thinking Skills through Storytelling is one of my favourite modules.



*Developing Thinking skills through Story telling to under privileged kids*

**Uday: What has been one major change in your life as well as professional career after marriage to an Army Officer?**

**Monica:** Travelling, meeting strangers and learning to adapt are the core ones, but also Army Life gave me so many opportunities to explore myself, find my GPS and made me more confident and independent in my thought process. It changed me from an average goalless one to be a determined passionate woman.

**Uday: How would you like to express the influence of Army life on your profession?**

**Monica:** Teaching was not my 1st choice but the smaller stations only had this opportunity and this turned to be a blessing for me. It also propelled me to study further. Today I am adept with multiple skills, and with the courses under my belt that gives me deeper insights and understanding in my areas of interest. The journey has been beautiful- from an educator to a trainer to a storyteller and probably now a writer of short stories and poems.

**Uday: Would you like to share the details of your professional world?**

**Monica:** I work with many organisations like Oxford University Press, DLF Foundation and Projects with interesting people. I lap up any opportunity to do different things and a fully blocked calendar, a sense of purpose each day, gives me a high. I call myself a TALKING SUITCASE as I travel throughout India training and telling my tales.



*Working with a sense of purpose gives me a high*

**Uday: How has been the journey so far and any stories from your work life you wish to share?**

**Monica:** My most interesting experiences have been at airports, railway stations and listening to the stories of cab drivers and their life. I plan to write about this at some point of time.

**Uday: Where do you operate from and how do you tackle the challenges of striking the work-life balance?**

**Monica:** I work from home on my wish and space. I am fortunate to have full support of my husband. Sometimes its not easy to juggle so many things, but I mindmap and create my own deadlines. When my sons were growing up things were different but now I spend a lot of time with myself. Reading, writing, mind mapping and narrating has become a part of my daily activities and gives me so much joy.

**Uday: Any other challenges you have faced so far, on the way to establishing yourself?**

**Monica:** The moment I settle down its time to move, but I have got used to this nomadic way of life. I also met some people who questioned my work, style and wanted me to fit the template.

**Uday: And, how did you overcome these challenges?**

**Monica:** By making the most of it, wrapping and boxing my stories and projects for another station and by apologetically being me. Meeting strangers, eating the local food, learning from them has become a part of me.



*Training Teachers*

**Uday: What are your plans for the future?**

**Monica:** As my husband retires in couple of years, I look forward to finally settle down and get into sponsoring 20 kids slowly from home and full time write short stories. I also want to feed people with love and reach out to people with my stories. I want to travel places, meet strangers, eat local food, get into literature circles.

**Uday: How did COVID-19 situation affect your professional life?**

**Monica:** A dynamic upskilling happened for me. I moved from being a face to face trainer to virtual trainer and built on my digital competencies. I watched nature very closely and it inspired me to understand life better and I became close to myself. On a personal front I got an opportunity to look after my ailing parents.

**Uday: What advice do you have, especially for spouses of defense officers, who aspire to be similarly independent?**

**Monica:** Just be yourself and have a firm belief in yourself and the organization. Build on your strength and lead others to do the same. Don't buckle down to pressure and don't try to fit in. We all are unique in own ways, just build on your skills, be proud of it and reach out to create a harmonious environment.



*For Nature's cause*

**Uday: What's your one Big Dream and why? How you plan to fulfil your dream?**

**Monica:** A beautiful space and plan where I can sponsor 20 children and take care of their needs. And my book where I unfurl my story and experiences.

**Uday: We wish your Big Dreams comes true soon.**



**Capt Uday K Shriwas** was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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# Stars On The Horizon

Children of Defence Officers have the capability to excel in various fields, owing to their extensive exposure resulting from frequent transfers and change of stations. They possess very high adaptability skills, and immense potential as individuals. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such children of the members of Forces Network who are on the path to carve a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

## **IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY SHRIWAS**

**Ms Isha Prabhakar** is a Recruiting Lead for Microsoft APAC Australia. Educated in Lady Shri Ram College for women with a degree in English Literature, she has built a career in the field of recruiting. She has worked for some of the top tech companies in the world and has hired across multiple geographies. A self-proclaimed extrovert, she is passionate about fitness, public speaking and travelling far and wide in the search of good food and adventure. Her father is a retired Army Officer from 15 Mechanised Infantry, and mother is a High school teacher.



**Uday: Please tell us about your childhood and the life you spent in an Army environment. What's the best thing that the Army life teaches you?**

**Isha:** Born in Ahmedabad Army Cantt hospitals, my first memories are those of staying with my parents in Pathankot Cantt when I was 2 years old in a lovely army community that felt like family. My dad was subsequently posted to Wellington and Kapurthala, each location where I joined new schools, made new friends, experienced different lifestyles and had such varied experiences, all of it with the backdrop of a vibrant army life - the weekly evening parties where we would play games in the kids' rooms, the Holi parties, the lazy and luxurious Sunday picnics and movie evenings.

I pride myself on my extraversion and ability to strike up a conversation with anyone and I thrive among strangers. This penchant for meeting new people, making connections and creating a sense of belonging for myself in unfamiliar situations, can be credited to the formative years that I spent navigating new places and people during the various postings.



*Me in garden at our house in Pathankot*

**Uday: What has been your childhood dream and any specific moments from your early childhood which are inked in your memories related to that dream?**

**Isha:** - I have never thought of myself as being typically ambitious. I have always been more of a 'go with the flow' kind of person with the intention of always finding joy in everything I do and giving my family a reason to be proud of me while being true to myself and passion.

When I was younger, I pictured myself as an outgoing, independent woman, with a penchant for public speaking and a great fashion sense. It wasn't a particular profession that I was chasing, but rather an image of who I wanted to be in this world and how I wanted to be perceived.

As a child also, I would put special attention into making friends, dressing up and occasionally dabbling in my mother's makeup with hilarious outcomes.



*Unknown to mother, I raided her vanity box*

**Uday: As you started your college life what's been your approach (preparation and research) to get closer to your dreams? How was your experience at your college (university)?**

**Isha:** I look at life as a meandering river, flowing in the directions that my heart has taken me, through ever-changing landscapes, gathering experiences, moving slowly or swiftly but always moving onwards.

As a young girl, I loved reading fantasy novels – they transported me to a whole new world of magic and intrigue, where anything is possible, and everything is fantastical, larger than life.

So, at the end of my schooling, I was at crossroads, to choose between an ostensibly more lucrative business/commerce degree or choose my heart's calling – an English Literature degree. I was spoilt for choice in so that I had the option of doing a business degree OR an English degree at the top colleges in Delhi University which made the choice that much harder.

After much reflection and conversations with experienced folks, I decided to follow my heart and take up English Literature at Lady Shri Ram College For Women, where I could bury myself in more books and beautiful stories, much to the consternation of my parents who thought that no-one would hire a Literature grad in a high paying job.

While I truly enjoyed the range of books and stories that I read, I was surprised that the most rewarding part of the experience was not the books but the experiences that come with University education – the overachieving, extremely brilliant peers from across the country, the wonderful and inspiring professors, the post college adventures exploring Delhi for the first time without parental supervision, the volunteer work I did with underprivileged children, the opportunity to play different characters on stage as part of the Drama Society and much more..

That is when I realized that life was so much more than the academics, it was a quest for new experiences. The exposure I received in college helped me learn an important life lesson that stays with me – that as the protagonist of my own fantastical life story, it was up to me to create magic and intrigue in my life, seek out varied experiences and unlock my superpowers through these experiences. My dream is to build a life full of joy and contentment surrounded by the people I love.



*As heroine of the show, I was thrilled, to be the protagonist of my own fantastical tale*

**Uday: How did you prepare for your career in the college of your choosing?**

**Isha :** While in college, I did not have a very clear idea of who I wanted to be in the world but that picture of the strong, independent, outgoing woman that I wanted to be, stayed with me.

In this pursuit, I thought of many different career paths – journalism, full time theater, writer, academician or climb the corporate in an MNC – in that order of preference. I spoke to a few professionals including my father, who by that time had already switched to a corporate career from the Army and was thriving in a new dynamic environment – and even did a stint in Europe. This propelled me to start thinking of a corporate career as a viable & lucrative career option to follow – where I could also play by my strengths – people skills.

As an Arts student with a literature degree, I did not hold a particularly monetizable degree so with no other ideas in mind, I did what every student with a will to get a job does – I started preparing to take the CAT exam and became an MBA aspirant while simultaneously seeking jobs through our college placement portal. Most organizations were looking for Commerce and Economics graduates and there weren't many takers for students with arts degrees like mine, but I still persevered and applied for all the jobs, not getting shortlisted for a single interview – except one for a recruiting role with DE Shaw, a tech investment firm that I had never heard of.

I was waitlisted for the DE Shaw role as they preferred an Economics graduate over me who accepted the offer in the winter of 2012 to join in July of 2013. I also forgot about this missed opportunity and went on with my MBA prep however, as luck would have it, she rejected the offer two weeks before joining the role and when I least expected it, they made an offer to me to move to Hyderabad within two weeks and join them as an Associate Recruiter. That is exactly what I did, moving to a new city for a new job at the age of 20 and I have never looked back since. This propelled me into the world of corporate recruiting in the tech industry.

The key learning's through this entire experience were career path:

- Every rejection is a learning opportunity so take the plunge every single time and don't be afraid of rejection/failure.
- You may not always be in control of every situation but instead of worrying about it, persevere with good intention. Life will eventually fall into place and every move you made, consciously or unconsciously, will start making sense.

**Uday: It is evident that you decided to follow a certain path in your career? Any reasons?**

**Isha:** My career took my places from Recruiting for DE Shaw, I went on to work with Uber as their 80th India employee in India, setting up entire teams and then moved to Microsoft where I first worked for the India team and am currently hiring for the APAC region, with an impending move to Singapore, delayed due to COVID travel restrictions, but nevertheless on the horizon.

What started as a nothing more than a fateful series of events landing me that first job, let me to find my calling in the world of recruiting and build a career which spans across 8 years, three organizations and multiple geographies. It also had the opportunity to travel to travel to locations like Sikkim, Himachal, Goa, Mumbai, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Taiwan, Seattle and more through my work journeys, experiencing different cultures, meeting new people and

All I had was this vision of the kind of person I wanted to be, and my career journey has been reflective of my desire to gain new experiences, challenging myself and independently traversing life, finding joy in the people and opportunities around me.



Through my corporate career, I have seen some ups and downs to one thing I learnt early on and applied is taking risks and not fearing failure. I quit a job without a plan B when I couldn't find happiness or growth in the role anymore. I took some time to reflect and persevered through a fresh job search, eventually landing myself a much better opportunity. Even in my current job, I have picked up challenging projects, some of which were successful and others not so much, but every step of the way has been a learning opportunity, helping me mature professionally and personally.



*My first solo business trip, courtesy Uber, San Francisco, California"*

**Uday: Would you like to talk about mentors and teachers who have guided you through your journey? And why you think mentors or teachers are important in our life?**

**Isha:** My parents have been a huge influence in my career path. They have been my teachers and my biggest cheerleader, always encouraging me to follow my heart and motivating me to do my best in whatever I chose to do. I consulted my father before choosing the next steps after college and his advice was pivotal in me choosing a career path in the field of Human Resources and moving so far away from home to pursue it.

I also believe that good teachers and mentors can elevate one's interest in a certain field and motivate you to unlock your potential. I understood the

importance of mentors when I started working at Microsoft. My first Manager at Microsoft continues to be my mentor. She pushed me and challenged my assumptions, course corrected me and guided me on how I could optimize my learning through the various projects assigned to me. She identified my strengths, taught me how to leverage them and create my personal brand in the organization, thus setting me up for success. She advised me on the skills that I should be learning and gave me feedback on my progress too. Most importantly, she motivated me to apply for an international career opportunity, which I myself didn't think I would be able to do but applied for, because of her advice and got the job.

A mentor can be anyone – a manager, a senior colleague, someone with more experience in the same industry who can add so much value by providing you a fresh point of view on your challenge, help you make big career decisions, give you honest feedback and help you improve continuously without judging you.

I would also be keen to find myself a career coach or life coach as I become more senior and possibly coach folks who are beginning their corporate journey and need advice.

### **Uday: Any special memories of your time spent with your Army Cantonment Friends?**

**Isha:** Ah, where do I even begin! First and foremost, the best thing about Army Cantonment, is the Cantonment itself, with vast expanses of open spaces speckled with greenery and a sense of wonder, the safety, comfort and all the facilities like sports complexes, mess and more. What I took for granted then, seems like a resort-like luxury today as I look around the concrete jungle (Delhi) which I now call my home.

One of the best things about Army life was all the fun things that we did with friends who were like family. When we lived in Kapurthala, every day was a new adventure. Somedays we would skate or cycle to the nearby shopping complex and on other days play on swings in the park or play hide and seek at others houses or find ourselves in the 'TV' rooms of messes while our parents were partying with the other officer. The Raising Day event was my absolute favorite as we would enjoy three days of festivities - indulging in and watch our parents play funny games during Pagal gymkhana, BMP and tank rides and the Gala evening where we would dance the night away to Vengaboys' Brazil.

I still love dancing at parties, but my love for dancing began at those Raising day and New Years parties. These parties also turned me into the extrovert that I am and helped me hone my people skills very early on, navigating the range of friendships I nurtured during my days in the Cantts.



*Me with father, dancing away at 15 Mech Infantry Raising Day*

**Uday: There is a huge potential, especially in fauji Kids What would be your message for them?**

**Isha:** Fauji kids learn to adapt to new environments very early on, taking change in their stride and making friends wherever they go, adjusting and learning and unafraid of the unfamiliar. They also gain such a variety of experiences at an early age which helps them develop a well-rounded personality. This becomes an asset as I have seen most Army kids have impressive personalities and a certain ease with which they handle social situations.

My message for them would be to recognize their strengths, hone in on them as these key life skills that they develop at such an early age make them stand out and are the secret sauce that will create the perfect recipe for success in whichever field they choose.

**Uday: Would you like to tell us about your achievements in your professional world?**

**Isha:** As I have called out previously, my professional life, while has been all of eight years, has had its shares of ups and downs but I am grateful for the immense learning through all of it which has made it all worth it. Upon reflecting, some of the most rewarding achievements of my career have been:

Bagging my first job at DE Shaw and paving way for myself in the world of tech recruiting. When I started out, I was perplexed by simple tools like Outlook and PPT and had a tough time transitioning into this new environment, however I received immense exposure to recruiting in India and the US, thus making good use of it.

Recruiting at Uber as an early stage start up – scaling the size of the org by 8X, hiring across various business domains across India. I also initiated, built and scaled the first ever University Recruiting program for Uber in India from ground up – creating a brand for this new organization on the block at the top colleges in the country and bringing in valuable talent back. This also led me to find my passion in University Recruiting, which continued into my next role at Microsoft.

At Microsoft, I have had the opportunity to delve into University Recruiting at a massive scale, supporting hiring and experience for thousands of fresh graduates year on year. I am particularly proud of the creative and strategic insights that I brought into this job, creating platforms to mentor and engage with students beyond just the hiring, elevating the Microsoft brand.

I was cherry picked to be the Executive Business Manager for the Asia Recruiting Leadership team, gaining exposure to Asia level leadership strategy, providing fresh perspectives on their challenges, leading some of the key strategic priorities at Asia level including talent development and culture immersion for the team and the leaders.

I have been recognized for my efforts at a regional and global level and I am so grateful for

Every year of my career journey has brought new challenges and the beginning of every new challenge been tough. A few times, I have even felt like giving up on the challenge at hand, but I always like to remind myself of the support systems, my own capability and perseverance and that failure is never to be feared.



*At Microsoft Headquarters – Seattle*

**Uday: Anything that you would like to add as a learning from your vast experience of having interviewed candidates from different countries and varied cultures?**

**Isha:** While it is important to showcase your skills and abilities during an interview, these three (not-so – secret but super helpful) tips will help you stand out among the crowd and give you an edge:

**Do your research before an interview** – Thoroughly learn about the company – their biggest bets in the last few years, their business strategy (whatever may be available online), key products and any recent news about the company. If possible, also learn a little bit about the interviewer through LinkedIn so that you can find common topics or devise questions around their position or career journey during the interview.

**Well Rounded representation of yourself** – Your interview is not a place for you to brag about your achievements (nobody enjoys talking to a bragger) but rather a pitch yourself as a well-rounded individual who has done some great work but has had their fair share of learnings/failures. Talk about your learnings from your experiences to showcase your humility and eagerness to learn. Organizations are looking for dynamic



*Addressing young engineers, giving them career advice at Microsoft*

individuals who can learn, grow and adapt with the ever-changing landscape of the world, thus your ability to showcase your ability to take risks, learn and adapt would be valuable.

**Build a rapport** – Your interviewer is looking to hire people who can not only get the job done but will also be a great team player and encourage a good environment in the workplace, improving team morale and increasing productivity. Being affable, approachable, and easy to talk to during an interview will give you brownie points.

**Uday:** Thank you Isha, Your tips would be a motivation and guidance for many.



**Capt Uday K Shriwas** was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

**Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Article, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor**

# Tech Corner

## Cyber Security: A Primer - Part IV

**BY ATUL KUMAR**

*(This is going to be a six article series on the subject, starting Aug 2021.*

*This is the Fourth part of the Article in the series by the Author)*

In the article in last month's edition we navigated through different usage of internet and allied security issues. This month we will understand about web browsers and on line activities on web..

### UNDERSTANDING WEB BROWSERS



#### How do web browsers work?

A web browser is an application that finds and displays web pages. It coordinates communication between your computer and the web server where a particular website "resides".

When you open your browser and type in a web address (URL) for a website, the browser submits a request to the server, or servers, that provide the content for that page. The browser then processes the code from the server (written in a language such as HTML, JavaScript, or XML) and loads any other elements (such as Flash, Java, or ActiveX) that are necessary to generate content for the page. After the browser has gathered and processed all of the components, it displays the complete, formatted web page. Every time you perform an action on the page, such as clicking buttons and following links, the browser continues the process of requesting, processing, and presenting content.

## **How many browsers are there?**

There are many different browsers. Most users are familiar with graphical browsers, which display both text and graphics and may also display multimedia elements such as sound or video clips. However, there are also text-based browsers. The following are some well-known browsers:-

- Internet Explorer
- Firefox
- Chrome
- Opera
- Safari - a browser specifically designed for Macintosh computers
- Lynx - a text-based browser desirable for vision-impaired users because of the availability of special devices that read the text

## **How do you choose a browser?**

A browser is usually included with the installation of your operating system, but you are not restricted to that choice. Some of the factors to consider when deciding which browser best suits your needs include

- Compatibility - Does the browser work with your operating system?
- Security - Do you feel that your browser offers you the level of security you want?
- Ease of use - Are the menus and options easy to understand and use?
- Functionality - Does the browser interpret web content correctly? If you need to install other plug-ins or devices to translate certain types of content, do they work?
- Appeal - Do you find the interface and way the browser interprets web content visually appealing?

## **Can you have more than one browser installed at the same time?**

If you decide to change your browser or add another one, you don't have to uninstall the browser that's currently on your computer—you can have more than one browser on your computer at once. However, you will be prompted to choose one as your default browser. Anytime you follow a link in an email message or document, or you double-click a shortcut to a web page on your desktop, the page will open using your default browser. You can manually open the page in another browser.

Most vendors give you the option to download their browsers directly from their websites. Make sure to verify the authenticity of the site before downloading any files. To further minimize risk, follow other good security practices, like using a firewall and keeping anti-virus software up to date.

## **Why are security settings for web browsers important?**

Your web browser is your primary connection to the rest of the internet, and multiple applications may rely on your browser, or elements within your browser, to function. This makes the security settings within your browser even more important. Many web applications try to enhance your browsing experience by enabling different types of functionality, but this functionality might be unnecessary and may leave you

susceptible to being attacked. The safest policy is to disable the majority of those features unless you decide they are necessary. If you determine that a site is trustworthy, you can choose to enable the functionality temporarily and then disable it once you are finished visiting the site.

### Where can you find the settings?

Each web browser is different, so you may have to look around. For example, in Internet Explorer, you can find them by clicking Tools on your menu bar, selecting Internet Options..., choosing the Security tab, and clicking the Custom Level... button. However, in Firefox, you click Tools on the menu bar and select Options.... Click the Content, Privacy, and Security tabs to explore the basic security options. Browsers have different security options and configurations, so familiarize yourself with the menu options, check the help feature, or refer to the vendor's web site.

While every application has settings that are selected by default, you may discover that your



*Web Browser's Security Settings*

browser also has predefined security levels that you can select. For example, Internet Explorer offers custom settings that allow you to select a particular level of security; features are enabled or disabled based on your selection. Even with these guides, it is helpful to have an understanding of what the different terms mean so that you can evaluate the features to determine which settings are appropriate for you.

### How do you know what your settings should be?

Ideally, you would set your security for the highest level possible. However, restricting certain features may limit some web pages from loading or functioning properly. The best approach is to adopt the highest level of security and only enable features when you require their functionality.

### What do the different terms mean?

Different browsers use different terms, but here are some terms and options you may find:

**Zones** - Your browser may give you the option of putting web sites into different segments, or zones, and allow you to define different security restrictions for each zone. For example, Internet Explorer identifies the following zones:-

- **Internet** - This is the general zone for all public web sites. When you browse the internet, the settings for this zone are automatically applied to the sites you visit. To give you the best protection as you browse, you should set the security to the highest level; at the very least, you should maintain a medium level.



- **Local intranet** - If you are in an office setting that has its own intranet, this zone contains those internal pages. Because the web content is maintained on an internal web server, it is usually safe to have less restrictive settings for these pages. However, some viruses have tapped into this zone, so be aware of what sites are listed and what privileges they are being given.
- **Trusted sites** - If you believe that certain sites are designed with security in mind, and you feel that content from the site can be trusted not to contain malicious materials, you can add them to your trusted sites and apply settings accordingly. You may also require that only sites that implement Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) can be active in this zone. This permits you to verify that the site you are visiting is the site that it claims to be. This is an optional zone but may be useful if you personally maintain multiple web sites or if your organization has multiple sites. Even if you trust them, avoid applying low security levels to external sites—if they are attacked, you might also become a victim.
- **Restricted sites** - If there are particular sites you think might not be safe, you can identify them and define heightened security settings. Because the security settings may not be enough to protect you, the best precaution is to avoid navigating to any sites that make you question whether or not they're safe.

**JavaScript** - Some web sites rely on web scripts such as JavaScript to achieve a certain appearance or functionality, but these scripts may be used in attacks.

**Java and ActiveX controls** - These programs are used to develop or execute active content that provides some functionality, but they may put you at risk.

**Plug-ins** - Sometimes browsers require the installation of additional software known as plug-ins to provide additional functionality. Like Java and ActiveX controls, plug-ins may be used in an attack, so before installing them, make sure that they are necessary and that the site you have to download them from is trustworthy.

You may also find options that allow you to take the following security measures:

**Manage cookies** - You can disable, restrict, or allow cookies as appropriate. Generally, it is best to disable cookies and then enable them if you visit a site you trust that requires them.

**Block pop-up windows** - Although turning this feature on could restrict the functionality of certain web sites, it will also minimize the number of pop-up ads you receive, some of which may be malicious.

## What is active content?

To increase functionality or add design embellishments, web sites often rely on scripts that execute programs within the web browser. This active content can be used to create "splash pages" or options like drop-down menus. Unfortunately, these scripts are often a way for attackers to download or execute malicious code on a user's computer.



**JavaScript** - JavaScript is just one of many web scripts (other examples are VBScript, ECMA Script, and JScript) and is probably the most recognized. Used on almost every web site now, JavaScript and other scripts are popular because users expect the functionality and "look" that it provides, and it's easy to incorporate (many common software programs for building web sites have the capability to add JavaScript features with little effort or knowledge required of the user). However, because of these reasons, attackers can manipulate it to their own purposes. A popular type of attack that relies on JavaScript involves redirecting users from a legitimate web site to a malicious one that may download viruses or collect personal information.

**Java and ActiveX controls** - Different from JavaScript, Java and ActiveX controls are actual programs that reside on your computer or can be downloaded over the network into your browser. If executed by attackers, untrustworthy ActiveX controls may be able to do anything on your computer that you can do (such as running spyware and collecting personal information, connecting to other computers, and potentially doing other damage). Java applets usually run in a more restricted environment, but if that environment isn't secure, then malicious Java applets may create opportunities for attack as well.

JavaScript and other forms of active content are not always dangerous, but they are common tools for attackers. You can prevent active content from running in most browsers, but realize that the added security may limit functionality and break features of some sites you visit. Before clicking on a link to a web site that you are not familiar with or do not trust, take the precaution of disabling active content.

These same risks may also apply to the email program you use. Many email clients use the same programs as web browsers to display HTML, so vulnerabilities that affect active content like JavaScript and ActiveX often apply to email. Viewing messages as plain text may resolve this problem.

## What are cookies?

When you browse the Internet, information about your computer may be collected and stored. This information might be general information about your computer (such

as IP address, the domain you used to connect (e.g., .edu, .com, .net), and the type of browser you used). It might also be more specific information about your browsing habits (such as the last time you visited a particular web site or your personal preferences for viewing that site).

Cookies can be saved for varying lengths of time:

**Session cookies** - Session cookies store information only as long as you're using the browser; once you close the browser, the information is erased. The primary purpose of session cookies is to help with navigation, such as by indicating whether or not you've already visited a particular page and retaining information about your preferences once you've visited a page.

**Persistent cookies** - Persistent cookies are stored on your computer so that your personal preferences can be retained. In most browsers, you can adjust the length of time that persistent cookies are stored. It is because of these cookies that your email address appears by default when you open your Yahoo! or Gmail account, or your personalized home page appears when you visit your favorite online merchant. If an attacker gains access to your computer, he or she may be able to gather personal information about you through these files.

To increase your level of security, consider adjusting your privacy and security settings to block or limit cookies in your web browser. To make sure that other sites are not collecting personal information about you without your knowledge, choose to only allow cookies for the web site you are visiting; block or limit cookies from a third-party. If you are using a public computer, you should make sure that cookies are disabled to prevent other people from accessing or using your personal information.

## ***Understanding Web Site Certificates***



### **What are web site certificates?**

If an organization wants to have a secure web site that uses encryption, it needs to obtain a site, or host, certificate. Some steps you can take to help determine if a site uses encryption are to look for a closed padlock in the status bar at the bottom of your browser window and to look for "https:" rather than "http:" in the URL. By making sure a web site encrypts your information and has a valid certificate, you can help protect yourself against attackers who create malicious sites to gather your information.

If a web site has a valid certificate, it means that a certificate authority has taken steps to verify that the web address actually belongs to that organization. When you type a URL or follow a link to a secure web site, your browser will check the certificate for the following characteristics:

- Web site address matches the address on the certificate
- Certificate is signed by a certificate authority that the browser recognizes as a "trusted" authority

### **Can you trust a certificate?**

The level of trust you put in a certificate is connected to how much you trust the organization and the certificate authority. If the web address matches the address on the certificate, the certificate is signed by a trusted certificate authority, and the date is valid, you can be more confident that the site you want to visit is actually the site that you are visiting. However, unless you personally verify that certificate's unique fingerprint by calling the organization directly, there is no way to be absolutely sure.

When you trust a certificate, you are essentially trusting the certificate authority to verify the organization's identity for you. However, it is important to realize that certificate authorities vary in how strict they are about validating all of the information in the requests and about making sure that their data is secure. By default, your browser contains a list of more than 100 trusted certificate authorities. That means that, by extension, you are trusting all of those certificate authorities to properly verify and validate the information. Before submitting any personal information, you may want to look at the certificate.

### **How do you check a certificate?**

There are two ways to verify a web site's certificate in Internet Explorer or Mozilla. One option is to click on the padlock in the status bar of your browser window. However, your browser may not display the status bar by default. Also, attackers may be able to create malicious web sites that fake a padlock icon and display a false dialog window if you click that icon. A more secure way to find information about the certificate is to look for the certificate feature in the menu options. This information may be under the file properties or the security option within the page information. You will get a dialog box with information about the certificate, including the following:

**Who issued the certificate** - You should make sure that the issuer is a legitimate, trusted certificate authority (you may see names like VeriSign, thawte, or Entrust). Some organizations also have their own certificate authorities that they use to issue certificates to internal sites such as intranets.

**Who the certificate is issued to** - The certificate should be issued to the organization who owns the web site. Do not trust the certificate if the name on the certificate does not match the name of the organization or person you expect.

**Expiration date** - Most certificates are issued for one or two years. One exception is the certificate for the certificate authority itself, which, because of the amount of involvement necessary to distribute the information to all of the organizations who hold its certificates, may be ten years. Be wary of organizations with certificates that are valid for longer than two years or with certificates that have expired.

When visiting a web site, you may have been presented with a dialog box that claims that there is an error with the site certificate. This may happen if the name the certificate is registered to do not match the site name, you have chosen not to trust the company who issued the certificate, or the certificate has expired. You will usually be presented with the option to examine the certificate, after which you can accept the certificate forever, accept it only for that particular visit, or choose not to accept it. The confusion is sometimes easy to resolve (perhaps the certificate was issued to a particular department within the organization rather than the name on file). If you are unsure whether the certificate is valid or question the security of the site, do not submit personal information. Even if the information is encrypted, make sure to read the organization's privacy policy first so that you know what is being done with that information.

## UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONALIZED DOMAIN NAMES



### What are internationalized domain names?

To decrease the amount of confusion surrounding different languages, there is a standard for domain names within web browsers. Domain names are included in the URL (or web address) of web site. This standard is based on the Roman alphabet (which is used by the English language), and computers convert the various letters into numerical equivalents. This code is known as ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange). However, other languages include characters that do not translate into this code, which is why internationalized domain names were introduced.

To compensate for languages that incorporate special characters (such as Spanish, French or German) or rely completely on character representation (such as Asian or Arabic languages), a new system had to be developed. In this new system, the base URL (which is usually the address for the home page) is dissected and converted into a format that is compatible with ASCII. The resulting URL (which contains the string "xn--" as well as a combination of letters and numbers) will appear in your browser's status bar. In newer versions of many browsers, it will also appear in the address bar.

### **What are some security concerns?**

Attackers may be able to take advantage of internationalized domain names to initiate phishing attacks. Because there are certain characters that may appear to be the same but have different ASCII codes (for example, the Cyrillic "a" and the Latin "a"), an attacker may be able to "spoof" a web page URL. Instead of going to a legitimate site, you may be directed to a malicious site, which could look identical to the real one. If you submit personal or financial information while on the malicious site, the attacker could collect that information and then use and/or sell it.

### **How can you protect yourself?**

**Type a URL instead of following a link** - Typing a URL into a browser rather than clicking a link within a web page or email message will minimize your risk. By doing this, you are more likely to visit the legitimate site rather than a malicious site that substitutes similar-looking characters.

**Keep your browser up to date** - Older versions of browsers made it easier for attackers to spoof URLs, but most new browsers incorporate certain protections. Instead of displaying the URL that you "think" you are visiting, most browsers now display the converted URL with the "xn--" string.

**Check your browser's status bar** - If you move your mouse over a link on a web page, the status bar of your browser will usually display the URL that the link reference. If you see a URL that has an unexpected domain name (such as one with the "xn--" string mentioned above), you have likely encountered an internationalized domain name. If you were not expecting an internationalized domain name or know that the legitimate site should not need one, you may want to reconsider visiting the site.

Browsers such as Mozilla and Firefox include an option in their security settings about whether to allow the status bar text to be modified. To prevent attackers from taking advantage of JavaScript to make it appear that you are on a legitimate site, you may want to make sure this option is not enabled.



## *Shopping Safely Online*

### **Why do online shoppers have to take special precautions?**

The Internet offers a convenience that is not available from any other shopping outlet. From the comfort of your home, you can search for items from countless vendors, compare prices with a few simple mouse clicks, and make purchases without waiting in line. However, the Internet is also convenient for attackers, giving them multiple ways to access the personal and financial information of unsuspecting shoppers. Attackers who are able to obtain this information may use it for their own financial gain, either by making purchases themselves or by selling the information to someone else.

### **How do attackers target online shoppers?**

There are three common ways that attackers can take advantage of online shoppers:

**Targeting vulnerable computers** - If you do not take steps to protect your computer from viruses or other malicious code, an attacker may be able to gain access to your computer and all of the information on it. It is also important for vendors to protect their computers to prevent attackers from accessing customer databases.

**Creating fraudulent sites and email messages** - Unlike traditional shopping, where you know that a store is actually the store it claims to be, attackers can create malicious web sites that mimic legitimate ones or create email messages that appear to have been sent from a legitimate source. Charities may also be misrepresented in this way, especially after natural disasters or during holiday seasons. Attackers create these malicious sites and email messages to try to convince you to supply personal and financial information.

**Intercepting insecure transactions** - If a vendor does not use encryption, an attacker may be able to intercept your information as it is being transmitted.

## How can you protect yourself?

- **Use and maintain anti-virus software, a firewall, and anti-spyware software** - Protect yourself against viruses and Trojan horses that may steal or modify the data on your own computer and leave you vulnerable by using anti-virus software and a firewall. Make sure to keep your virus definitions up to date. Spyware or adware hidden in software programs may also give attackers access to your data, so use a legitimate anti-spyware program to scan your computer and remove any of these files.
- **Keep software, particularly your web browser, up to date** - Install software patches so that attackers cannot take advantage of known problems or vulnerabilities. Many operating systems offer automatic updates. If this option is available, you should enable it.
- **Evaluate your software's settings** - The default settings of most software enable all available functionality. However, attackers may be able to take advantage of this functionality to access your computer. It is especially important to check the settings for software that connects to the Internet (browsers, email clients, etc.). Apply the highest level of security available that still gives you the functionality you need.
- **Do business with reputable vendors** - Before providing any personal or financial information, make sure that you are interacting with a reputable, established vendor. Some attackers may try to trick you by creating malicious web sites that appear to be legitimate, so you should verify the legitimacy before supplying any information. Locate and note phone numbers and physical addresses of vendors in case there is a problem with your transaction or your bill.
- **Take advantage of security features** - Passwords and other security features add layers of protection if used appropriately.
- **Be wary of emails requesting information** - Attackers may attempt to gather information by sending emails requesting that you confirm purchase or account information. Legitimate businesses will not solicit this type of information through email.
- **Check privacy policies** - Before providing personal or financial information, check the web site's privacy policy. Make sure you understand how your information will be stored and used.



- Make sure your information is being encrypted - Many sites use SSL, or secure sockets layer, to encrypt information. Indications that your information will be encrypted include a URL that begins with "https:" instead of "http:" and a padlock icon.
- Use a credit card - There are laws to limit your liability for fraudulent credit card charges, and you may not have the same level of protection for your debit card. Additionally, because a debit card draws money directly from your bank account, unauthorized charges could leave you with insufficient funds to pay other bills. You can further minimize damage by using a single credit card with a low credit line for all of your online purchases.
- Check your statements - Keep a record of your purchases and copies of confirmation pages, and compare them to your bank statements. If there is a discrepancy, report it immediately.

### *Shopping Safely Online*



### **What is online trading?**

Online trading allows you to conduct investment transactions over the internet. The accessibility of the internet makes it possible for you to research and invest in opportunities from any location at any time. It also reduces the amount of resources (time, effort, and money) you have to devote to managing these accounts and transactions.

### **What are the risks?**

Recognizing the importance of safeguarding your money, legitimate brokerages take steps to ensure that their transactions are secure. However, online brokerages and the investors who use them are appealing targets for attackers. The amount of financial

information in a brokerage's database makes it valuable; this information can be traded or sold for personal profit. Also, because money is regularly transferred through these accounts, malicious activity may not be noticed immediately. To gain access to these databases, attackers may use Trojan horses or other types of malicious code.

Attackers may also attempt to collect financial information by targeting the current or potential investors directly. These attempts may take the form of social engineering or phishing attacks. With methods that include setting up fraudulent investment opportunities or redirecting users to malicious sites that appear to be legitimate, attackers try to convince you to provide them with financial information that they can then use or sell. If you have been victimized, both your money and your identity may be at risk.

### **How can you protect yourself?**

**Be wary of online information** - Anyone can publish information on the internet, so try to verify any online research through other methods before investing any money. Also be cautious of "hot" investment opportunities advertised online or in email.

**Check privacy policies** - Before providing personal or financial information, check the web site's privacy policy. Make sure you understand how your information will be stored and used.

**Make sure that your transactions are encrypted** - When information is sent over the internet, attackers may be able to intercept it. Encryption prevents the attackers from being able to view the information.

**Verify that the web site is legitimate** - Attackers may redirect you to a malicious web site that looks identical to a legitimate one. They then convince you to submit your personal and financial information, which they use for their own gain. Check the web site's certificate to make sure it is legitimate.

**Monitor your investments** - Regularly check your accounts for any unusual activity. Report unauthorized transactions immediately.

**Use and maintain anti-virus software** - Anti-virus software recognizes and protects your computer against most known viruses. However, because attackers are continually writing new viruses, it is important to keep your virus definitions current.

**Use anti-spyware tools** - Spyware is a common source of viruses, and attackers may use it to access information on your computer. You can minimize the number of infections by using a legitimate program that identifies and removes spyware.

- **Keep software up to date** - Install software patches so that attackers can't take advantage of known problems or vulnerabilities. Enable automatic updates if the option is available.
- **Evaluate your security settings** - By adjusting the security settings in your browser, you may limit your risk of certain attacks.

**In the upcoming article next month we shall understand physical security aspects especially around our devices like tabs, laptops and mobile phones.**



*Col (Dr) Atul Kumar, psc was commissioned in Army Ordnance Corps in June 1988. During his 31 years of distinguished career he has tenanted varied regimental, staff and operational assignments. Qualified in armament and ammunition technical activities, he is an alumnus of DSSC Wellington and possesses Masters in Science, Computers and Business Management as well as Doctorate in Strategic Studies. He was awarded COAS and VCOAS Commendation Cards for contribution in the field of ERP implementation in the Army. He is a voracious reader and an avid writer whose articles have been awarded and published in various journals. Currently he is working in Deloitte India as Director Enterprise Technology and also visits institutions like IIMB, JIMS and CMM as guest faculty.*

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**“I FEEL, SOMETIMES, AS THE RENAISSANCE MAN MUST HAVE FELT IN FINDING NEW RICHES AT EVERY POINT AND IN THE CERTAINTY THAT UNEXPLORED AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE AWAIT AT EVERY TURN.”**

**POLYKARP KUSCH**

# Tech Corner

## The Indian IT Act: Section 79A - Digital Evidence

BY ASHWIN PRADHAN



**Digital evidence or Electronic Evidence is any probative information stored or transmitted in digital form that may be used before the courts/ Income-tax authorities.**

Section 79A of the IT(Amendment) Act 2008 defines electronic form evidence as “any information of probative value that is either stored or transmitted in electronic form and includes computer evidence, digital audio, digital video, cell phones, digital fax machines”

The main characteristics of the digital evidence are,

- It is latent as fingerprints and DNA
- Can transcend national borders with ease and speed
- Highly fragile and can be easily altered, damaged or destroyed and also time sensitive.

For these reasons, special precautions should be taken to document, collect, preserve and examine this type of evidence.

## Digital Devices: Sources for Digital Evidences

Use of digital devices in day-to-day life has increased tremendously. We may come across a wide range of digital evidence including E-mail word processing documents, data base tables, files saved from accounting programs, digital photographs, ATM transaction logs, instant message histories, internet browser histories, contents of computer memory, computer back-up, global positioning system tracks, digital video or sound files, data stored in mobile and the data stored in memory storage devices. To help the understanding of the investigating officers, a compilation of various devices and the potential evidence these devices may contain is provided below.

### Digital Device Potential Evidence

**A Desktop Computer:** The device contains all the files and folders stored including deleted files and information which may not be seen normally. Analysis of key document files like word documents, excel files, email's, tally data may help in unearthing potential evidences. Retrieval of deleted files using Cyber Forensics can help get key evidence that have been destroyed.



**Pen Drives :**The device stores many files and may be hidden easily. In many cases the parallel books of accounts maintained as tally data or excel sheets are kept in Pen Drives that can be easily hidden

**Hard Drives :**The device stores many files and may be hidden easily. Backup of earlier years may be kept and may be easily hidden.

**Handheld Devices** like Mobile Phones ( Smart Phones), Electronic Organizer, IPAD, Personal Digital Assistant etc.

Much information can be obtained from the devices like Address Book, Appointment calendars/information, documents, emails, phone book, messages( text and voices), video recording, email passwords etc. Many applications like CHAT, Whatsapp application can store many crucial conversations important for the investigations. Remittances and transactions are done by fund transfer through mobile phone service providers utilizing money deposited with the latter bypassing banking channels. A person may do all his business through a mobile phone without any computer or laptop or warehouse for his inventory - as example, online business platform [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) maintains huge warehouse at several places in India

where online traders can store their merchandise. In such cases the trader may make all transactions through mobile phone and store in small external microchips making detection difficult.

**Smart cards, Dongles and Biometric Scanners :** The device itself enables to understand the user level access to various information and places.

**Display Monitor (CRT/LCD/TFT etc):** Screens of Mobile Phones if switched on All the graphics and files that are open and visible on the screen in the switched on systems can be noted as electronic evidence. This evidence can be captured only in video, photographs and through description in seizure memos

**Answering Machines:** The device can store voice messages and sometimes, the time and date information about when the message was left. It may have details such as last number called, memos, phone numbers and names, caller identification information and also deleted messages.

**Local Area Networks ( LAN) Card or Network Interface Cards:** The device itself is a digital evidence and may contain crucial evidence.

**Modems, Routers, Hubs and Switches:** The device may contain details of IP addresses where the actual data is stored.

**Servers:** The device is a potential evidence for pulling out audit logs using forensic analysis. Analysis of emails of key persons from Mail Servers can help in finding crucial evidences required for the case. Servers Contains crucial data on business related applications like SAP, ERP, CRM, Mail

**Removable storage devices like SD Cards in Mobile phones:** All new generation phones use these and store files in which evidence can be found.

**Scanners and Copiers:** The device itself, having the capability to scan may help prove illegal activity like making bogus bills etc. Copiers may also contains stored data which can be crucial evidences.

**Digital Cameras :**The device can be looked for images, videos, sounds, removable cartridges, time and date stamps

**Pager:** This can be looked for address information, text message and phone numbers

**CD/DVDs:** The device stores many files which may contain the evidence.

**Facsimile Machines (FAX):** The device stores some documents, phone numbers, send/receive logs that can contain the evidence.

**Global Positioning Systems (GPS). Google Maps:** The device may provide travel logs, home location, previous destinations etc which may be crucial in finding places where evidences may be stored.

**Cloud Data Servers:** The device is available on all smart phones and tablets. The Cloud may be used to store hidden data where crucial evidences may be stored. Some enterprises offer service for storage of commercial data in servers located in foreign countries and business data are stored there through internet - which can be accessed as per terms and conditions.

From the digital devices, two types of evidences are possible, one is persistent evidence and other is volatile evidence:

**Persistent evidence:** the data that is stored on a local hard drive and is preserved when the computer is turned off. For example, Documents (word, slide, sheet, pdf), Images, Chat log, Browser history, Registry, Audio / Video, Application, Email, SMS / MMS, Phone book, Call log

**Volatile evidence:** any data that is stored in memory, or exists in transit, that will be lost when the computer loses power or is turned off. For example, Memory, Network status and connection, Process running, Time information It is to be noted that in certain cases, where volatile evidence is crucial, switching off a switched on system may result in destruction of volatile evidence.



### **Digital Forensics-What is it and its significance?**

Digital forensics is the process of identifying and collecting digital evidence from any medium, while preserving its integrity for examination and reporting. It can be defined as the discipline that combines elements of law and computer science to collect and analyze data from computer systems, networks, wireless communications, and storage device in a way that is

admissible as evidence in a court of law.

Digital evidence gathering is becoming an increasingly powerful tool for the department in its fight against various crimes. It can be used individually as key evidence or alongside more traditional methods of evidence gathering, where it could serve as a complement to other types of evidence. Furthermore, digital evidence may help in the course of the investigation phase to prepare the next steps.

In a nutshell, the significance of digital evidence analysis is that it:

- Help reconstruct past event or activity
- Show the evidence of policy violation or illegal activity
- Ensure the overall integrity of network infrastructure

### **Digital Forensics-Various Branches**

The branch of Digital forensics can be classified as follows:

- Disk Forensics deals with extracting information from storage media in the form of Active, deleted files and data from unallocated , slack spaces.
- Network Forensics is a branch of Cyber forensics dealing with monitoring and analysis of computer network traffic for the purposes of information gathering, legal evidence or intrusion detection
- Database Forensics is a branch of digital forensic science relating to forensic study of databases and their related meta data. This may be of help in understanding the time stamp of the database data created to see whether any manipulations where done in the original database
- Mobile device forensics deals with examining and analyzing mobile devices to retrieve call logs, SMS/MMS, videos, audios, photos etc.
- Email Forensics deals with recovery and analysis of emails including deleted emails, calendars and contacts
- GPS Forensics deals with examining and analyzing GPS devices to retrieve Track logs, Track points, routes , stored locations, home offices etc

### **Key Elements of Digital Forensics**

Key Elements of Digital Forensic are as follows:

- **The identification and acquiring of digital evidence:** Knowing where the digital evidence is present, stored and what are the processes that can be used to retrieve the digital evidences is the first step. It is noticed that usually in big corporations, where huge number of digital devices is present, identification of crucial digital evidences will save time in analysis of digital evidence and also cost. Many a times it is noticed that customized software's like ERP/SAP are used and the strategy to retrieve the entire software should be discussed with the system administrator. It is also important to identify the types of information stored and the appropriate technology that can be used to extract it. After the evidence is identified the forensic examiner/investigator should image/clone the hard disk or the storage media



- The preservation of digital evidence should be done in such a manner that there is no possible alteration, damage, data corruption or virus introduction during the process of examination.
- The analysis of digital evidences involves discovering all the files on the subject system. This includes existing normal files, deleted yet remaining in Recycle bin, hidden files, password-protected files and encrypted files. The analysis also includes retrieval of deleted files and also gives accesses to hidden files, temporary files and protected files. In many business specific applications like customized jeweler software/real estate software, may give details of reports required for day to day functioning of the organization.
- Report the findings, means giving the findings, in a simple lucid manner, so that any person can understand. The report should give description of the items, process adapted for analysis, chain of custody on the movement of digital evidence, hard and soft copies of the findings, glossary of terms etc
- The presentation and use of digital evidence in assessment order and presentation of the same in court of the law in matters of appeal involves stating the credibility of the processes employed during analysis for testing the authenticity of the data.

### **What Cyber Forensics Can Reveal**

Digital Evidence actually has several advantages over other kinds of physical evidence:

- It can be duplicated exactly and a copy can be examined as if it were the original. Importantly, copies made following proper procedures have the same evidentiary value as the original. It is a common practice when dealing with digital evidence, to examine a copy thus avoiding the risk of damaging the original.
- With the right tools it is very easy to determine if digital evidence has been modified or tampered with by comparing with the original.
- It is possible to recover and analyze deleted files that have not been overwritten, as well as carving out portions of files and text from unallocated and slack space
- It is possible to do String and Key word searching for finding key files either present, deleted files etc
- It is possible to do time line analysis to see when the digital evidence was created, modified, changed, merged with other files etc
- It is possible to know manipulations in data by seeing changes done by unauthorized persons in the data.

## The challenges in dealing with Digital Evidence:

- The digital evidence collected and presented should be admissible in law and steps should be taken to maintain integrity of the data.
- Digital evidence, which is ephemeral, poses problems for searching and seizing. Computer data changes moment by moment and is invisible to the eye. It can be viewed indirectly only after applying proper procedures and processes for collecting evidence.
- Problems posed by recovery of deleted evidence are the challenges which law enforcement agencies have to tackle.
- It is very easy to keep digital data in encrypted or password protected mode. It is difficult to decipher the real information without knowing and getting the password or without having the key to the encryption

## The sanctity and relevance of Digital Evidence

As in the case of written or oral evidence, digital evidence can also be classified into three main categories:

**Material evidence:** Material evidence is any evidence that speaks for itself without relying on anything else. In digital terms, this could be a log produced by an audit function in a computer system, the books of account maintained on a day-to-day basis on the computer, or any inventory management account maintained on the computer etc., if it can be shown to be free from contamination.

**Testimonial evidence:** Testimonial evidence is evidence supplied by a witness. This type of evidence is subject to the perceived reliability of the witness. But if the witness is considered reliable, testimonial evidence can be almost as powerful as material evidence. For example, word processor documents written by a witness could be considered testimonial as long as the author is willing to depose that he wrote the same.

**Hearsay:** Hearsay is any evidence presented by a person who is not a direct witness. Word processor documents written by someone without direct knowledge of the incident or documents whose authors cannot be traced fall in this category? Except in special circumstances, such evidence is not admissible in court of law. But even such evidence may constitute material and may be very relevant in Income-tax proceedings, which are not bound by technical rules of evidences. Otherwise also, they can provide important leads for further investigation.

**Accordingly, merely gathering electronic evidence is not sufficient. Efforts have to be made to corroborate the contents therein vis-à-vis other evidence such as material and oral. Preliminary and detailed statements of the persons in control of computers/ electronic devices are always very important.**

## Importance of standard procedures to deal with Digital Evidences

From the above discussion on the nature and legality of digital evidence, it is clear that investigation in an automated environment require standard methods and procedures for the following main reasons:

- Evidence has to be gathered in such a way that the same would be accepted by a court of law. This should be easier if standard procedures are formulated and followed. This would also facilitate exchange of evidence in cases having interdepartmental and international ramifications especially if investigators from other departments and countries collect evidence in similar manner.
- Every care must be taken to avoid doing anything which might corrupt or add to the data, even accidentally or cause any other form of damage. The use of standard methods and procedures would diminish this risk of damage. In some cases, some data may be changed or over-written during the process of examination. Thus, there is need for a thorough understanding of technology which is being used by the investigator for examination and also need for its documentation so that it would be possible to explain the causes/ effects later on in a court of law.
- Some of the most important reasons for improper evidence collection are poorly written policies, lack of an established incidence response plan, incidence response training and a broken chain of custody. “Chain of custody” is the roadmap that shows how evidence was collected, analyzed and preserved in order to be presented as evidence. Establishing a clear chain of custody is critical because electronic evidence can be easily altered. A clear chain of custody would demonstrate that electronic evidence is trustworthy. Preserving a chain of custody for electronic evidence, at a minimum, requires that;
  - 1.No data has been added, changed, deleted from the seized information
  - 2.evidence.
  - 3.The seized /information evidence was duplicated exactly and completely.
  - 4.A reliable and validated duplication process was used.
  - 5.All media were secure and safe.



## Important terms in collection of Digital Evidence

**Seizure:** The process of generating a unique identity (Message Digest) of the digital evidence in a write block, and trusted environment, which is thereafter taken in the custody of the law enforcement official for the purpose of investigation.

**Acquisition:** The process of making Bit-stream image of the digital evidence proposed to be seized in a write block and trusted environment. The process is deemed to be successfully completed if the message digest of the original digital evidence being seized matches with the message digest of the Bit stream backup copy made on a forensically sterile storage media.

**Seizure and Acquisition** – The process of simultaneously generating a message digest and a bit-stream backup of the digital evidence proposed to be seized in write block and trusted environment. The process is deemed to be successfully completed if the message digest of the original digital evidence being seized matches with the message digest of the bit stream backup copy made on a forensically sterile storage media.

Just like in the case of a conventional documentary evidence, merely gathering electronic evidence is not sufficient. It needs to be analyzed in the context of the facts of the case and relevant information needs to be extracted. Efforts have been made to corroborate the contents therein with material and oral evidences to reach to a conclusion useful for, or relevant to the proceedings for efficient prosecutions.



**Capt Ashwin Pradhan** was commissioned in Arty Sata regt. on Mar 2003. He is a IIM Graduate in Operations with over 18 years of experience in Information Security, Risk & Compliance management, Physical Security management and Facilities management. Currently working with Maersk GSC in Site Office Management team. He is a certified Dip In Cyber Law, Digital Evidence Specialist, Internet Investigation Specialist, Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), Certified Ethical Hacker V9, Certified Information Security Consultant, Certified Professional Forensic Analyst, Certified Lead Auditor in Information Security Management System (ISMS) ISO 27001:2005.

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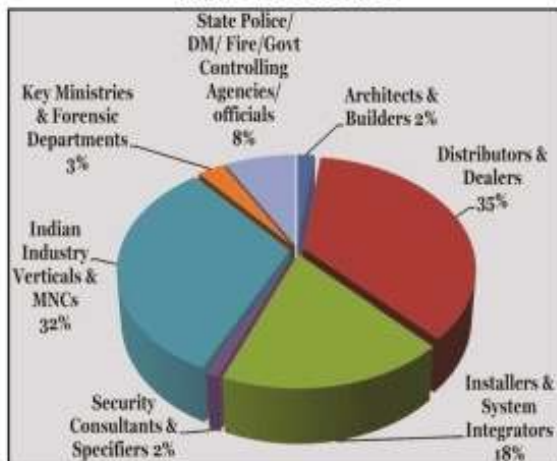
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# Author of the Month

## Gurusaday Batabyal

*IN INTERACTION WITH RAJESH NAIR*

**Col Gurusaday Batabyal** was commissioned to 3/4 Gurkha Rifles (Chindits) in June 1979, and commanded 2/4 GR. A graduate of Defence Services Staff College, he served as the founder Commander of Indian Peacekeeping Contingent of the UN Mission in Lebanon (1998-99). He has served as Col MS, Col GS, M.A. to DCOAS (P&S) and tenanted the post of Special Representative of Government of India in Manila. He had been several times part of Army delegations to Myanmar, Nepal and RMA Sandhurst (UK). Post his army tenure he served in the corporate for 10yrs at various senior positions including CEO, ED etc. He quit corporate to pursue academic and research work on a freelance mode.



**Rajesh: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces, and your subsequent Forces career?**

**Guru:** I belong to a village named Chanidas Nanur in West Bengal near Santiniketan in Birbhum district. My father as well as my grandfather were in the teaching profession. Since childhood I had an academic bent of mind and was under the tutelage of my grandfather who encouraged me to read books beyond the syllabus. The state of West Bengal in the 1970s was reeling with Naxalite movements and many college and university students joined the movements. In 1972, I completed my B.Sc-Chemistry with Distinction. To dissuade youths joining the Naxalite movements, the Central Government undertook a massive recruitment rally in colleges and universities and along with a friend I joined the Army without knowing much about it. It was an impulsive decision of two friends motivated through the heroic tales of 1971 Bangladesh liberation war which was still fresh in mind. Within a year plus I got selected for officers training in Army Cadet College Pune and also cleared the UPSC written examination for SS-19 Course, the first graduate entry SS course. I continued in ACC Pune and declined to undergo the SSB selection board for SS-19 course. I was commissioned on 9th June 1979 in 3/4 Gorkha Rifles (CHINDITS). While in ACC and IMA besides doing fairly well in academics I was awarded Blue in Tennis and medal winner in various swimming events including Water Polo.

As Adjutant of 3/4 GR, I took part in the September 1987 Battle of Bila-Fondla where our Battalion got a spectacular victory. I am a graduate of Defence Services Staff College - first one from my course to attend the DSSC. Commanded 2/4 GR besides serving as the founder Commander of Indian Peacekeeping Contingent of the UN Mission in Lebanon(1998-99). I also served as Col MS, Col GS, M.A. to DCOAS(P&S) and in my second foreign assignment tenanted the post of Special Representative of Government of India in Manila (Philippines) in an UN-US sponsored international

project on Management of Failed States and Conflict Resolution. Was fortunate to be part of the army delegation to Myanmar, Nepal and RMA Sandhurst(UK). Though I was through for my next rank but was overaged for promotion and side stepped into corporate in 2006.



*As first Indian Peace Keeping Contingent Commander in Lebanon -1998  
shaking hands with the Asst Secretary General of United Nation*

**Rajesh : Please give a brief about your corporate tenure. You left a successful career in corporate to start teaching, was it the passion calling? How did it all happen?**

**Guru:** My joining the corporate was a divine intervention at the right moment, God was too kind. A day after retirement from the army I joined a loss making IT Company of Birla Group based in Kolkata as its CEO. To begin with it was a challenging task for me being a non-technical person; I had to learn a lot, and with everyone's effort the company started making profit within one and a half years after my joining. On completion of two years there I joined as CEO Data-Core Sync, an MNC and served in this position for five years with YoY growth followed by which I was made Executive Director of DCPL Group-an industry conglomerate consisting of 17 companies with additional charge of Director Mongrace group of schools. During my corporate tenure I was member of executive council of CII and Bengal Chambers of Commerce heading e-governance portfolio. Government of Fiji appointed me as adviser to its Prime Minister on e-governance and couple of my recommendations after my briefing to the PM Fiji were accepted and implemented. After serving ten years in the corporate and when I was in the peak of my career I no more wanted to continue with any permanent job as I desired to pursue academic and research work on a freelance mode. It was a long-cherished dream -an inner calling that I wanted to fulfil. And I was preparing for that while still serving in the corporate. I pursued and completed my PhD from Tagore's University Viswa Bharati -Santiniketan -a century old central government university of international repute. Those days Visva-Bharati had mandatory six months PhD coursework studies held on every Saturdays and Sundays. This schedule helped me to pursue the course and appear in various examinations. I presented papers in several seminars and my articles were published in India,



*Two authors greeting each other at Beirut: Robert Fisk & Col G S Batabyal*

Bangladesh and USA on topics related to South Asia's history and geo-politics. On completion of my PhD I was engaged as a visiting Professor by the North Bengal University to teach 'Theory of International Relations and Strategy' for 3-4 weeks in each semester to M.A. students pursuing post graduate degree in Geo-Politics & Strategic Studies. Besides I was also engaged by Presidency University Kolkata, University of Dhaka, and University of Washington to take special lectures/ chair seminar sessions on various themes related to South Asia.

**Rajesh: Your maiden book “Politico – Military strategy of the Bangladesh liberation war, 1971” tell us more about it, how is it different from others?**

**Guru:** This book is primarily based on my PhD thesis with additions and modifications. The book deals with evolution and formulation of national strategy to cope up with the crisis in East Pakistan which effected India economically, socially, psychologically besides threatening India's security with the influx of ten million refugees in North Eastern states of India. The book covers strategic level operational plans and its execution and has discussed how an intra-state conflict of Pakistan became an inter-regional conflict with India getting sucked in the political whirlpool ending into a global conflict with big powers like China, USA and USSR joining the fray in the backdrop of cold war geo-politics in South Asia.

History is replete with examples about how war and politics are intertwined. Usually, military professionals writing war history goes into too much of tactical details with less coverage on national level strategy and the political history that led to war; non-military authors write more on socio-political history which caused conflict but cover scanty about the military and strategic aspects. Having served both in uniform and in academia I have tried to make it a balanced narration covering socio-political reasons for the conflict and evolution of grand strategy and its execution. True history is rare: in this book it has been my endeavour to write an unbiased history with documental proof obtained from archives in various countries, oral interviews and authentic secondary sources.



**The book has 13 chapters as under:**

**Chapter I:** Idea of Pakistan and Road to Bangladesh

**Chapter II:** Art of War: Nuances of Strategy, Operational Art and Tactics

**Chapter III:** Military Geography of East Pakistan: Its implications on Formulation of War Strategy and Conduct of Battles

**Chapter IV-** Strategic imperatives of Cold War geo-politics in South Asia and the role of external powers during 1971 Indo- Pakistan war.

**Chapter V:** Geopolitics in South Asia from 1947 to 1971 and the Role of External Powers During 1971 Indo-Pakistan War

**Chapter VI:** Politico-Military Strategy of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

**Chapter VII:** Planning and Conduct of Operation:

**Chapter VIII:** Mukti Bahini: Strategy, Modus Operandi and Contribution

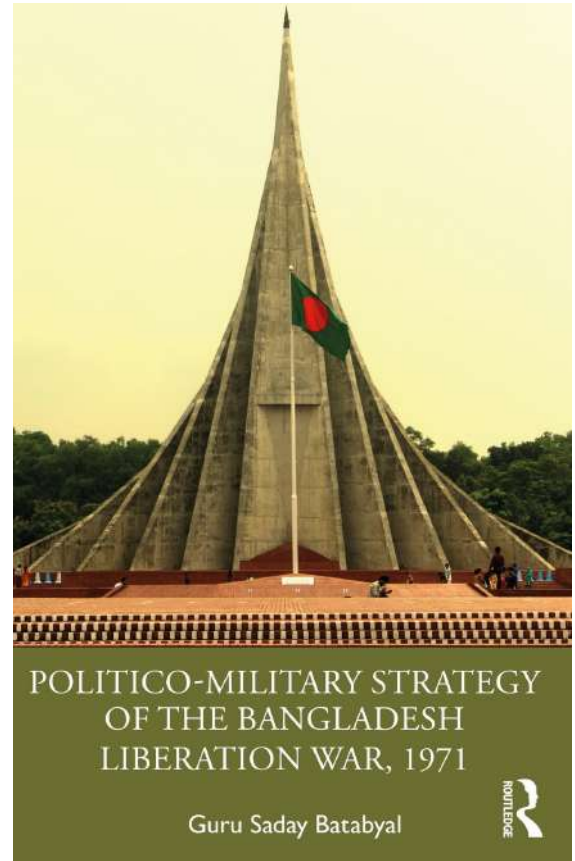
**Chapter IX:** Air & Naval Operations: Strategy and its Execution

**Chapter X:** Role of United Nations during 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War

**Chapter XI:** Analysis of the War through the Prisms of, Operational Art, and Principles of War

**Chapter XII:** Reflection & War Highlights

**Chapter XIII:** Years Beyond the Liberation War



**Rajesh : What motivated you to write a book?**

**Guru:** Writing has been a passion with me since my school days. My articles have been published in many journals/newspapers in India and abroad. I have also authored a book chapter. Many have written on Bangladesh liberation war but hardly any book has covered in detail about grand strategy where military strategy is a part and not the whole spectrum of the national strategy; I covered this aspect including theoretical aspects of national strategy, military strategy, operational art and tactics. Action or inaction of United Nations has been given special emphasis to highlight how big nations hijack the basic tenets of UN to serve their political purpose. My aim was to offer something new on the table. By the way, ***I have pledged royalty of this book to the needy widows of 1971 war.***

**Rajesh: What were the challenges you faced while writing it?**

**Guru:** I researched intensely for three plus years for my PhD thesis and later a year for writing my book. I had to travel extensively to interact and collect research inputs. Much I wanted to visit Pakistan to talk to a few participants who were still alive beside visiting their archives etc. but I was denied visa despite my own regimental officer was serving as DA in Islamabad. I had to make it up through other means. Getting a clearance from MEA and more so our services HQs on some odd inputs had been a herculean task. On the contrary I found response from US Defence establishments and

UN archive were prompt. During oral interview of participants in the war, diplomats, politicians, authors and academicians of 1971 vintage both in Bangladesh and in India one had to be cautious to get the facts which usually were mixed with emotional response. Many Mukti joddhas of Bangladesh and Indian armed forces officers did not have strategic level exposure and stuck to tactical level interactions where as my book mainly covers strategic level discourse. One was though lucky to get strategic perspective from Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw after hearing his lecture couple of times, interacting with Lt Gen Sagat Singh at his Jaipur residence and a three hours long argumentative discussions with Lt Gen Jacob at his residence in Som Vihar New Delhi, -as you are aware he was COS Eastern Command in the rank of Maj Gen during 1971 war, Diplomat Mr.Mani Dixit, Ms. Arundhati Ghosh, Ronen Sen etc.

Other challenge was to get it published from a reputed world-class publisher like Routledge or Oxford which I aimed at. It takes much effort to navigate through many stringent processes that a publisher like Routledge/ Oxford has. Routledge aimed to get the book published coinciding golden jubilee of Bangladesh liberation war. One had to meet the deadline and complete the manuscript accordingly. Overall, it was a great learning and helping me to deal with the other book writing projects in hand.

### **Rajesh: What's your future plans?**

**Guru:** I planned to write three books on Bangladesh Liberation War dealing with different themes. My next book in English covering 'India's Humanitarian Intervention in Bangladesh and International Laws on War' is in progress. On advice of Gen Shankar Roy Chowdhury, ex army chief I am writing a book in Bengali which will cover major aspects discussed in my other books. Publishing of this book was planned for December coinciding with the famous book fair of Kolkata, it got delayed due to pandemic restrictions. I expect this book to get published next year. I am also writing articles for several journals and magazines beside writing part of my regimental history.

### **Rajesh: Suggestions to officers from Forces network if they want to pursue on similar lines?**

**Guru:** Great to see that a few from our fraternity are already published authors and the number is growing; latest to join the elite group of authors is Sqn Ldr Toolika Rani. I also find occasionally good articles from our fraternity. Writing is a passion one must develop besides having a flair for it like Cdr Arun Jyoti.

Also, one should understand what theme s/he will be more comfortable to write, fiction -non-fiction, pure history or novels based on historical themes, contemporary geo-political activities etc. For example, though I write on multiple subjects but majorly I love to write historical based themes which is time consuming as it requires great amount of research. Those who have financial commitments and not yet fully fulfilled family obligations preferably should pursue writing as a hobby than a full time profession.

**Rajesh: How do one contact you for guidance, help or suggestions.**

**Guru:** My humble service is available for anyone who would seek my assistance. I could be contacted through my e-mail [colgsbatabyal@gmail.com](mailto:colgsbatabyal@gmail.com). After initial contact a mutually convenient date and time could be fixed for any discussion.

**Rajesh: How can someone order your book.**

**Guru:** The book is available on Amazon and can be ordered from below link

<https://www.amazon.in/Politico-Military-Strategy-Bangladesh-Liberation-1971/dp/1032103361>

**Rajesh :** Thank you Col Batabyal, we wish you lot of success for future releases also.

**Guru:** Thank you



**Capt Rajesh Nair** prior to joining Army has worked as a computer server administrator and as a computer faculty for nearly four years. He is from the 75th Course, OTA, and was commissioned into 14 Maratha Light Infantry. Post Army service, he has worked in the field of administration for more than a decade, having worked with companies like Wipro, Mahindra Automobile, Tata Communications and Credence Global Solutions. He has done many a course including certification course in Facility Management, POSH, ISO etc. He is a certified POSH Trainer.

I want to be a Renaissance woman. I want to paint, and I want to write, and I want to act, and I want to just do everything.

Emma Watson

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# Book Reviews

## The Battle of Rezang La - Kulpreet Yadav

BY ARUN HARIHARAN

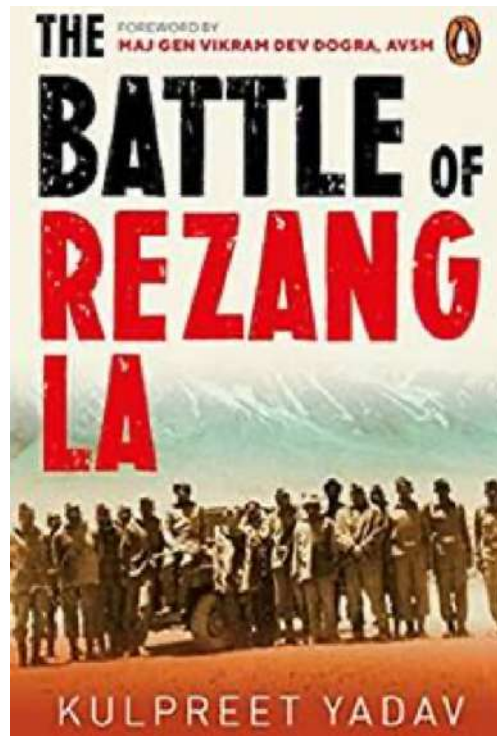
A STIRRING TALE OF HEROISM IN THE FROZEN HEIGHTS OF REZANG LA

### About the Author



Kulpreet Yadav is an Indian novelist, screenwriter and an actor. He is the author of thirteen books, including 'The Girl Who Loved a Pirate' and 'The Girl Who Loved a Spy'. The Girl Who Loved a Pirate is India's first thriller based on marine piracy and hijacking. He completed his post-graduation in journalism and mass communication from Amity University, Noida in 2004 and management courses from IIM, Indore, and IIM, Lucknow.

He joined the Naval Officer's Academy and served for two decades. In 2007 he was awarded the Director General's Commendation for professionalism and dedication to the nation. He retired voluntarily in the rank of commandant with the Indian Coast Guard in 2014.



## The Book Review

Kulpreet Yadav's emotional retelling of the battle fought by Charlie Company of 13 Kumaon in the 1962 war with China is a poignant story of valour

One of my most piquant memories of childhood was watching the 1964 B&W war classic "Haqeeqat" starring Dharmendra and the very majestic Balraj Sahni among others. The film left a lasting impression on me simply because it very starkly brought out the trials and tribulations of the courageous men who fought in the ill-fated war with China in 1962 with almost everything stacked against them including numerical inferiority, poor and inadequate equipment and clothing and above all indecisive political leadership.

The movie was loosely based on a battle fought in the icy heights of the remote post of Rezang La in Ladakh by a handful of ill-equipped, poorly kitted out and grossly outnumbered yet valiant soldiers of the Kumaon Regiment against the Chinese troops. The battle went down in the annals of military history as one of the greatest last stands of all times – comparable probably only to the famous Battle of Saragarhi, in the Indian context.

Kulpreet Yadav has attempted to re-tell this very heroic tale of Major Shaitan Singh, PVC and Charlie Company 13 Kumaon which literally fought last-man, last-bullet standing defending the Rezang La pass from the advancing hordes of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) having only (to quote the author)-'each other, outstanding leadership and love for the motherland'.

Yadav has been able to capture the spirit of the battle in a smooth and lucid manner—mainly because of his deep understanding of the nuances of the subject of the book, being a Naval veteran himself as also due to the painstaking effort put in by him in research and meeting some of the surviving veterans and their kin to get a near first-hand account of the battle. The buildup to the battle, including logistic challenges and inspired leadership against all odds by military leaders at various levels has been beautifully described in the book which has lent a flow to the narrative.

The tale begins about two months before the actual battle when 13 Kumaon sets up base in the picturesque town of Baramulla in Kashmir. It then moves on to the preparations to move to the Chushul Sector of Ladakh as relations with China worsen, as does the situation in the border. The camaraderie of the officers and the men of the battalion as they get mentally and physically prepared to move to the new location, fully knowing well that they would face an imminent battle with a numerically and technologically superior enemy, has then been described along with realistic accounts of the meticulous and detailed preparations undertaken by Major Shaitan Singh and his Company once they reach Rezang La.

Major Shaitan Singh, who was awarded the Param Vir Chakra, is definitely the hero of this chronicle. However, the author has not shied away from describing the valour of others such as Naib Subedar Surja Ram, the Commander of 7 Platoon, Naik Ram Kumar, the Section in-charge of the three Inch Mortar, Company Havildar Major Harphul Singh, Lance Naik Singh Ram and many others.

The meat of the book is by far, the description of final battle, which started in the wee hours of 18 November 1962 and ceased only much later into the day when most of the soldiers of the company including Major Shaitan Singh had made the supreme sacrifice defending Rezang La till their last breath after repulsing seven waves of unrelenting attacks by the enemy—thereby saving the strategically important Chushul airfield from falling into enemy hands and preventing a possible occupation of the entire Ladakh region by Chinese troops.



The author has described the fateful moments as a near eyewitness account, from the mortally wounded Major gallantly leading his men till the very end and the moral dilemma faced by CHM Harphul Singh and few other surviving soldiers whom the former ordered to fall back and reach the Battalion HQ so that at least someone could go back and tell the world the poignant story of the valour exhibited by the rank and file of Charlie Company in the frozen heights of Rezang La.

The one thing this book stands out from other accounts of battles or military history volumes is the emotional and human angle which has been interjected from time to time as the story unfolds, which makes the readers connect better with the protagonists. Trivia about the overall geo-political situation of the time and other historical facts related to Ladakh, Tibet etc. inserted by the author at the end of each chapter also enables the reader to understand the larger canvas better.

The book is definitely well researched and makes an excellent read for a military history buff or a casual bibliophile alike simply because of the fact that it is able to engage the reader with a tight and well-knit narrative. Moreover, it is not too replete with military jargon and clichés - making it easily comprehensible for everyone. I for one, while reading this book definitely got a feeling close to what I got when I watched "Haqeeqat" for the first time as a child!

### **About the Book**

Title : The Battle of Rezang La  
Author : Kulpreet Yadav  
Publisher : Penguin Veer  
Cost : Rs 299  
304 pages;



**Col Arun Hariharan** a Corps of Engineers officer, took premature retirement in 2013, post his command. He is a senior corporate professional now. He is a voracious reader with a lot of interest in history, archeology and occult. His weekly column on light hearted stories of his experiences in the military was published in Hindustan Times from 2011-2014. He has chronicled the history of Meerut Cantonment. His book on short-stories in titled the Gaisal Club and other Indian Tales of Macabre was published by Amazon in April 2017. He is also a prolific blogger and maintains blogs for his short stories, travelogues and on his family heritage. Arun is also passionate about photography and dirtying his hands maintaining his motorbike.

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# Pune, Maharashtra, India



Pune Chapter of Forces Network organised a social meet in Pune. Names of officers and ladies who attended the meet are as below:-

**Standing - L to R** - Col Y Mann; Capt Rajesh Nair; Capt Uday Shriwas; Col Sunil; Col Uttam Mukerji; Col Basant Sinha; Maj Milind Tungar; Capt Sushil Gaikwad; Lt Col Ajay Sharma; L. Col Alok Das; Col Sanjeev Sood; Col Nilesh Salvi; Col Prashant Kamath, SM; Capt. Sanjay Saket; Capt. Vishal Patil; Lt. Cdr. Deepankar Adhikari; Lt. Cdr Devender Chillar; Lt. Cdr Amandeep Singh;

**Sitting L to R** - Col Ravindra Singh; Col Patil; Col Sathe; Mrs Sathe; Mrs Anjali Patil; Col Ramendra Sharma; Lt Col Jitendar Kumar;

**In Front** : Maj Rohit Naik

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