

Fellowship Report – APRICOT 2024, APNIC 57 – Bangkok. Thailand.

I would like to express my gratitude to the APRICOT 2024 APAN 57 committee for selecting me for the Fellowship. It provided me with an invaluable learning opportunity and an overall excellent experience. Initially, I received a WhatsApp message from *Mr. Rupesh Shrestha*, the SANOG Chairperson, informing me that I had been selected for the fellowship, albeit in a hold status. This meant that if the initially selected person declined, I would have the chance to participate. Without hesitation, I confirmed my availability to *Mr. Rupesh Shrestha*.



After a week, I received a confirmation email from *Mr. John Rattray*, the fellowship coordinator, indicating that the process for booking airfare tickets and arranging visas was underway. Subsequently, he provided all the necessary visa requirement documents. With *Mr. John's* support, I completed all the required tasks within 20 days, including applying for overseas leave, which our Ministry of Higher Education – Sri Lanka approved.



On the eagerly awaited day of February 20, 2024, I embarked on my journey with Sri Lankan Airlines to Bangkok, albeit with a 2-hour delay. Touching down in Bangkok, I was pleasantly surprised by the efficient transport infrastructure, particularly the BTS railway system, which proved incredibly convenient for visitors like me. The speed and comfort of the train were delightful. Accommodation arrangements made by *Mr. John and Mrs. Molly* ensured a pleasant stay, conveniently located near the event hotel.

The workshop spanned the initial three days, the next three days of conference sessions, and finally, two days of holiday, a total of 10 days altogether. Opting for the "*Cyberwar Defense*" workshop by *Mr. Barry Green* and *Mr. Roland Dobbins*, I delved into the intricacies of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. These malicious attempts aim to disrupt the functioning of targeted servers, services, or networks by inundating them with internet traffic. Understanding the various forms of DDoS attacks, including volumetric attacks, protocol attacks, and application-layer attacks, emphasized the importance of robust network infrastructure and proactive security measures to mitigate such threats.



The subsequent "*Elevating Soft Skills of Network/Systems Engineers*" event, facilitated by *Mr. Terry Sweetser*, *Mr. Aftab Siddiqui*, *Mrs. Sarah Lake*, and *Mr. William Stockbridge*, proved enlightening.



The interactive sessions provided invaluable insights, from learning presentation skills to mastering public speaking and demonstrating leadership in scenarios. *Mr. Stockbridge's* session, in particular, left a lasting impression, offering practical advice on professional communication that I'll carry throughout my career. *Mr. Siddiqui's* expertise and engaging presentation style were equally inspiring, while sessions by *Mr. Terry* and *Mrs. Sarah* equipped attendees with essential event preparation knowledge. The experience enriched my understanding of cybersecurity

and soft skills, thanks to the insightful workshops and engaging sessions organized during APRICOT 2024 APAN 57.

Throughout the conference, I had the privilege of attending numerous tech talks where industry experts, including representatives from ISPs, IXs, and vendors, generously shared their insights and



experiences. Notably, **FLEXOPTIX**, represented by *Mr. René Fichtmüller*, stood out by providing complimentary single-mode transceivers seamlessly integrated with my network. These custom-made transceivers offered the flexibility to adjust configurations according to our evolving needs.

Moreover, the conference's opening ceremony and plenary sessions were truly captivating. As the days unfolded, a plethora of events unfolded, capturing my

interest, particularly the following sessions:

1. **"The Intelligent Internet of Things for Sustainable Development Goals,"** led by *Prof. Mona Jaber*, offered a profound exploration of the United Nations' sustainable development agenda established in 2015, outlining 17 ambitious goals to be achieved by 2030. *Prof. Jaber* underscored the imperative of global collaboration and innovation to address pressing challenges. She also highlighted the transformative potential of the Internet of Things (IoT) and machine learning (ML) in advancing sustainable development, focusing on real-world applications in health, energy, and urban development sectors. However, she also acknowledged the complexities and risks, including biases, security concerns, and privacy issues associated with implementing these technologies.



2. **"Let's Encrypt: Automate all the things!"** conducted by *Mr. Philip Paeps*, provided invaluable insights into leveraging free SSL for web services and demonstrated practical techniques for SSL

renewal using the "certbot" command. The hands-on demonstration proved immensely beneficial for my future endeavours.

3. **"NOG reports"** allowed me to present our NOG reports for LKNOG (Lanka Network Operator Group). As an executive member of LKNOG, I shared our organization's achievements and successful event collaborations with LKNOG 7 and SANOG 40, while also moderating this event alongside *Mr. Yoshinobu Matsuzaki*.

4. **"Paul Announcement"** marked the end of an era as *Mr. Paul Wilson*, after 25+ years of dedicated service, announced his departure as Director General of APNIC. His leadership and contributions were celebrated, underscoring his multifaceted talents and invaluable organizational role.

Overall, the conference provided a wealth of knowledge and networking opportunities, leaving an indelible mark on my professional journey.

Throughout the sessions, we indulged in a couple of social dinners and entertainment at the enchanting **"SIAM-MUSIUM,"** which offered an extraordinary experience. I gleaned valuable insights by immersing myself in Thailand's rich history and culture. This marked my inaugural attendance at an APRICOT conference and my maiden voyage to Thailand. Bangkok was advantageous, pulsating with energy and offering many captivating experiences.



The warmth and hospitality of the Thai people left an indelible impression on me. Delighting in various delectable Thai cuisines, I found it impossible to choose a favourite, as each dish was equally delightful. These experiences left me yearning for more time to explore the city, its culinary delights, and its vibrant culture.

I must express my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to my enriching fellowship experience, particularly *Mr. Rupesh and Mr. Kabir*,

for allowing me to represent Sri Lanka at APRICOT 2024 APNIC 57. I also deeply appreciate *Mr. John and Mrs. Molly*, the dedicated fellowship coordinators, whose unwavering support was invaluable. The unforgettable memories forged at APRICOT 2024 APNIC 57 undoubtedly stand as a highlight of my professional career.

Thank You,

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