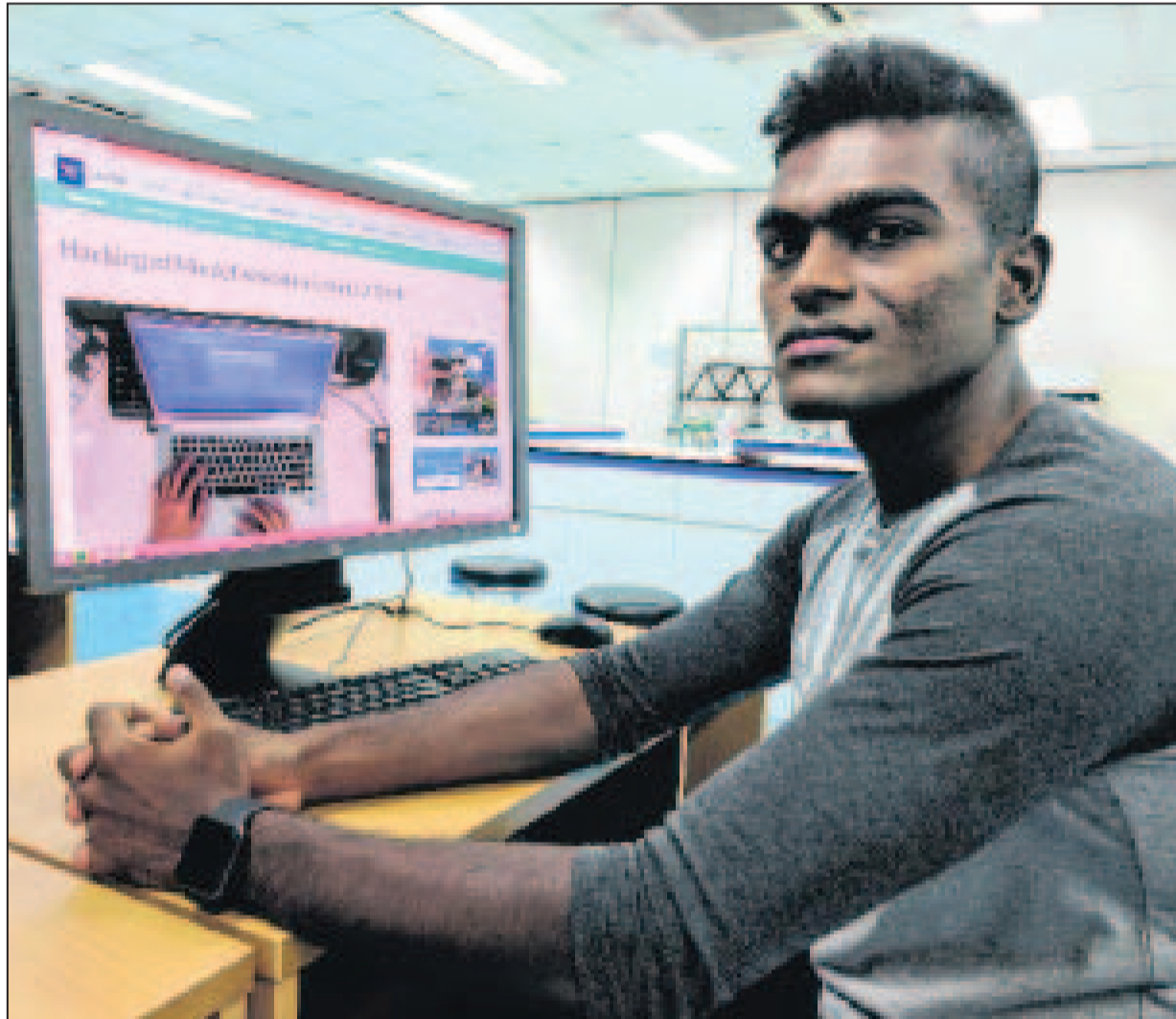# Stopping cyber attacks before they happen

Ajit Chandran wants to apply what he has learnt in his computer security degree to real-life situations

PHOTO: AMRITA KAUR

AMRITA KAUR

IN FEBRUARY this year, Mr Ajit Chandran (above) read a news article about a cyber attack that led to the theft of the personal details of 850 national servicemen and staff at the Ministry of Defence (Mindef).

Now, Mr Ajit, who is pursuing his Bachelor of Computer Security (Honours), wants to sign on in the army to help prevent such attacks in the government sector.

"There are increasingly many cases of cyber threats, computer attacks and data breaches. It is the best time to learn about ethical hacking in order to protect the government sector from hackers with bad intentions," said the 22-year-old.

Another report he read some time ago stated that almost half of adults around the world had personal information exposed by cyber attacks.

"It's a big and growing problem and concern. From local non-prof-its, to small firms, to multinational companies, no organisation or individual is exempt from such occurrences.

"And the antidote requires more than just dealing with the aftermath. It requires detecting and preventing hacks, hazards and attacks in the first place. And it fits in perfectly with my career aims," said Mr Ajit, who feels that pursuing a job in this field would suit him best.

Mr Ajit, whose parents moved here from Chennai before he was born, did his diploma in IT and advanced diploma in IT at the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) after he completed his O Levels at the now-closed MacPherson Secondary School in 2011.

He enjoyed both the courses at the institute and decided to narrow his interest down to computer security.

Mr Ajit, who enjoys watching documentaries on cyber attacks, enrolled in the Bachelor of Com-puter Security (Honours), awarded by Northumbria University at MDIS in December last year, after his advanced diploma.

The one-year course is designed to provide a broad, general education in the theory and practice of engineering and computing technologies with special emphasis in the area of computer security and network systems.

It will produce professionals with abilities in resolving computer security problems and cases.

Some careers they can take up include penetration tester, IT security engineer, security technology consultant, cyber security engineer, ICT network security engineer and information security analyst.

Mr Ajit looks forward to the group projects and thought-provoking discussions with his classmates from countries such as China, Russia and Korea.

"I like the cosmopolitan student population at MDIS and I feel that the exposure to different views will prepare me well to work in the industry," said Mr Ajit, who studies at the student lounge and library at MDIS as he finds it "very conducive".

Some of the modules taught in the Bachelor of Computer Security (Honours) course include dynamic Internet technologies, advanced operating systems, principles of ethical hacking, advanced digital security and security for web applications.

One of Mr Ajit's favourite modules is network technology and this is thanks to the way it is taught, he told tabla!.

"Ms Kestina (the lecturer for the module) provides us with great notes that help in our assignments and exams. She makes it very easy to understand what is being taught and the quizzes and online assignments are very helpful in preparing for the exams."

Mr Ajit will be graduating in December this year and is planning to apply for a job in the armed intelligence unit of Mindef next month.

Referring to the article on the cyber attack that led to the stolen personal details of 850 national servicemen and staff at Mindef, he said: "I am very inspired to not only solve such cyber attacks but prevent them in the first place."

The Bachelor of Computer Security (Honours) by Northumbria University is now replaced by Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Information Technology, awarded by Teesside University, UK and the next intake for the new course will be in September this year.

Local diploma holders and those who have completed an advanced diploma in IT will advance to year two or year three of the course.

Year one of the course consists of 90 per cent coursework with only one exam module while year two and year three is wholly based on coursework.

➡ amritak@sph.com.sg

About the course

- THE Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Information Technology is awarded by Teesside University, UK.
- The programme duration is eight to 24 months (full-time) and 12 to 36 months (part-time).
- The fees for the full- and part-time programmes range between $10,486 and $29,960, depending on the entry level of the student.
- The next intake is in September 2017.

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