Deputy Commissioner of Police Dr. Balsing Rajput gives us an Insight on dealing with Cyber Crimes

Interview of Dr. Balsing Rajput, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Preventive, Crime Branch Mumbai City

Maharashtra Cyber team of Digital Crime Unit developed the anti-piracy software solutions and practices which won the "IP Champions Award" of USA Chamber of Commerce.

Q Please give us a brief about your achievements and journey so far.

A. I joined the police department in 2005. I am presently serving as Deputy Commissioner of Police, Preventive, Crime Branch Mumbai City. Before that I served as Superintendent of Police, Cyber, Maharashtra Cyber, Maharashtra State Mumbai. I have also served as Deputy commissioner of Economic offenses wing and Zone 11 at Mumbai city, DCP crime and Zone at Solapur city.

I am life time learner. I received my Doctorate (Ph.D.) from Tata Institute Of Social Sciences, Mumbai in Cyber Economic Crimes in 2018. I graduated with a B. Tech and M. Tech (Agriculture Engineering) Degree from Mahatma Phule Agricultural University, Rahuri, Maharashtra.

I have authored a book titled "Cyber Economic Crime in India" published by Springer Nature in 2020, which is a well-researched book about the cybercrime scenario in India. My other book "Being Human – Reflections of Life" will be launched in May 2021.

It is of great pleasure that our Maharashtra Cyber team of Digital Crime Unit developed the anti-piracy software solutions and practices which won the "IP Champions Award" of USA Chamber of Commerce.

I was part of **Cyber Security Delegation of India to Israel in 2016** and **Estonia in 2019** to study the e-government initiatives and cyber security measures.

I got selected for **Chevening Cyber Security Fellow 2017 of UK** and during my fellowship I presented a research paper on "Identifying Emerging Cyber Security Challenges from National Security Perspectives". I was also a part of the **International Visiting Leadership Program Fellow of USA for Cyber Security in 2019.**

I was the State Nodal Officer for Social Media Analysis unit of the Election commission for Maharashtra State, Assembly and Parliamentary Elections. I have a vast experience of crime investigation supervision, and detection working in **Economic Offences Wing of the Mumbai Police.** I have unearthed multiple scams and investigated many sensitive cases. I have willingly taken up extremely challenging assignments in the Maoist hit areas and communal sensitive places and have completed them successfully. I have always led teams from the front in **Anti**

Extremist/Naxal Operations. I have also worked in communal riot sensitive areas and stabilized communal harmony with citizen friendly community policing initiatives.

Q. **Kindly share any incident/ assignment that you have been a part of in terms of cybersecurity of which you are extremely proud of?**

A. I am extremely proud that I got opportunity to build the Maharashtra Cyber Department (specialized department) created by the Government of Maharashtra to deal with Cybercrime and Cyber Security in the State of Maharashtra, under the guidance of Shri. Brijesh Singh, IGP Cyber form 2016 to 2020.

Wherein I had the opportunity to work on a Cyber Labs Project. Maharashtra is the only state which has a network of 51 Cyber Labs. There is an advanced cyber lab in every district of Maharashtra and other important units of police force for effective investigation and prevention of cybercrime. I was also a part of the Maharashtra Cyber team, where we implemented a network of **43 Cyber Police Stations** in the Maharashtra State for providing

organisation setup to deal with cybercrime cases and provide better access to justice to the victims of cybercrime.

I am extremely proud to work on the development of integrated cyber security environment for Maharashtra state through **Maharashtra Cyber Security Project** form 2016 to 2020. This is ambitious project of the Maharashtra government which involves Computer emergency response team, Centre of excellence and fusion centre. I got the opportunity to conceptualise and implement the **Automatic Multimodal Biometric Identification System** (MAHA-AMBIS). It is the first project in India using an integrated finger/ palm print identification, Facial recognition, and IRIS Matching system for criminal identification, with a valuation of $ 9 Million. The project spread across the Maharashtra state in more than 1300 places. This complicated and highly technical project was completed in August 2019 within the specified time limit. I have also contributed to the establishment of a specialized Maharashtra Cyber Digital Crime Unit (MCDCU) for combating piracy of intellectual property on digital platforms.

During COVID-19, I initiated campaigns like **"Cyber Swatchata Campaign"** (clean cyberspace campaign) to remove hateful messages, fake news and rumours. This campaign has huge impact on the society. During the campaign more than 600 criminal cases were registered, 300 accused arrested and more than 5000 hateful messages were identified and removed from the internet and social media.

Being the Chief Architect and Operational Head of the **"Operation Blackface"** campaign to eliminate Online Child Pornography. The operation was successful and for the first time in India more than 150 criminal cases were registered for online child pornography and more than 70 criminals involved in the crime were arrested within a span of 6 months in 2019.

The safety of the women and children in cyberspace is a very sensitive topic. Under the guidance of Shri Brijesh Singh, IPS, IGP Cyber, I took the lead and designed the **"Cyber Safe Woman"** campaign at state level to sensitize the women and children for prevention of the online crimes or cybercrimes against them. The campaign reached to more than 300 schools and colleges along with awareness programs.

I am also involved in capacity building efforts for cyber security and cybercrime Investigation for Maharashtra Police. I have conducted several training courses on scientific investigation, cybercrime investigation, mobile and computer forensics, gender sensitization, and investigation of crime against women and children through CCPWC lab.

Q. How is the Maharashtra Cyber and Maharashtra Police Department dealing with the advancement in the technology and penetration of internet technology?

A. Maharashtra police is one of the most advanced police force in the country. Maharashtra police is using all kind of advancements in technology and effectively utilising penetration of Internet technologies to reach out to common citizens to provide better services. Maharashtra cyber is a nodal agency for effectively tackling cyber crimes in Maharashtra. The agency is using Internet and communication technology for delivering service, criminal investigation, police administration and awareness majors for crime prevention. We have implemented crime and criminal tracking and network system for digitization of crime investigation and tracking of criminals. This system has now become a backbone for the police force for criminal investigation.

Maharashtra police is slowly transforming its operations and working through ICT initiatives like MPIS or M-Police. This application marks the digitization of police processes and workflows. In short this is now a common enterprise resource solution for all police work.

To strengthen the security of women and children in the cities, Maharashtra government is implementing the Safe City project (Nirbhaya project). This project includes infrastructure and human resource capacity building for better investigation of cases related to woman and effective prevention.

Covering cities with the network of surveillance cameras for improving the safety perception, Maharashtra government has implemented City Surveillance projects in various cities. Maharashtra now has one of the most advanced and largest CCTV network in Mumbai city

for prevention and helping in detection of crime.

In today's age data is like oil, which helps many analytical technologies and applications for better decision making and supervision. Considering this reach the police has an open source data available without harming the privacy of the citizens. The police is building a Fusion Centre for predictive policing and data analytics for crime intelligence and prevention.

Awareness and sensitization of the citizens is of utmost importance in crime prevention. An informed citizen is best person to prevent the crime. Maharashtra police is using various social media platforms, digital technologies and audio visual means to reach out to citizens to sensitise them about the various types of crimes, their modus operandi and prevention measures.

Q. What are the latest State-Of-The-Art products/technologies being used by security personnel to prevent cybercrime in India today?

A. Cybercrime is a major challenge in today's world. Due to the convergence of various technologies on a single device like a mobile phone, it has become easier for criminals to commit a crime.

The different types of crimes emerging today were not even heard off before 10 years. As new and disruptive technologies are increasing in cyberspace, police and government mechanism find it challenging to cope with it. To fight cybercrimes, the Government of India has build an organizational and technological setup through Indian cybercrime coordination center and cybercrime reporting portal. Due to these initiatives it has become very simple for a victim to register their complaint online. Apart from that agencies for National Center for cybercrime training is also being set up for improving the skillset of the police officers.

Q. Any precautions you would like to recommend for banks or businesses in general when it comes to cybercrime?

A. One of the first lines of defense in a cyber-attack is a firewall. You should set up a firewall to provide a barrier between your data and cybercriminals. In addition to the standard external firewall, many companies are starting to install internal firewalls to provide additional protection.

While small businesses often operate by word of mouth and intuitional knowledge, cyber security is one area where it is essential to document your protocols. Businesses should document their cyber security best practices and the cyber security policies and scrupulosity use it.

It is essential that companies have a documented BYOD policy that focuses on security precautions. With the increasing popularity of wearables, such as smart watches and fitness trackers with wireless capability, it is essential to include these devices in a policy and prepare a standard operating procedure for the same.

Humans are the weakest link in Cyber security, hence it is essential that all employees accessing the network be trained on your company's network for cyber security practice and security policies. Their activities should be vetted for preventing the insider leak of information or attack.

While it's important to prevent as many attacks as possible, it is still possible to be breached regardless of your precautions. The companies should have a regular back up system for documents, electronic spreadsheets, databases, financial files, human resources files, and accounts receivable/payable files. Ensure backing up all the data stored on the cloud as well. Make sure that backups are stored in a separate location in case of fire or flood.

It's easy to assume that your employees know to never open phishing emails. However, Since phishing attacks involve installing malware on the employee's computer when the link is clicked, it's essential to have anti-malware software installed on all devices and the network.

Security is a moving target. The cyber criminals get more advanced every day. In order to protect your data as much as possible, it's essential that each and every employee consider cyber security a top priority.

Q. What are your long-term goals?

A. I wish to contribute to eradicate cybercrime and build better policing measures. **aNS**

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