

AMRITA VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM'S WOMEN-ONLY

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Cybersecurity Conference ShaktiCon to begin April 9, 2021

- *In the run-up to the event, a 36-hour, women-only Capture the Flag (CTF) contest would be held from April 3-5, 2021*
- *The focus of the Conference is fixing the gender gap in cybersecurity and showcase the next generation of offensive and defensive security technologies*

Hyderabad, March 31, 2021: More than 3,000 women hackers from India and around the world are expected to attend Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham's three-day global conference on cybersecurity called ShaktiCon that begins on April 9, 2021. In the run-up to the event, a 36-hour, women-only Capture the Flag (CTF) contest would be held from April 3-5, 2021, in which contestants will face challenges from the fields of cryptography, reversing, forensics, Pwn and web exploitation.

ShaktiCon is a completely free global conference focused on inspiring, training, and upskilling women in the field of cybersecurity. It offers training programmes to nurture women talent in the field, a global cybersecurity conference with talks and panel discussions by leading women professionals in cyber-security, and a women-only CTF hacking contest to showcase talent and win prizes and scholarships. The event is organized by Team Shakti, India's first and top-ranked women-only CTF team of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham.

The pre-conference global cybersecurity contest held in December 2020 attracted more than 1,500 women hackers with 828 teams from five continents. The participants, which have now grown to more than 3,000 women, received free access to premium learning platforms such as TryHackMe and PentesterLabs, practice challenges and training videos. They will be attending the upcoming ShaktiCon conference and participating in the CTF hacking contest.

Said Prof. Vipin Pavithran, Assistant Professor, Amrita Center for Cybersecurity Systems & Networks, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, who is the organizer of ShaktiCon: "Cybersecurity is considered a masculine domain and most women don't see it as a viable career path. The cybersecurity industry needs more women, and also has to open up for them. Demand is outstripping supply in this field. In the next five years, the number of jobs in cybersecurity will triple. Over 3.5 million new cybersecurity jobs would be created in 2021 alone. Despite this, women comprise only 20% of the total workforce in cybersecurity, and only 1% of them are in top leadership positions. The future of the cybersecurity industry depends on its ability to attract, retain and promote women, who represent a skilled and under-tapped resource."

He added: "The focus of our annual conference ShaktiCon is advancing the leadership and professional development of women in the field of cybersecurity and showcase the next generation of offensive and defensive security technologies. ShaktiCon offers a platform for female researchers and hackers from around the world to close the skills gap with men and help fix the gender gap in cybersecurity."

The keynote address at the ShaktiCon would be delivered by Rinki Sethi, VP and Chief Information Security Officer at Twitter Inc., followed by talks and training by eminent women cybersecurity experts such as Sung Lee from VMware, Sanju Misra from Linde, Mina Sheikhalishahi from Eindhoven University of Technology, Allison Marie Naaktgeboren from Portland State University, Bhavna Soman from Microsoft and SreepriyaChalakkal from Siemens.

Team Shakti is India's first and only women CTF team consisting of budding young female minds who want to make a difference in the field of cyber-security and fix the gender gap. The team participates in "Capture The Flag" competitions and provides training to school and university students, conducts CTFs, develops cybersecurity tools and participates in bug bounties. "Team Shakti has become one of the leading women-only CTF teams in India within just two years" said Prof. Vipin Pavithran, the founder and mentor of Team Shakti. The Club, based at the varsity's Amritapuri campus, is run by the students themselves with the help of research scholars, alumni, and faculty members