

Fellowship Report: APRICOT 2025 & APNIC 59, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to attend APRICOT 2025 and APNIC 59 as a fellow. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. John Rattray, the Fellowship Coordinator, and the APRICOT 2025 Fellowship Chairs for selecting me for this esteemed program and for his unwavering support throughout the journey. His guidance, particularly in arranging essential travel documents and advising us to book flights via AirAsia, was invaluable.

Upon receiving the fellowship, I completed all necessary formalities, including booking my flight with AirAsia as instructed and acquiring the required visa documentation provided by the fellowship team. Additionally, I applied for overseas leave from my organization, LEARN, which was duly approved.

My journey commenced on February 18th, with a 3.5-hour flight to Malaysia. Upon arrival, a friend in Malaysia (Umair) kindly picked me up and dropped me at the M World Hotel in Petaling Jaya. En route, we enjoyed a delightful dinner, making for a warm and welcoming introduction to the country.

The first segment of my fellowship experience was the APNIC Academy: Network Automation Workshop, held at the very hotel where I was accommodated. This intensive four-day workshop provided a deep dive into network automation concepts, including hands-on practical sessions. The topics covered included:

- Introduction to Automation
- The 3 W's of Automation
- Introduction to Salt
- Introduction to YAML and Jinja
- Configuration Management using Salt
- Salt States: Advanced Configuration Management
- Parsing Output Using TextFSM
- The Salt Event Bus
- Napalm Logs
- The Salt Reactor
- Salt Rest API
- Building a Device Inventory
- Extending Salt in Your Own Environment
- Debugging Techniques

The instructors were Terry Sweetser, Dave Phelan, and Makito Lay they were incredibly knowledgeable and supportive, making the learning process smooth and engaging. Their expertise and hands-on approach significantly enhanced my understanding of network automation, and I walked away with newfound skills that will undoubtedly be beneficial in my professional journey.

Following the technical workshop, we participated in the APRICOT Fellows Skills Workshop, which was designed to enhance soft skills and leadership capabilities. The workshop covered the following topics:

- Learning Presentation Skills
- Facing Public - Overcoming Fear
- Leadership in the Community
- Scenario-Based Incident Management and Role-Playing

The session was both insightful and interactive, fostering personal and professional growth. The facilitators William Stockbridge, Aftab Siddiqui (APNIC Foundation), Terry Sweetser (APNIC Training Delivery Manager), and Robbie Mitchell (Internet Society) shared valuable knowledge and real-world experiences, making the sessions truly engaging. The scenario-based incident management exercises, in particular, were incredibly effective in simulating real-world challenges and preparing us for leadership roles within our communities.



Throughout the fellowship, I had the privilege of connecting with esteemed professionals in the industry, including:

- Mr. Champika (ICANN)
- Mr. Pubudu (APNIC)
- Mr. Tashi Phuntsho (APNIC)
- Mr. René Fichtmüller (FLEXOPTIX)
- Mr. Rupesh (SANOG Chairperson)

Additionally, I met many representatives from various countries, each bringing unique insights and experiences, enriching my understanding of the global networking community.

Beyond the conference, my experience in Malaysia was truly remarkable. The hospitality was outstanding, and I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the vibrant city, indulging in diverse Malaysian cuisines, and experiencing the country's rich culture. From bustling street markets to exquisite local dishes, every aspect of the trip added to my unforgettable experience.

As a Sri Lankan Malay, my connection to Malaysia runs deeper than just this visit. Being in Malaysia felt like reconnecting with a part of my heritage, and I found myself completely captivated by its familiar yet distinct culture. The warm people, the flavorful food, and the lively atmosphere made me feel at home. This visit has only fueled my desire to explore more of Malaysia, to uncover its hidden gems, and to immerse myself further in its beauty and traditions. I truly miss Malaysia and look forward to returning to experience even more of what this incredible country has to offer.

On February 24th, I concluded my incredible journey and safely returned home. The entire experience, from the workshops to the cultural immersion, has left a lasting impression on me. I carried back not just technical knowledge and professional connections but also cherished memories that I will hold close.



I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. John Rattray and the entire APRICOT team, whose dedication and support made this fellowship experience seamless and rewarding. Their efforts in coordinating travel, accommodation, and program logistics ensured a productive and enriching time for all fellows.

The memories and knowledge gained from APRICOT 2025 and APNIC 59 will remain a significant milestone in my professional career. I look forward to applying my newfound skills and contributing back to my community while continuing to engage with the broader networking and security landscape.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity!

Thank you,
Tuwan A Jaleel