Varun Thakore

MTech(RA), EE, IIT Bombay

✉ varunt@ee.iitb.ac.in 🌐 varunthakore.github.io varunthakore

Research Interests

Applied Cryptography, Zero-Knowledge Proofs, Blockchains

Education

2021 – 2024 (expected)	**Indian Institute of Technology Bombay** Master of Technology, Electrical Engineering. *Specialisation in Communication Engineering.*	GPA = 9.04/10.0
2015 – 2019	**Sardar Patel College of Engineering** Bachelor of Technology, Electrical Engineering.	GPA = 7.58/10.0

Publications and Drafts

1 **MProve-Nova: A Privacy-Preserving Proof of Reserves Protocol for Monero**
Varun Thakore and Saravanan Vijayakumaran.

Research Experience

2022–23 **Proof of Reserves for Monero** *EE, IIT Bombay*
Prof. Saravanan Vijayakumaran | MTech Project - Stage I
– Developed a **privacy-preserving** proof of reserves (POR) protocol for Monero based on **Nova**, such that the exchanges do not reveal the addresses and the amounts that they own.
– Implemented it in **Rust** which involves working with **non-native field** and **Merkle trees**.
– The protocol has a proving time of about **8Hrs** for **10,000** addresses. The verification time (**2.19s**) and proof size (**12KB**) are **constant** irrespective of the number of addresses.
– Implemented a **non-collusion** protocol to prevent exchanges from colluding to generate POR.

2022 **Review of Elliptic Curve Pairings** *EE, IIT Bombay*
Prof. Saravanan Vijayakumaran | MTech Seminar
– Studied **elliptic curves** including their representations, **Group law** and other properties.
– Surveyed literature on **bilinear pairings** including **Divisors** which are used to define pairings, **Weil pairing**, **Tate pairing** and **Miller's Algorithm** which is used to compute pairings.

2023–* **Proof of Reserves for ERC-20*** *EE, IIT Bombay*
Prof. Saravanan Vijayakumaran | MTech Project - Stage II
– Study **Ethereum** transactions, types of accounts and data stored within a block.
– Design a **privacy-preserving** proof of reserves protocol for ERC-20 tokens based on **Nova**.
– Write rank-1 constraint system for **Keccack-256**, ECDSA signature verification on **secp256k1** and proof of membership for **Merkle Patricia trie** using bellpepper Rust library.

*Currently in progress

Work Experience

2021–24 **System Administrator (Part-time), EE Department** *EE, IIT Bombay*
– **Headed** the transition of department Mail, Proxy, LDAP and Web Servers from Physical systems to **Virtual Machines** using virtualization platforms like **Proxmox VE**.
– Responsible for configuring and securing Dept. **Mail Servers** and **Network Infrastructure**.

2019-21 **Proposals Engineer - Hybrid and Energy Storage** *Sterling and Wilson Pvt Ltd*

Key Projects

2023 **Nova SHA-512** *Guide: Prof. Manoj Prabhakaran*

Course Project: Cryptography and Network Security (Submitted at ZK MOOC Hackathon)

– Implemented R1CS for computation of **SHA-512** using **Rust** and **bellpepper** library. Number of constraints for SHA-512 compression function are **67,123**.

– Studied **Nova** folding scheme, used to fold two R1CS instances into one. Implemented **SHA-512 compression function** as the step function within the Nova computation.

– For input of size **64 bytes**, proving time is **5.9s**, proof size is **10KB** and verification time is **268ms**.

Private ECDSA Signature Verification *Guide: Prof. Manoj Prabhakaran*

Course Project: Adv. Tools from Modern Cryptography

– Implemented R1CS circuit for **ECDSA** signature verification on **secp256k1** curve using **Rust** and **bellpepper** library. Involves writing circuit for curve operations in the base field of **secp256k1**.

– Circuits for point addition and scalar multiplication implemented in **36** and **3343** number of constraints, respectively and circuit for signature verification implemented in **3389** constraints.

2022 **Data Augmentation using Generative models** *Guide: Prof. Sunita Sarawagi*

Course Project: Advanced Machine Learning

– Employed **CGAN** & **VAE** to generate novel data, diverging from conventional data augmentation.

– Analyzed the effect of data augmentation on variable size **MNIST** dataset using **CNN** classifier.

– Observed an accuracy improvement of **82.74%** with **VAE** model and **78.77%** with **CGAN** model, in contrast to **78.34%** accuracy without augmentation, with a training set size of **100** samples.

2021 **Cloud Cover Prediction - Shell.ai Hackathon** *Guide: Prof. Preethi Jyothi*

Course Project: Foundations of Machine Learning

– Cloud coverage impacts Solar PV power production. The task was to use **time series forecasting** techniques to predict cloud cover for next 20, 60, 120 minutes using the given historical data.

– Implemented several models including **Linear Regression**, **Multi Layered Perceptron** and **Long Short Term Memory Networks**. Achieved an accuracy of **89.44%** using MLP.

Extracurricular Activities

2023 Won 2nd prize for **"Category 2 : Circuits/R1CSs for Recursive SNARKs"** of **ZK MOOC Hackathon** hosted by **UC Berkeley RDI**, which had **600 participants** from over **60 countries**.

2022 **Teaching Assistant, ACM Winter School on Digital Trust, Trust Lab, IIT Bombay**

Teaching Instructor: Prof. Saravanan Vijayakumaran

– Assisted in conducting a workshop on **Smart Contract Development** for over **50** students.

– Workshop covered **Solidity**, compiling & deploying contracts using **Remix IDE** and **Hardhat**

2021 **Finalist** in **Shell.ai** Hackathon 2021 which had **2,000 registration** from more than **50 countries**.

Technical Skills

Programming	Rust, Python, Bash, Solidity, C, C++
Software & Tools	Bellpepper, Arkworks, Git, LaTeX, Pytorch, NumPy, Pandas, SciPy and Matplotlib

Relevant Coursework

Cryptography and Network Security
Adv. Tools from Modern Cryptography
Game Theory and Mechanism Design
Foundations of Machine Learning
Advanced Machine Learning
Information Theory and Coding
Error Correcting Codes
Communication Networks
Statistical Signal Analysis