

5 MINUTES WITH DR. JIBAN NATH

CARMIGNAC'S FRONT OFFICE QUANT RISK OFFICER

How does one from Assam, one of the furthest North-Eastern provinces of India which is renowned for its tea and one-horned rhino, blend into cosmopolitan London? Let's dive into the experience of Jiban Nath, Front Office Quant Risk Officer at Carmignac.

Tell us about your childhood?

I was born in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which borders Pakistan in Northern India at a time when my father was posted to the frontier as a serving member of the Indian army. Within few months after my birth, my sister, I and mum had to leave Kashmir due to the looming Indo-Pakistani war leaving dad behind. He was away from home for eleven months at a time, so I grew up with my mum until the age of nine in the village Dudhpatil, in Assam. I left the village to further my education and went to live in the nearest city, Silchar, with my aunt, who was a primary school teacher. She instilled in me a strong desire to learn and a sense of competitiveness.

What was your dream job as a kid?

When one grows up in a village like mine and at the time when I did, one's level of exposure and knowledge to what was available in the world was extremely limited. Before the age of ten, all I knew was that I needed to study very well to get out of the village where I saw struggles of daily-waging people around me and hopefully be a lecturer in a college. So, soon after the graduation from high school, I left my hometown and took a forty-hour train journey to Delhi, which was an adventure since I had never, until then, travelled outside of Assam.

What was it like in Delhi?

When I arrived in Delhi, paid accommodation was unaffordable, so I stayed in an open courtyard of a temple for a few months waiting for admission to Delhi University. Then, I rented someone's lounge sharing with a friend I made during my stay in the temple. As he was employed, he would sleep by 9 PM, so I would study sitting in the well-lit stairwell till late into the night. After the first semester, a family offered me a bed in their sitting room and food in exchange for tutoring their two kids for the next two semesters. A barter that suited me well.



How did you choose to specialize in Finance?

After my master's degree, I became a lecturer in a college in Delhi. But within a couple of months I was appointed a lecturer in Mathematics in a newly established university in my hometown where I taught masters students for three years. But in my mind the desire of doing a PhD further afield was a burning constant. Having applied, I was selected for a commonwealth scholarship for a PhD in the UK and entered Kings College in London and graduated in 2001. Everyone from my PhD cohort was applying for jobs in finance, so I decided to apply for a Quantitative Analyst position, and this is how my finance career started.

How did you join Carmignac?

Whilst working as a Quant with a PM in a London hedge fund, a senior member of the risk team with whom I had not worked before asked for help with a project and I obliged. A few months later, we both left the hedge fund and went our different ways. Sometime later, he started working at Carmignac, and as he needed a person with quantitative and programming skills, he reached out to me. I then met Maxime Carmignac and was soon hired, much to my delight.

You've been living in the UK for a while now. Have you started considering yourself as British?

While I'm proud of my Indian roots; I am proud to be a British citizen, too. I'm convinced the greater the exposure to different cultures, the increase in knowledge one experiences. This is not only because of the opportunity to learn more

about the world but also about being aware of oneself. Every day is a learning experience in a multi-cultural society that is London, and I enjoy it. In my view, democracy, respect for rule of law, diversity and individual liberty are some of the core values of British society and I share those. So I certainly do consider myself British, but always with Indian roots and taking the best of both cultures.

How do you leverage this adaptation skill in your daily job at Carmignac?

In the front office team, I work with various teams across the business including Portfolio Managers. To remain relevant, one must be connected, agile and mobile. This is what is exciting about this job and in finance in general. I love to be in the middle of the action.

What is special when you work as a front office Quant Risk officer at Carmignac?

The floor I work on is so culturally diverse, it's amazing! The colleagues around me are from very diverse nations and backgrounds including English, French, American, Spanish, German, Swedish, Turkish etc. I don't think I ever witnessed a floor that was as diverse as this anywhere else. This is very exciting and positive. The diverse nature of the people coupled with tolerance creates for vivid and informative debate. In my view diversity creates excellence.

Talking about excellence, what is your definition of this notion?

We in Carmignac are responsible for effectively managing the clients' assets, and excellence is about

servicing that mandate to the best of our collective abilities to ensure client satisfaction. I always ask myself: am I doing my best? Is my best relevant and useful? We improve ourselves by always keeping a realistic eye on what we are trying to achieve.

Do you have a motto?

"Live and let live". Everyone dreams of having a successful and happy lives but we have to be tolerant to our differences and must adapt to let live.