

The Quidnunc



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Welcome to the conference!

-Rajat Saha

Greetings, hon'ble delegates and dignitaries!

Alcheringa Atlantis in association with Literary Society, IIT Guwahati finds great pleasure in welcoming you to the first edition of IITG Model United Nations Conference. We shall strive to provide you a warm and comfortable stay at this beautiful campus of ours.

As delegates and champions of a just and stable world gathered here in the serene campus of IIT Guwahati, all eyes will be on you as the planet goes through a turbulent phase as we write.

The campus community and members of the International Press will observe every move of yours with utmost hope and speculation.

From the first-time delegates, it is hoped that you will bring a fresh perspective to the common issues

concerning the member-nations, primarily the issues of politically-motivated interventions and sanctity of the R2P doctrine. For, only you can offer novel and unconventional ideas to issues where we seem to have reached a standstill.

The members of the International Press are no less important in documenting and analyzing the proceedings of one of the most important MUN conferences in recent times and relaying it to the expectant masses, as several nations fall in and come out of turmoil. In line with the expectations, we will keep the general public informed and up-to-date as the conference develops, through all its twists and turns.

Finally, we remain hopeful that our delegates will arrive at a resolution which is

not only respectful of the concerns of all member-nations but also just and workable.

Must reads:

- TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
- TIPS FOR FIRST TIMERS
- THE IDEA THAT IS IITGMUN
- THE FLIP SIDE TO R2P

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"Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions..."

A new era begins: Editor's word

- *Amlan Das, Editor-in-chief*

Diplomacy is very interesting. There is so much happening all around the globe and there is so much to know. I would not say that by doing a Model United Nations Conference you are actually changing the world, but rather it is a great platform to learn and explore the world. It opens to you a whole new world to develop your diplomacy as well as your research skills. I agree, it's just a simulation, a play based on politics. But again, we are not on a mission to save the world, we are just attempting to learn how the world functions and trying to find solutions for the global issues of the day in an idealistic manner. Not only does it improve your speaking

skills but also helps you develop your personality. And who knows, playing a leader might help you take up the mantle of one in real life.

It's very unfortunate that the concept of MUNs reached North East really late, with the first MUN of the region happening just a few months back in Nagaland. It was always a dream for me to see my fellow mates doing an MUN here in Guwahati. And I am glad that IIT Guwahati has given them this chance.

Back in Delhi, there are MUNs every weekend. At times, it is more like a social gathering rather than an academic conference. But again, good debaters never

compromise on quality. I am quite fortunate to have been with probably the best so called MUNers of India, in fact to be trained by them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank IIT Guwahati for bringing in this noble concept of MUN into the state and urge the delegates to take full advantage of the opportunity. You have got a brilliant Executive Board; exploit their experience and knowledge to the fullest. I seriously hope such conferences continue happening in the region, and this particular one sets an example for them to look up to. I wish all a very best of luck.

“...THE VISION
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Why IITGMUN?

- *Vishal Kumar*

So, the big day is finally here! IIT Guwahati Model United Nations 2014 (IITGMUN'14) heralds the arrival of a fresh breeze of debating culture into the region. The air is already abuzz with excitement as we look forward to sessions where delegates will give their best trying to dominate, and amaze us with their new ideas and fresh perspective. Though born in the West, MUNs are a raging phenomenon the world over, and not without good cause.

There are many reasons that substantiate an MUN's claim to being one of the most fruitful intellectual activities. First up, preparation for such an activity requires a lot of research on the participant's part. We are sure you have burned quite a bit of midnight oil furthering your knowledge on the agenda, and making your case watertight. Secondly, the manipulative politics and the maze of diplomacy offered by the conference help sharpen one's skills to negotiate and convince, skills which are priceless in real life. An MUN

is one of the best exercises in team-work and consensus building.

We live in times of political turbulence. The world is full of issues which warrant understanding, and thus intellectual discussions. This decade has seen some major political upheavals. Be it the invasion of Afghanistan, the Arab spring, or the Middle East crisis, the principle of “Responsibility to Protect” has been put to test again and again.

The agenda before the committee is currently hogging

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the political headlines the world over. The ups and downs in the Syrian crisis have raised fingers over the effectiveness of the principle in resolving such complex scenarios. In the light of recent developments, and the mixed record of this principle, it's safe to assume that the conference will witness some very exciting discussions.

But it's not all; the vision behind IITGMUN goes far

beyond debating and exchange of ideas. It's an attempt to help the participants see this world in a new light. It's by events like MUN, by studying and enacting international bodies like the UN, that we learn the governing dynamics behind world politics. We strive to let us all see every aspect of the world with the same curious and piercing gaze. We strive to let us all ask the right questions, and

search for the right answers. IITGMUN is a leap of faith to achieve this goal, the first step in the unending quest for knowledge.

Responsibility to protect: The flip side

-*Mangesh Joshi*

The United Nations initiative of 2005, the R2P has emerged as the designated standard in international law. R2P initiative asserts that it is the responsibility of the state to protect and provide security to its people and the responsibility of international community in assisting the state in the above endeavour. However, if the state is unable or unwilling to protect its people from the mass atrocities, the international community has the responsibility to take coercive measures like economic sanctions and considering military intervention as a last resort (The authority of military intervention rests solely with the UNSC.) Even though the R2P's *raison d'être* seems laudable, it has been criticized by various countries and on various counts.

The BRICS are leading the front in criticizing the R2P. The interventions in Libya and Syria cemented their suspicions and weakened

the international consensus on R2P. The third pillar of R2P which talks about intervention is most criticized of the three. Many developing countries have raised questions that humanitarian interventions can be interest driven and a part of a "neo-colonial" scheme. Lack of modified criteria further fuels their fears of concealed motives and possible political abuse by world powers. Some question the efficacy and morality of intervention given that sovereignty is deeply enshrined in modern world order. Some critics are of view that internationalization of conflicts can complicate peace process and the regime change may not bring the desired result. Improper handling of intervention can have potentially huge consequences and delay further intervention. NATO's decision to push for a regime change in Libya antagonized many and it was unsurprising that the same countries blocked the Syrian resolution of US.

The proponents of R2P should work out the criteria which determine the conditions and means under which the intervention is required. The refusal of BRICS in supporting the Syrian resolution demonstrates urgent need for common criteria, else two permanent UNSC members and three aspiring members of UNSC may block every further international intervention and cause the demise of R2P doctrine. The criteria would limit the misuse by world powers and yet put pressure on the regimes abusing the sovereignty, and thus will add much-needed legitimacy to the interventions.

"...HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS CAN BE INTEREST DRIVEN AND A PART OF A 'NEO-COLONIAL' SCHEME..."

Tête-à-tête with the Executive Board

-Questionnaire by Pallavi Benawri

-Interviewers: Taha Barwahwala, Siddarth Tikoo, Dhruv Gupta

The Executive Board of IITGMUN recently became candid with us, with Chairperson Ashesh Das, Co-chairperson Pooja Chitkara, and Rapporteur Raghav Goyal sharing their valuable experience. Here are the excerpts:

IP: What factors led you to the decision of being a part of the executive board?

AD: I have been to many MUNs, but never to one in the North-East. When the EB applications came out for IITGMUN, I got interested. I applied, and my résumé fit the requirements. So, here I am.

RG: First, it was too good an opportunity to pass - the first edition of MUN in a prestigious college like IIT Guwahati. I decided to be a member of the board so as to set the bar for the rest of all. The prospect is very challenging and IITG has the chance to begin their MUN journey with their cultural fest.

PC: Well, I am honoured to be a part of the MUN, and primarily, what I would say my inclination was to even apply in the first place, was that it was one of the first few MUN's to be organized in the north-east and I genuinely do believe it's time that the north-east came on to the circuit map. That was primarily my motivation.

IP: What is your take on the agenda of the conference, 'The Responsibility To Protect?'

AD: The principle is becoming increasingly important in current times, given the situation in Syria and the Middle East. It is high time that the world recognizes its potency and endeavour to make it more detailed, more effective. It is pleasing to know that IITGMUN is addressing this sensitive topic by putting it on the agenda.

RG: I think it's a very thoughtful agenda and it's really well fitting for the General Assembly. The delegates won't have to force their brains into the debate and they can make comments befitting their country. Moreover, the vastness of the agenda will allow different opinions to be discussed and debated which itself is pretty interesting.

PC: The best thing about the agenda is that it allows you the opportunity for constructive analysis, it gives you the option of conflicting debate, of logically analysing the debate as the agenda provides. Also on the other hand, you can include a lot of foreign policies, you can include a lot of international, bilateral and multilateral agreements. We have so many crisis situations that you can analyse thoroughly. Very few agendas combine both these elements.

IP: When it comes to the present situation in Syria, many believe that there's no foreseeable victory for either contingent. What according to you could be a viable solution for this situ-

ation? If you don't believe there is one, what do you think will be the denouement?

AD: The Syrian situation is at a critical point. The war cannot stop unless there is a compromise between the rebels and the regime. However we also cannot simply ask President Assad to step down. It will be most impractical. We need calculated actions from the western fraternity or this deadlock can continue for 15-20 years.

RG: One of the major problem with Syria is actually there is no general consensus on the best possible solution in the international community. The international community itself is divided into two - one advocating the R2P and other stating the importance of respecting the state's sovereignty.

Though we can never give up hope and being part of the UN we have to believe that there is a viable solution. Whether it is giving back power to the people or taking up strict military action it is up for debate.

PC: From what I can understand from this situation is that there is no clear cut solution because neither of the two sides are willing to come to a compromise and neither of the two sides is so unquestionably strong that the other will simply give in, to put it that way. The rebel army is not united in its fight against the government be-

“...TAKE IT AS A CHANCE TO BE A DELEGATE OF A NATION - A DIFFERENT NATION - AND DO JUSTICE TO THAT GROUP...”

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cause of certain sectorisation of the Syrian community and also other factors, plus the prospect of foreign intervention makes the case a lot complex. If I really had all of it together, I could not really come out with a direct solution, because I'm sure if such a direct solution did exist, it would have been probably been considered in our life long back.

IP: How would you advise the delegates, esp. the first timers, to prepare themselves for this conference?

AD: The delegates should keep in mind that unlike parliamentary debating, a MUN is a highly formal event. The decorum of the conference has to be observed at all occasions. Also, the delegates should be well-acquainted with the rules and regulations and due procedure of the debate.

RG: The best advice I think is maybe the one I received myself - to not take MUN as a competition. Take it as a chance to be a delegate of a nation - a different nation - and do justice to that group. It's about representing your country - ideologies of which may seem strange to others but don't be afraid to stand out. Remember what you have researched and the rest will automatically fall into place.

PC: : First of all I think if you're a first timer at the MUN, then you're probably in the best position to participate because being a very first timer you don't have much expectations and we won't judge you. So even if you don't perform that well, it still does not make any difference because it was your first time and you can

be forgiven for any blunders that you commit. If you go with that sort of a mind-set you'll do brilliantly. Two things that you would probably need to work on is research which in short does not come very naturally, so do good research. And secondly lot of confidence. Someone who has been in 30 MUNs is no better than someone who has come for the first time. I think they should take it as more of a learning opportunity. All of us can individually say that we probably learnt the most about MUNs from our first, second or third MUN, and just have a lot of fun.

Writing resolutions can be challenging since they must appeal to a broad range of members with conflicting concerns to be passed successfully. How do you suggest the delegates formulate their resolutions to make them incontrovertible?

AD: The resolutions should be highly concise, so that everyone can comprehend what is being said. As the EB our interference in the proceedings will be minimal. However, we encourage the delegates to thoroughly debate each aspect of a resolution and go for amendments whenever required.

RG: I think that is where lobbying plays its major role - writing resolutions. It is one of the most difficult things the delegates will do and that is why they need to respect everyone's opinion, and resort to negotiations and compromise. They have to keep in mind that the resolution will only be accepted by all if it has inputs from and benefits for all

involved But while doing this they'll have to make sure they don't give up on the very essence of their stand. .

PC: I think at the end of the day it is majority v/s minority. Ultimately the draft resolution which gets the majority is the one which gets passed. But if the countries which hold a stake in that particular issue - if they are not in agreement with the draft resolution irrespective of the draft resolution ultimately getting passed it will not lead to any practical action in the real world. So while it is important that the draft gets passed it is also important that the country that actually holds a stake is in agreement with what has been placed in the document.

In the end I would like to conclude this interview by asking you about your expectations from IITG MUN 2014?

AD: I have very high expectations from the event. I have been to many places for MUNs and will surely like to see what the North-East has got in store for us.

RG: My expectations are serious delegations and fresh ideas. Most of the delegates would be first timers and their enthusiasm is hard to match. I'm really looking forward to that and I expect them to be very well prepared.

PC: I have no doubt the organisation will be absolutely brilliant. I hope I get to see a lot of intelligent analysis and the utmost diplomatic courtesy as the UN requires, and more than anything else I hope to have a total blast!

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“THE NEWS IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NEWSMAKERS”

INTERNATIONAL PRESS, IIT GUWAHATI MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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(Editor-in-Chief)
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- ◇ Nakul Yadav
- ◇ Pallavi
Benawri
- ◇ Rajat Saha
- ◇ Taha
Barwahwala
- ◇ Vishal Kumar

It is befittingly said, “The sword is always beaten by the spirit.” And so it shall, with delegates striving to provide solutions to global issues while adopting a peaceful approach, and ardently contested debates ensuring that all point of views are heard and all opinions aired before arriving at a mutually agreeable consensus. In the words of Hubert Humphrey- “Freedom is hammered out on the anvil of discussion, dissent and debate.” So brace yourselves for discussion, learn to tolerate dissent, and roll up your sleeves for debate, for a man reveals nothing unless you contradict him.

Find us on the web at:

www.iitgmun.wordpress.com

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