

Dear Delegates,

It is my sincerest pleasure to welcome you to the Seven Sisters Joint Crisis Committee between the Indian Government and the Northeast Rebels at the sixth annual University of Toronto Model United Nations Conference. My name is Natalie Ha and I am currently in my fourth year at the University of Toronto where I am completing an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in History and Ethics, Society and Law. This is my third year being involved in UTMUN and I am looking forward to what is sure to be another thrilling weekend of debate. UTMUN is a great conference for both experienced and novice debaters and the topics we will be discussing in this session are particularly exciting.

This modern day committee deals with a wide variety of issues ranging from human rights abuses and ethnic tensions to mass migration and self-determination in the Seven Sister States of India. These topics are all broad in nature, touching on countless sociopolitical issues that will allow you to thoroughly explore the complex matters at play in contemporary India. It will feature debates and crisis situations between the Indian government and the insurgent forces that will require you to think quickly and complexly and it will be your responsibility to come up with realistic and innovative solutions to these problems. The UTMUN crisis staff has put in a lot of effort in creating this committee and it is our hope that it will both challenge you and help you develop your debate skills along the way.

This background guide serves only as the beginning of your research and much of it is a very brief overview of the problems that will be discussed and you will need to conduct additional research in order to properly represent your position in this committee. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at n.ha@mail.utoronto.ca. I wish you all the best of luck and I look forward to meeting all of you at the conference in February.

Sincerely, Natalie Ha



History

The history of India is one of the oldest in the world. It is filled with vast amounts of intellectual and spiritual culture that makes it stand out amongst the world's civilizations. Yet it has also been, and some argue it continues to be, tumultuous and controversial and in no region is this more evident today than in the Seven Sister States.

The Mughal Empire

Beginning in 1556 and ending in 1719, the Mughal Empire of India "was one of the largest centralized states known in pre-modern world history", on par only with the Chinese Ming Empire. The result of a "millennium of Muslim conquest, colonization, and state building in the Indian subcontinent", the Mughal Empire was the first uniquely Indian state. Led by an all-powerful emperor, the Mughal Empire was a bastion of culture and power marked by "military victory, territorial expansion, and centralized control" that "unified the subcontinent" and "imposed an unprecedented level of public order." The Mughal Empire also saw the establishment of an extremely impressive and incomparable economy that prominently featured specialized occupations and foreign trade. It was also during the Mughal period that "new maritime connections with western Europe became the conduit for direct, unmediated transfers to India." Following years of conflict and power struggles, however, the empire began to weaken. This coupled with the growing economic dominance of foreign companies such as the British and Dutch East India Companies led, ultimately, to the fall of the Mughal Empire in 1719.

Imperial Rule and the Road to Independence

The period that has had the most profound effect on the current state of affairs in modern India is, arguably, the period during which it was under the domain of the United Kingdom and from which it subsequently achieved independence in 1947. It was in this period from the early eighteenth century to the mid twentieth century that we "saw the extension, consolidation and finally the decline of British rule... [and experienced] the growth of an international economy with which parts, but only parts, of the Indian economy became enmeshed."⁵

¹ John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1

² Richards, 2.

³ Richards, 1-2.

⁴ Richards, 5.

⁵ Dharma Kumar, "Economic History of Modern India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 9 (1972): 64.



The East India Company (EIC) was the "first joint stock multinational corporation of the world." And although the British East India Company was operating on a charter granted by Queen Elizabeth the First, it would come to rule India by itself for many years. The Company "[established] a commercial presence in India centered [sic] upon three presidencies established at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta" which "were fortified and defended by the Company as it sought to consolidate its position in an often hostile commercial and political world." Eventually, this led to "the growth of a small private army that [would] rival the regular British army in terms of size and manpower... [helping] to transform the Company from trader to sovereign."8 As the East India Company continued to expand its political and economic power, it also expanded its geographical territory by occupying areas such as Bengal in 1757. Soon enough, "the fortunes of [the] Company and [the] nation... became so tightly intertwined that they had begun to move in tandem with one another... when the Company flourished, the nation flourished." As the Company gained further power, it also solidified its position as political ruler, "[concentrating] its efforts on the collection of territorial and customs revenues in northeast India... [a] right [which] had been granted by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II." This move, and others in its vein, signified the shift "from trade to political dominion in the region." ¹¹

In time, because "the military and administrative costs of [the] empire multiplied, the Company proved itself unable to generate a revenue surplus for transfer to Britain [and] by 1772 the Company was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy" leading to criticism at home and intensifying the already existing resentment of those in India. ¹² Such feelings culminated in the Indian Rebellion of 1857, alternatively recognized as India's First War of Independence. During the Rebellion, the country "witnessed a widespread military mutiny and large-scale civilian uprisings against the alien rule [of the British] in India... which was threatening Indian freedom with its formidable clutches of slavery." While

⁶ Vijay K. Seth, "The East India Company-A Case Study in Corporate Governance," *Global Business Review* 13 (2012): 221.

⁷ Huw V. Bowen, "400 Years of the East India Company," *History Today* 50 (2000): 48.

⁸ Seth.

⁹ Seth.

¹⁰ Seth.

¹¹ Muhammad Saleem Mazhar and Mussarat Jabeen, "War of Independence 1857: Lessons for Present Situation of South Asia," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* 3 (2011): 1250.

¹² Seth.

¹³ Mazhar and Jabeen, 1249.



the Rebellion failed to bring about the independence that its Indian participants sought, it had the effect of bringing together "various feudal lords, rajas, nawabs and chiefs of respective rule and territories into one united force" as "soldiers of different regions and religions... fought one of the most powerful empires of the world... with limited resources and... poor military training" and still managed to present one of the most formidable oppositions to British rule that it had ever witnessed in one of its empires. Hore most however, the Rebellion of 1857 effectively ended the political rule of the British East India Company in most of India and the "Company ended its days in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny when no case at all could be advanced for its survival in any form." Nevertheless, "its powerful legacy endured in India for many more years in the form of the Indian army and civil service" and many of the structural aspects of the East India Company remained.

In light of the fall of the East India Company, the British instated their own imperial rule in the form of the British Raj. Years of economic and political imperialism and oppression would continue until the First World War when many of Britain's colonies began to actively campaign for independence as countries like India and Canada who had contributed significantly to the war effort petitioned for greater autonomy. Alliances similar to the partnership that formed during the Rebellion of 1857 again came to exist and "a politically innovative campaign of noncooperation [and nonviolence] united the Indian National Congress, radical peasant movements, and Muslims demanding the restoration of the recently abolished caliphate."¹⁷ So powerful and threatening was this new partnership, led by Mohandas Gandhi, that "at its height in 1919 [it] provoked one of the most notorious imperial atrocities, when troops fired on unarmed demonstrators at Amritsar" killing at least 379 people and wounding at least an additional 1200. 18 This is not to say, however, that in the post war years there were no victories for the independence movement as India gained membership in the League of Nations and a new Government of India Act was passed in 1935, both of which helped to bring a measure of independence to the nation. Internal conflicts between the British and Indian forces would continue with limited British concessions for the needs and wants of the Indian citizens throughout the next few decades. Yet for all intents and purposes, British India thrived and "in 1935, [it] was a veritable showcase of modern imperial endeavor,

¹⁴ Mazhar and Jabeen, 1250.

¹⁵ Seth.

¹⁶ Seth.

¹⁷ Martin Shipway, "British Empire, End Of," in *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, ed. John Merriman and Jay Winter (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006): 446.

¹⁸ Shipway, 446.



with a thriving industrial sector, forty two thousand miles of railway, and a civil service and police force both staffed and increasingly officered by Indians, but also, crucially for British power, limited suffrage and a 300,000-strong army." Yet none of these steps helped when, in September 1939, "without consulting a single Indian nationalist leader", the country was brought, though not without support, into the Second World War. Following the war, efforts at gaining independence continued and the fight for independence would end, ostensibly, in 1947 when "Lord Louis Mountbatten... [signed] the Transfer of Power in August... from Britain to two separate states of India and Pakistan", a move that remains controversial to this date. ²¹

The Seven Sister States

The Seven Sister States are located in the northeast region of India and consists of seven states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya. The state of Sikkim is sometimes also associated with the Seven Sister States. The regions, until recently, remained extremely remote and many required visitors to obtain a pass from the government to access them. With a population of over 35 million people, the picturesque region it occupies has become increasingly important in recent years because of its geographical location. Surrounded by "five countries... [the Seven Sister states are] a gateway of India to [the] South East Asian region" whose prominence has been bolstered by the "Look East policy." This has "prompted the government to [create] the paradise unexplored campaign [although] lack of vision... and management in the development policy of the region has not produced the desired outcome."²³ Conversely, the Seven Sister States have also been "characterized [sic] by physical isolation... high cost of access, sparse population, low GDP per capita, dependence on [the] tertiary sector in the economic structure, limited local economic control, relative neglect by the central government and borderland locations" and "low per capita income, low investment, acute unemployment problems, poor communication and infrastructure."²⁴ The culmination of these problems has resulted in increasing frustration amongst the region's population, "weakened administrative discipline and depleted human capacity" and a general failure of the government to meet "the needs of

¹⁹ Shipway, 446.

²⁰ Denis Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152.

²¹ Shipway, 449.

²² Margaret Gangte, "Sustainable Development Alternative: Unlocking the Lock (Case Study of Northeast Region of India)," *Journal of Sustainable Development* 4 (2011): 61.

²³ Gangte, 61.

²⁴ Gangte, 61.



the people."²⁵ There has been a subsequent "mushrooming of insurgent outfits operating as extortionists" that has "sustained and encouraged militant activities [and] disrupted law and order leading to [the] further deterioration of economy and administration."²⁶ The region, therefore, exists as one of both promise and conflict and it is likely that these conflicts will only continue to escalate unless the government moves to make changes in the region.

²⁵ Gangte, 61.

²⁶ Gangte, 61.



Topics

It is evident that the history of India has been long, complex, and filled with both internal and external conflicts. Following its independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, India has grown into the second most populated country in the world and is now one of the largest economies in the world. Yet the country continues to face countless challenges, some of the most prominent being the issues plaguing the Seven Sister states.

Human Rights Abuses in Northeast India

One of the main accusations being brought against the Indian government by the insurgent forces regards the alleged human rights abuses being enacted upon the citizens of the Seven Sister States. The problem of human rights abuses has become prominent enough that foreign governments, including the United States, have begun to criticize the "excessive use of force by security forces, widespread corruption, limits on [the] freedom [of the press] and discrimination against women and minorities."²⁷ Northeast India is also distinct in that parts of the Seven Sister States enforce the "Disturbed Areas Act [which] gives police extraordinary powers of arrest and detention, and the [Armed Forces Special Powers Act which] provides search and arrest powers without warrants [which] human rights groups alleged... [gave forces] virtual impunity."²⁸ The government maintains, however, that these acts are used solely in order to maintain national peace and used only against "suspected terrorists, militants and their suspected supporters." Similarly, insurgents have "also engaged in widespread torture, rape and other forms of violence, including beheadings, kidnapping, and extortion." For a country built on a foundation of non-violence, these allegations of human rights abuses on both sides are particularly troubling. The Indian government must find a way to alleviate these alleged atrocities and to get to the root of the problem while ensuring the security and well being of its citizens.

Ethnic Tensions and Mass Migration

In July 2012, ethnic tensions in the state of Assam escalated to the point where "thousands of people [were forced to pour] into relief camps [when] ethnic clashes killed at least 41 people" within a week as members of the Bodo tribe and Muslim settlers fought violently in

²⁷ Anonymous, "India Rapped For Poor Human Rights Record," *The Hindustan Times,* March 10, 2006, accessed December 11, 2012,

http://search.proquest.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/471079690.

²⁸ "India Rapped For Poor Human Rights Record"

²⁹ "India Rapped For Poor Human Rights Record"

³⁰ "India Rapped For Poor Human Rights Record"



the streets of Assam. ³¹ The government authorized "shoot on sight orders and a curfew [in efforts] to quell further rioting" as over 200,000 people fled the region. ³² The roots of the riot were tied to "animosity and accusations of land-stealing between members of the ethnic-Bodo community and the thousands of mostly Bengali Muslim settlers, many of whom came from the former East Pakistan before it became Bangladesh in 1971." ³³ A similar event took place in Tripura in 2000 when "festering tensions between the local Indian tribespeople and Bengalis... flared." ³⁴ It is extremely likely that with limited amounts of land available in the region and "population growth in the nearby Indian, Nepali, and Bangladeshi plains... [continuing] to push people off the land" and into the area occupied by the Seven Sister States, that these events will not be resolved easily or quickly. ³⁵ The government needs to find a way to address these ethnic tensions in a peaceful manner and to provide for those citizens who have fled their homes as a result of these conflicts. We must develop new and innovative solutions to these issues, keeping in mind the deep seated and historical roots of these conflicts and the remoteness of many of these regions as well as the fact that much of the migration deals with countries other than India-specifically Nepal and Bangladesh.

Self Determination of the Region

The Seven Sisters have "historically felt that modern India had no claim to its territories and many of their tribes asserted their independence early on." In the case of "the states of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh [they had all been] carved out of the territorial boundaries of the old Ahom kingdom [in efforts] to

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³¹ VOA News, "Thousands Flee Ethnic Clashes in Northeast India," *Voice of America News*, July 26, 2012, accessed December 11,2012,

http://search.proquest.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/1027918539.

³² VOA News

³³ VOA News

³⁴ KTD Singh, "Ethnic Violence Leaves Dozens Dead in India's Northeast," *The Associated Press*, May 21, 2000, accessed December 11, 2012,

http://bf4dv7zn3u.search.serialssolutions.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-

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^{21&}amp;rft.spage=1&rft.externalDocID=605749311.

³⁵ Mandavi Mehta, "Northeast States, The," in *Encyclopedia of India*, ed. Stanley Wolpert (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006): 244.

³⁶ Mehta, 241.



strengthen the administrative structure of the Indian state and to appease tribal demands for independence" and Assam was created out of parts of "the district of Sylhet [which] went to East Pakistan, and present-day Bangladesh." Like most of the partitions created by England, "these partitions did not pay sufficient attention to tribal groupings... [resulting in] considerable tribal populations [being] divided between [different] states and nations." There has always existed, therefore, a unique and yet unifying history between the Seven Sisters that has helped to fuel its desire for independence. Its distance from the traditional centers of politics and business, moreover, has fostered relationships of mutual reliance between the states that have cultivated an independent identity from the rest of the country. Heeding these claims for increased autonomy, the government must, therefore, decide which groups will be given greater autonomy over their internal affairs and to what extent. It must do so taking into account the precedence that it is setting not only for other states that wish to acquire independence but also the effect that it could have on other international independence movements.

³⁷ Mehta, 241.

³⁸ Mehta, 241.



Positions

This committee will be representing the Indian government as led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a role that will be assumed by the committee director. Also present will be various Ministers from the Prime Minister's cabinet. Many of the Ministers have in the past represented different ministries or gained expertise in areas other than the one they currently represent and so will have knowledge in numerous areas.

Arackaparambil Kurien "A.K." Antony

Antony is the current Minister of Defense and a Member of Parliament from the Rajya Sabha region as a representative of the Indian National Congress. By most accounts, Antony is the second highest ranking member of the Indian Cabinet. Previously, he also served as the minister of the state of Kerala in south western India and a member of the Kerala Legislative Assembly where he became the official Leader of the Opposition in 2005. He has since served on committees for Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Population and Public Health and Health and Family Welfare and worked in areas of corruption and reform. A former lawyer and journalist, Antony was raised as a Syrian Catholic although he is now an atheist.

Sharadchandra "Sharad" Pawar

Pawar currently serves as the Minister of Agriculture and as a Member of Parliament representing the constituency of Madha in the state of Maharashtra, the wealthiest state in India. Pawar is also the President of the Nationalist Congress Party, a party that he created in 1999 after a disagreement with the Indian Nationalist Congress. Upon the appointment of Pranab Mukherjee to the Presidency, many had expected Pawar, rather than Antony, to succeed him as the second in command of the cabinet. Pawar is known for his political ambition and has been accused of corruption several times but maintains many relationships across party lines that have helped him maintain his power over the years. First being elected to the Maharashtra government at the age of twenty-seven, Pawar has served in many prominent positions, including as the Chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and as the President of the International Cricket Council. Other members of Pawar's family are also involved in politics at various levels and his brother serves as the Editor in Chief of the Daily Sakal, one of the largest newspapers in India.

Palaniappan "P." Chidambaram

³⁹ HT Correspondent, "It's Official, AK Antony is No 2 in Cabinet," *the Hindustan Times*, October 31, 2012, accessed December 11, 2012, http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/It-s-official-Antony-is-No-2-in-Cabinet/Article1-952474.aspx.



From the state of Tamil Nadu, Chidambaram is currently in his second, non-consecutive term as Finance Minister and is a member of the Indian National Congress. A Harvard educated corporate lawyer who had formerly represented companies like Enron, Chidambaram was also the former Minister of Home Affairs after the Mumbai attacks in 2008- a position which he held until he became the Finance Minister. An advocate of numerous economic and bureaucratic reforms, Chidambaram's career has nonetheless seen its fair share of controversy.

Sushilkumar Shinde

Appointed Minister of Home Affairs in July 2012, Shinde had previously served as Minister of Power from 2006-2012 and also made an unsuccessful run for the Vice Presidency in 2002. The son of a cobbler, Shinde belongs to a Scheduled Caste community and had previously been a police officer in the Maharashtra region. Shinde is generally known for his amicability and has relatively few political enemies and can count prominent politicians such as Indian National Congress President Sonia Gandhi among his friends after serving as her campaign manager in her 1999 campaign.

Salman Khurshid

Minister of External Affairs Khurshid's political career began when he assumed the role of Officer on Special Duty in the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Office. Subsequently he was elected as the Member of Parliament from the constituency of Farrukhabad and was first appointed as Minister of Corporate Affairs and then Minority Affairs and Law and Justice before being named to his current position. Prior to his political career, Khurshid enjoyed a prominent legal career where he represent high profile groups such as the Students Islamic Movement of India, a group that is considered a terrorist group by the Indian government.

Manish Tewari

Currently serving as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and the Member of Parliament from Ludhiana, Tewari comes from a long line of politicians in his family. His father, a Punjabi professor and author, had been killed by Sikh militants in 1984. First becoming a Member of Parliament in 2009, his position as Minister of Information and Broadcasting is his first high profile position and his first in the cabinet, although he had been actively involved in politics beforehand. Some of the prominent projects that he has undertaken since being elected have included building the infrastructure of his constituency and attempting to place the Indian intelligence agencies under the oversight of the parliament.

Kapil Sibal

A long time ally of Prime Minister Singh, Sibal is the incumbent Minister of Communications and Information Technology, having also served as the Minister of Science



and Technology and Minister of Earth Sciences. Growing up, Sibal and his family had been left homeless as a result of the British partition. Among his most notable controversies were attempts to regulate internet content, a move that led to widespread criticism. He also made attempts at creating an affordable laptop as part of the One Laptop Per Child intiative and has been a member of several nongovernmental organizations and charitable foundations-including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Human Rights Commission, and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative.

K. Rahman Khan

Minister of Minority Affairs Khan is currently serving his fourth term as a Member of Parliament from the state of Karnataka, where he had previously become the first Muslim person to be named a Chartered Accountant in his state. His accounting background had seen him consulted on numerous committees on financial affairs prior to his appointment as the Minister of Minority Affairs. Since assuming this position, Khan has made efforts to call for structural reforms that will allow for more minority rights.

Ashwani Kumar

Kumar is currently the sitting Minister of Law and Justice as well as the Member of Parliament for the Punjab region. A former lawyer, Kumar had also served as a Senior Advocate for the Supreme Court of India and travelled extensively as a representative of India, including as a member of the Indian delegation to the Indo-Japan Economic Dialogue and the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue in 2012. He has advocated for a strong and careful observance of Indian law at all levels and especially in areas pertaining to the "safety and dignity of women."

Tariq Ahmad Karim

Karim is a career diplomat currently serving as the High Commissioner to India from Bangladesh. Beginning his career as a member of the Pakistani Foreign Service, Karim has held numerous high power positions in the Bangladeshi government, including as the High Commissioner to South Africa, the Ambassador to Iran, and as the Deputy Chief of Mission to Beijing. High Commissioner Karim has been a crucial strategist to the Bangladeshi government, helping to end the "cross border insurgency problems [between Bangladesh and India] that had plagued relations between the two countries for over two decades."

⁴⁰ Yudhvir Rana, "I Hope CM Follows Raj Dharma, Says Law Minister Ashwani Kumar," *The Times of India,* December 9, 2012, accessed December 11, 2012, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/I-hope-CM-follows-Rajdharma-says-law-minister-Ashwani-Kumar/articleshow/17544197.cms
⁴¹ http://www.bdembassyusa.org/index.php?page=ambassador-ahmad-tariq-karim



Bikram Singh

A stand out as a student while in the National Defense Academy and the Sikh Light Infantry, Commander Lieutenant General Singh excelled in numerous subjects ranging from various sports and music and art to zoology and biology. He has led a lengthy and distinguished career in the Indian Army that dates back to the pre-independence British Indian Army and that has also included posts with the United Nations in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Upon his appointment, Singh became the first Chief of the Indian Army never to have served in a traditional war (the last time India fought in a conventional war "was in 1971 against Pakistan to liberate Bangladesh"). 42

Paban Singh Ghatowar

He is the Union Minister of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. Ghatowar has been a long standing member of the Indian parliament, having a career of over 20 years as an MP. His position is charged with overseeing the development of the Northeast Corridor and ensuring basic services and infrastructure are available. He is also charged with promoting peace and security within that region.

Kishore Chandra Deo

He is the Minister of Tribal Affairs and the Minister of Panchayati Raj. Chandra Deo has been a member of parliament since the late 70s, although he has been voted out numerous times. His position is associated with looking after the tribes in India as well as the issue of their self-governance. The Northeast region of India has high concentrations of tribal populations, which ranges from 19.3% to 94.5% depending on the state.

Aiit Seth

Ajit Seth is the Cabinet Secretary of India, making him the head of India's entire civil service. Ajit Seth answers directly to the Prime Minister of India and is charged with advising the Prime Minister and providing assistance to the Cabinet among his other duties. His roles include communicating with military and intelligence wings of the government alongside leading the civil service.

Sanjeev Tripathi

He is the current chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, the main external intelligence office of India. His agency was created after the 1962 war with China and handles mainly foreign intelligence matters. Tripathi had a long career in intelligence and is quite

⁴² Anonymous, "Who is General Bikram Singh?," *New Delhi Television*, June 1, 2012, accessed December 11, 2012, http://www.ndtv.com/article/cheat-sheet/who-isgeneral-bikram-singh-220833.



experienced in dealing with insurgents and terrorists. He was one of the architects of the peace agreement between the Northeast Insurgents and the Indian government.



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