BACKGROUND GUIDE

FOR

THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

IIT INDORE MUN'22



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The International Press

History is being written, you are the author. Is the pen mightier than the sword?

The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization with main aim to promote international co-operation. This organization builds up to provide support, and peace among all countries. UN consists of the Security Council, along with the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) which represents the Press. The International Press was established in the year 1948 in the UN, and it has always strived to bring out the truth to the people. The Press acts as a link between the masses and the UN.

The Press has its own stand, and it has become a necessity for it to provide factual and enlightening information, which frees people from ignorance. It functions as an investigative, versatile and important form communication between the world and the human beings.

The International Press consists of a body of news agencies, broadcasters, and the like, who has their form of liberty in informing, and deliberating about events occurring in the United Nations. The International Press endeavors in promoting awareness and to wake up the conscious of the human mind to the reality and authenticity about the events occurring in the world. It works tirelessly and with diligence in providing the truth, disclosing and elucidating on the debate among the delegates of the notable committee.

The most important function is that it acts a watchdog, and keeps the decision makers in line, and holds the answerable and responsible for any kind of actions taken. Thus the International Press, with the collaboration of reporters, and photographers has always been an unconventional way of information, knowledge, realism, and a humane approach.

The INTERNATIONAL PRESS has always followed the path of truth and certainty, because of which it is verifiable and reliable. It has remained strong in its stance, and even brought out the dilemmas and conspiracies in the public realm. Through the support of various modes of communication, co-operation, and elucidation, the delegates of INTERNATIONAL PRESS act in a liberated and unconventional way with authorization to cover up all attributes and features of the MUN conference.

Forms of Media

There are many forms of media; however, they can broadly be classified into two categories: textual and visual. Textual media involves formats that are comprised of written texts only. They usually do not have much scope for humor and are mostly formal, except for informal opinion pieces, which can be used by reporters to write wittier, humorous, and creative pieces. Textual media includes various forms of articles, and interviews. Visual forms of media are the more attractive, eye-catching and artistic forms of media. They involve minimum usage of text and maximum visualization. However, they can be more difficult to present, as it is important that the reporter broadcasts the message

clearly, for easy interpretation. Visual media includes illustrations, photographs, videos, and visual graphics.

1.1 Textual Media

The International Press is expected to predominantly produce written content.

The International Press delegates will have the option of presenting various types of written content, including news pieces, opinion pieces on discussions in committee, interviews, and informal articles. Getting the basic facts and information wrong can be hazardous for a reporter, and in such cases, understanding the situation and the issues being discussed in the committee is essential. If a journalist is not able to do so, he or she is encouraged to approach the dais with a note for clarification. However, to gather detailed and proper information about the committee proceedings, it is imperative that the reporter be present in the committee for the entire session or for an hour or so, depending upon the content he or she wishes to produce. One should remember that a refined and quality piece is devoid of factual inaccuracies and assumptions, features quotes and interviews, and is an original work. In this section of the study guide, we shall be talking about the five different categories or types of articles, this is a highly crucial part of the background guide. Each of these is a unique way of conveying information. It would be appreciated if the delegates try to use as many of these as possible.

News Pieces

News pieces are the most common way of reporting. They constitute fact-based articles stating key facts about proceedings of a committee, some background information, and information about the agenda of the committee. Remember, every article written must abide to a certain standard of accuracy. Reporters take care to get the facts right, and in case of doubt, they should approach the delegate or the Executive Board described, for clarification. Depending on the availability of personnel, individual Reporters will be assigned a "beat" of one or more committee/council simulations on which to report, and may be assigned to conduct interviews during tea or lunch. To capture the beat, ensure that you are actively present in the committee to be able to identify the form and shape of the discussion. You can use the first-half of the day to collect data and select the core idea of your article, and utilise the remaining time to give a factual backing to the same.

- A beat based article is a specialised, factual article, and can include direct quotes from delegates, and/or statistical data.
- It has no requirement of a personal opinion, and is only restricted to the happenings in the committee around the beat, and the facts attached to the same.
- The data used in a beat-based article should use the correct data, including the names of delegates and the facts stated.
- The inclusion of factual details and direct quotes of the delegates enhances the credibility of the article.
- Once the beat is identified in the committee, the reporter also has the liberty to shed light on a segment of the topic based on his/her research.

Opinion pieces

As one can decipher from their name, opinion pieces generally feature the reporter"s opinion upon an issue. Reporters may write Op-Eds for the newsletter after they have finished reporting from the council, which may include their take on the agenda. Editorials or Op- Eds do not have to contain any information on what happened in the council/committee but concerns what the author thinks of the discussion at hand. Editorials and Op-Eds have to be very high in standards of writing and expression, and publication shall be at the subject of discretion of the Editorial Board. In clear words, Editorials and Op-Eds differ from News articles in matters of substance than events.

Things to keep in mind while writing an OpEd:

- It should be based on verifiable facts, but should not necessarily contain them
- It is bound by word limit, and hence you need to be concise and to the point.
- It has to express opinions-however; opinions do not mean baseless arguments.
- The number of aspects covered in an OpEd's argument is upto the author, but it is necessary to keep in mind that the argument(s) showcased are not too fuzzy.
- Arguments should be comprehended in a manner that they lead to a final concluding paragraph and not just an abrupt ending.

Features

Features are articles where a journalist gets to show his/her creativity to the maximum. Not essentially as important or relevant as an OpEd or a Report/Beat, features allow the journalist to unleash their creativity in the form of poetry, prose, diary entries, open letters and a lot more. These, however, need to be committee-centric; otherwise they do not really serve the purpose of being a part of a MUN newsletter.

Points to remember while writing a feature:

- Make them as creative as possible.
- Make sure they are committee-centric, Background Guide International Press 8 | P a g e For Example, in a committee debating about the Syrian crisis, the journalist could write a feature from the point of view of the Syrian refugees, children, and et cetera, the possibilities are endless.
- Features, while do not require a heavy work on research, but stand for the purpose of influential symbolism to reflect the agenda at hand.
- While we understand that limiting creativity to a word limit is not right, you have to keep in mind that this is, eventually, a newsletter, and we need to stick to a word limit.

Interviews

Interviews are another common method of gathering information and presenting data. Reporters may interview the delegates or even the Executive Board during breaks or lobbying sessions. The reporters are NEVER to do an interview inside the committee room. If the reporter wishes, he or she can send a note to the person who is to be interviewed and do the interview outside. The number of questions asked should be minimal, but significant. Reporters should also remember that creativity is an essential part of good journalism. Interviews should not be limited only to the delegates of the committees but can be extended to the members of the Executive Board and the Secretariat. Interviews can be anything from general conference opinion, to expectations, to the committee

proceedings, or even fun, interactive quizzes. However, reporters should never ask anything that is inappropriate or makes the interviewee uncomfortable. The interviewee reserves the right to deny answering any question and should not be compelled to do so under any circumstances. An interview is an opportunity of a personal interaction with a person. It is an effective tool which should be utilized to bring out those aspects which will not come in light otherwise in the course of the MUN.

Interviews in MUN

The constant debating may provide with little opportunities of you getting ample time for a detailed interview. The ideal interview times are refreshment breaks and through chits. Chits are one tool which we encourage you to use for substantive purpose only. You can bring out the relevant points through chits and you can take permission for a prior interview through them.

Preparing for the Interviews

Research – Do as much research as you can. If you"re going to interview, say, a head of state read up on the subject and make sure you understand basic terms such as "fiscal policy." A well-prepared reporter inspires confidence in the person being interviewed.

Developing Questions – Once you"ve thoroughly researched your topic, prepare a list of questions to ask. That will help you remember all the points you want to cover once the interview is underway.

Keys to a Successful Interview

Establish a Rapport – When starting out, don't abruptly launch into your questions. Chitchat a little with your source. Compliment them on their office, or comment on the weather. This puts your source at ease.

Keep it Natural — An interview can be an uncomfortable experience, so keep things natural and conversational. Instead of mechanically reading out your list of questions, weave your queries naturally into the flow of the conversation.

Also, maintain eye contact as much as possible. Nothing is more unnerving to a source then a reporter who never looks up from their notebook.

Be Open – Don"t be so focused on getting through your list of questions that you miss something interesting.

For instance, if you"re interviewing the cardiologist and she mentions a new hearthealth study that"s coming out, ask her about it. This may take your interview in an unexpected direction – but if it leads to something interesting, so what?

Maintains Control – Be open, yes, but don't waste your time. If your source starts to ramble on about things that are clearly of no use to you, don't be afraid to gently – but firmly – steer the conversation back to the topic at hand.

Wrapping Up – At the end of the interview, ask your source if there's anything they want to discuss that you hadn't asked about. Double-check the meanings of any terms or words they used that you're unsure about. And always ask if there are other people they recommend that you speak with.

A Note about Note-taking – Beginning reporters often freak out when they realize they can't possibly write down everything the source is saying, word- for-word. Don't sweat it. Experienced reporters learn to take down just the interesting stuff they know they'll use, and ignore the stuff they won't. This takes some practice, but the more interviews you do, the easier it gets.

Reporting

One of the most important tasks that journalists in the International Press perform is formal reportage. They are primarily required to cover the event and describe it to others in the most structured and concise way possible, and for this purpose, they take notes and submit articles that contain the major happenings/discussions in their respective councils. A good news report ought to be articulate, succinct, neutral in tone and opinion, and be able to convey the essence of a discussion/occurrence to someone who has not personally witnessed it.

The key points to remember while writing are:

- 1) Keep your article brief and to-the-point. Council reports should ideally not exceed 250-300 words.
- 2) Your article must not betray your personal perspective on the agenda. It is very important to maintain objectivity and report the incidents/conversations with as much neutrality and accuracy as possible. This is a key difference between reporting and writing an Op-Ed article.

For this purpose, you are advised to be meticulous with your notes and include quotes as much as possible, with due credit to the speaker. The correct format and punctuation required for quoting is, for example: "Those people are criminals who want to take over the city and kill the community," said Sheikh Rate"s Abdulkareem Albu Fahad, who is leading the tribal fight against al-Qaeda in Ramadi.

- 3) Your article must be coherent and well-structured. It ought to contain an identifiable opening, two descriptive paragraphs, and a conclusion. You must give your article a relevant headline and a by-line containing "By (Your Name)".
- 4) Grammar and punctuation must not be compromised with. A spell-check of the final draft is essential.
 - **Taping** Recording an interview is fine, and generally it's best to get the permission of the person you're recording. Taping can be helpful if you're doing a long interview that you'll have time to listen to and type out later.

• Informal Articles

While most of the conference reporting is formal and profound, reporters will have the option of portraying their more creative and humorous sides through informal articles. The official Choithram Model United Nations newsletter will be a forum for any article featuring content that is witty, creative, humorous, critical, or as simple as a conference update. Delegates can present all sorts of content like a list of DOs and DON'Ts at an MUN, confessions by delegates, a list of conference-related puns and jokes, and much more! However, the reporters should always maintain a level of professionalism and optimism. No reporter is to write anything that might offend any person and should refrain from accusing people in any manner.

1.2 Visual Media

Along with written content, journalists can also cover committee sessions through visual content, which includes photographs, videos, and visual graphics. Journalists are highly encouraged to present visual content, as it is an unconventional, attractive, modern, and creative way of reporting. However, as in textual media, the basic norms of reporting apply here too.

Photography

Photography is a powerful journalistic medium. Photographs are much more attractive then written media and speak a thousand words, one picture at a time.

Reporters have been given the option of clicking photographs alongside traditional textual reporting. Photographs of the committee proceedings and the delegates can be taken throughout the committee session. However, photojournalism should not be taken lightly, and a few basic rules should be kept in mind. The photographs of the delegates should be un-posed and impromptu, and they should be professional in nature. Good photographs generally show committee proceedings, such as a delegate raising a placard, discussion of the resolution, and informal discussion amongst delegates. Selected photographs clicked by reporters will be featured in the official IIT MUN newsletter. The subjects of the photographs generally should not be directly looking into the camera, or the photographs might appear staged. The journalists may take pictures to supplement their articles, or they may post them as a stand-alone story. Photography will be evaluated by taking into consideration its formal structure and its storytelling value. Journalists have to bring their own cameras as well as cables for transferring of photographs if necessary. IITI MUN will not be responsible for lost or damaged gadgets.

Research Methodology:-

The confines of an in-house conference limit us to what we want to call investigative journalism but your preparations will be severe. You can use the following guidelines for effective research. You must be adequately prepared to understand the debate.

- 1. Go through the backgrounds for basic understanding of the agenda and then the documents and links it mentions. The background guide can be obtained from the website of the conference.
- 2. Read about the agenda and various perspectives on it. Aid and form an opinion.
- 3. Understanding the legal, social, cultural and economical implications of the debate.
- 4. Read about the foreign policy and agenda perspective of nations that you might think will majorly impact the debate.

Requirements of Reporters

Materials to be submitted during the on-going conference

MATERIALS REQ. - News Report

AMOUNT (MINIMUM)-1 (compulsory)

- ➤ The time for submission of the materials, will be announced as the INTERNATIONAL PRESS session begins.
- The word limit for all articles for the newsletter is 150-200. Do not exceed or it will cause a problem in the layout.
- > Submit all your articles in "Times New Roman" and in font size 14.
- ➤ Delegates are asked to bring their own laptops, pen drives, and other electronic devices needed.
- ➤ Delegates are to be in charge of their own possessions.
- Committee allotments will be given beforehand and delegates have to adhere by the given schedule.
- > Apart from the materials required, a press delegate has to also do editing work.

Code of Conduct

The International Press committee is a committee of exclusive nature and has characteristics of its own. Therefore, to ensure proper functioning and uniformity in the conference and the committee, there are certain policies and regulations dedicated to only International Press delegates:

- Reporters are expected to be respectful and polite to every delegate, staff member, and conference executive. When in committee, reporters should not cause any sort of disruption. If a reporter wishes to interview a certain delegate or member of the committee, they are to communicate with the person and arrange a time for the interview, which can only conducted during lobbying sessions or breaks. However, if urgent, a reporter may confer with the person via notes and conduct the interview outside the committee room during the session, so long as it does not inhibit participation.
- At times, reporters may not be permitted to enter committee rooms. The International Press
 delegates are to follow the rules set by the Executive Boards of respective committees, and no
 violation of them will be tolerated. The International Press Executive Board will specify and

- elaborate upon the committees to be covered and times to enter their rooms at time of allotments.
- Reporters are advised to carry an active cell phone at all times. This is so that in case the Executive Board calls for an emergency meeting or is taking up delegates for a press conference, the Board is able to directly communicate with the reporters in an easier, faster way. However, reporters are to avoid using cell phones inside committees. Reporters are forbidden from calling and texting inside committee rooms. A recording device may be carried by reporters.
- The International Press of IITIMUN has a strict plagiarism policy. No act of plagiarism of
 material from any online, tangible, or literary source will be tolerated. Any content caught
 indulging in this will be frowned upon, and its author will be subjected to negative marking.
 Originality is the key to successful reporting. Creativity, originality, and uniqueness are
 always applauded and encouraged.
- Do not indulge in any form of reporting which has your personal likes or dislikes for a person/country/religion.
- Do not write any reports without adequate amount of knowledge; make sure your reports are accurate.
- One should remember the fact they are representing a news outlet.
- One is not required to write word by word on the proceedings of the committee session. Choose a specific topic or any instance during the committee and elaborate on it.
- News reports are always brief and to the point. Do not stray away from the core of the article and stick to the mentioned word limit.
- Always write News Reports in third person and in the past tense.
- News report or any other form of writing should be unbiased, and any personal feelings should not affect the reports.
- Make sure to avoid using flowery and complicated language because the articles" main aim is to inform, and not to impress others by your language skills.
- Use complimentary and attractive titles for the articles.
- Columns are articles which may include certain opinions. But they have to be to the point and crisp. Don't put opinions which may hurt or disrespect a person, or a country.
- Select an interviewee who you think is smart and witty, or informative, or someone who has something important to say. One can interview delegates as well as EB Members.
- In an interview, make sure to introduce yourself to the respondent and note down everything the respondent has mentioned throughout the interview. In an interview, make sure you ask questions which are relevant.
- Proof-read articles before submission so that they are well written, with no grammatical errors. This will make the work of editors a little less burdened.
- Submit the materials in accordance with the deadline.
- It is suggested that one should go through the background guides of the other 5 committees, or at least read materials that revolve around the agendas which will be discussed.
- One has to be in the character of a reporter and should not deviate from the truth.

Elements of Style

- Abbreviations- No periods should be used separating letters of an abbreviated organization or agency. Only standard acronyms and approved abbreviations should be used. Some example abbreviations include: ECOSOC, GA, HSC, ICJ, IPD, NATO, UK, UN, US, USSR.
- **Apostrophes** This punctuation mark will only be used to indicate possessive secondary quotations. Apostrophes are never used to indicate pluralisation.
- **Currency** Dollar values are displayed with the appropriate currency symbol. Values on orders at or greater than one million are summarized, for example \$54,000, \$135,000 or \$214 million. Indian Rupees shall be written as INR and not Rs.
- **Capitalization** Nowhere shall anything but Abbreviations be capitalized.
- **Books and print sources** Names of all books and print sources should be capitalized and italicized, such as the newsletter, New York Times and The Economist.
- **Developing nations** Within the international community, the use of the term "third world" is actively discouraged. No nation will be referred to as "Third World."
- **Diplomatic courtesy** While Reporters are encouraged to faithfully report on the statements of representatives within each Excalibur MUN simulation, no quotation should violate the dictates of diplomatic courtesy. If a Reporter feels that a quotation by a representative is discourteous, the representative should be encouraged to rephrase the statement in a more courteous fashion or risk having it omitted from the Reporter's article.
- **Hyphenation** Hyphens should only be applied according to American English grammar. If questions arise, consult the Editors. Examples of typically hyphenated prefixes include non-, sub- and ex-. Some compound words are hyphenated as well, such as sociopolitical. o Member States- In print, references to United Nations "Member States" should be initially capitalized.
- Names- Reporters should never guess the spelling of a person's name or portfolio to be reported. Verbal verification is mandatory on all named sources. Naturally, all proper names are capitalized.
- National references- When referring to any UN Member State or Observer, standard UN country names should be used. These names match those with which each nation signed the UN Charter. For example, the People's Republic of China should always be referred to as "China." Additionally, some national names are longer than those commonly used. For example, Libya is recognized at the UN as "Libyan Arab Jamahiriya."
- Numerals- Any numeral ten or less should be spelled out in English. Numerals over ten are reported using standard Arabic numerals, such as 2001.
 Numerals with five or more digits should include commas, such as 1,345,000. Fractions and decimal numbers should be reported as decimal numerals or percentages, such as 0.5 or 50%.
 Roman numerals are used only when referring to a source which was originally designated using Roman numerals, such as Chapter VII of the UN Charter (articles of the UN Charter are written as "Article 7"). Ordinal numerals are spelled out within the text of an article, such as the First Committee of the General Assembly.
- **Percentages** Percent symbols will be used to report percentages, for example 35.8%.

- **Quotation marks-** As per Standard English grammar, punctuation at the conclusion of quotation must always be included inside the closing quotation mark.
- Quotations- All quoted statements within articles should be incorporated grammatically into the sentence being written. Additional capitalizations should be avoided. If only part of a sentence is being used in a quotation, an ellipsis (i.e. ...) should be used to indicate the omitted portions of the statement. If the Covid-19 Model United Nations 11 | P a g e ellipsis comes at the end of a sentence, it should have a period at the end as well within the quotation marks (....") to indicate the conclusion of a sentence. If, within a quotation, the speaker uses an abbreviation or reference which would be unclear to the reader, the Reporter may interject a clarification within brackets (i.e. [...]). This indicates that the bracketed information is not a direct quotation; rather it is a clarification on the part of the author.
- **Spacing** One space is used to separate words, as well as following commas, semicolons, colons and periods. Spelling- Reporters should be sure to spell check all articles before the editorial deadline. This will greatly assist the Editor

Tips for Reporters

MUNs are a lot of fun, but they can be overwhelming, especially if you are a journalist. You have to constantly be mindful of a lot of things at once, and it can get very messy. However, these things are extremely important and collectively pose as a challenge for the journalist. While the International Press Executive Board is always there for assistance and editing, a journalist can only be a good and successful one if he or she keeps the following in mind:

- Research is something too obviously needed for an MUN but also often ignored. The more you research, the more confident you will be not only just in the International Press but also in all of the other committees. Reporters need to know what is going on in the committee they are writing an article on; otherwise, they will end up sitting blankly and wasting the beat. In the case of your own committee, active participation is really appreciated, and for that, one should be thoroughly researched.
- When in the beats, it is highly recommended that reporters note down the things being spoken in committee. While a recording device is helpful, it is preferred that the reporters write down the things on paper, as the sound may or may not be recorded properly in this case. However, the usage of a recording device for an interview is preferred.
- No one likes to read articles with long, complex words and confusing long sentences. Reporters should keep language in the pieces formal and informal simple and professional. Usage of slang, abbreviations, or inappropriate language is prohibited. Reporters should remember that they are writing about a formal conference.
- Accuracy is crucial. Reporters should take care to spell the names and quote the delegates correctly, get the facts right, and avoid grammatical errors. While the International Press staff will be editing the pieces, a journalist should always be careful about their grammar and content.
- Reporters this year will be representing news agencies from all around the world. Reporters are urged to go through the articles published by correspondents and reporters from the agency so as to

get a proper idea of the agency scontent type, the audience it targets, and the style of writing. When reporting, journalists should keep these in mind and write accordingly. Reporters should also be well-researched about the history, stance, and opinion of their news agency in reference to the agenda.

- Only opinion pieces can be made up of the reporter"s personal views. The reporter should take care not to include his or her personal opinion in any other types of pieces. In interviews, the reporter may voice his or her doubts and question delegates but should never directly express personal opinion.
- Opinion pieces may be written in first or second person, and all other pieces should be in third person. Reporters may write in either American English or British English but not both.
- Interviews always make a good story. It is recommended that reporters prepare a diverse set of interviews to submit. They may be formal or informal. For formal interviews, reporters should pick a particularly outspoken delegate, or one with an unusual opinion. When taking an interview, the press reporter should inform the delegate what the interview is about and that he or she is on record that is, being recorded. Also, it is best if the interviewer prepares a list of questions and writes it down prior to the interview. However, it is not necessary to stick entirely to the list, and the reporter may ask follow-up questions.
- Reporters should try to avoid yes/no questions in interviews. Try to get as many detailed, opinionated, and comprehensive answers as possible.
- Always start a piece with a particularly eye-catching headline. No one likes to read a piece with a boring title. Also, the beginning content of the piece, that is, the first paragraph, should be the most interesting so that it captures the reader"s attention for the rest of the piece. The content after that may be more elaborative and detailed.
- Reporters should try to indulge in as many types of media as possible and should have a diverse collection to submit. Many new forms of media have been made available for the reporters, and creativity and humor in them would be really appreciated.
- It would be great if the reporters could write some informal articles as well as formal pieces, as informal pieces pose as a good opportunity for reporters to display their more witty, creative, and humorous sides.

The Pre-requisites

- Do not forget to research on the committee you are assigned. While a little bit of a shift will be permitted, having knowledge of the agenda will not only broaden your perspective, but it will help you incredibly in making what you have to.
- Remember a situation cannot be simplified or artistically portrayed if the cartoonist themselves cannot interpret it. Covid-19 Model United Nations 13 | P a g e Collaborate with journalists to create joint articles to show harmony in the newsletter. The International Press is a team, and we must work like one.
- The most essential piece of advice is that, one must emulate the delegates, the agenda in a manner that makes it satisfactory for the onlookers to understand what happens in committee. Immersing yourself is the only way to do that. Strive to create art, and just a piece, and your role as a cartoonist, an artist and a caricaturist will be complete.

Personal Responsibilities:-

We are sure you all are aware of the dress code being followed at these conferences. The dress code for international press will be Indian/Western formals. Wearing jeans, casual shoes will be not allowed and may result in your disqualification.

Diplomatic courtesy should be followed at all times. Addressing people with courtesy will be encouraged. Derogatory remarks to conference staff, secretariat, delegates or any members of the conference will not be tolerated. Please make sure you are self dependent at the time of conference. Keep your laptops and cameras charged. Make sure you do not disturb the conference participants.

Closing Remarks

The IITI MUN provides every reporter a chance to channel his or her creativity and experience professional journalism stimulation. A substantial amount of time and preparation goes into making sure that the reporters" experience is fun-filled as well as beneficial. Aim high and try to become the true voice of the people. Confidence is tantamount for a journalist. This study guide has given you a brief idea of what the committee is going to be like, and additional information will be provided during the beginning of the conference. In the meantime, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask anything regarding the International Press committee at mun@iiti.ac.in