

Model United Nations as a Platform for Interdisciplinary Learning and Global Citizenship: A Report on GMC Conference 2026

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Abstract

This article presents a detailed report on GMC Conference 2026, the 3rd National Edition of the annual Model United Nations (MUN) conference organised by the GECA MUN Club at Government College of Engineering, Aurangabad (Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar), Maharashtra, India. Held on 17–18 January 2026, the conference brought together 370 delegates from more than 20 institutions across approximately seven Indian states, deliberating across nine committees on a range of substantive international and domestic policy agendas. Operating under the theme Legacy in the Loom of Leadership and supported by an eighteen-member Executive Board and a forty-member organising committee, GMC Conference 2026 stands as the largest and most complex edition of the conference to date. This report documents the conference structure, committee agendas, thematic and pedagogical design, notable outcomes, logistical challenges, and the broader educational case for embedding simulation-based learning exercises, like MUN, in undergraduate curricula. The article also discusses the measured growth of this conference across three editions and the strategic trajectory it has set, including its transition to an international format in 2027.

Keywords: Model United Nations, simulation-based learning, global citizenship, interdisciplinary education, conference management, parliamentary debate, diplomacy education, undergraduate learning, GECA MUN

INTRODUCTION

Model United Nations (MUN) is a long-established pedagogical format in which student participants

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simulate the deliberative processes of the United Nations and related international and national bodies. Originating in American universities in the early twentieth century, the format has expanded substantially over the past two decades, particularly in South and Southeast Asia, where it has been adopted by institutions ranging from secondary schools to postgraduate programmes [1, 2]. The appeal of the format lies in its integrative character: to participate meaningfully in a MUN conference, a delegate must research and synthesise information across international law, political science, economics, and diplomacy, develop structured oral argumentation, engage in multilateral negotiation, and produce written policy instruments – all within a procedurally constrained environment that rewards preparation and penalises superficiality [3].

Despite this richness, MUN as an educational phenomenon remains under-documented in the academic literature relative to its prevalence in

practice. Conference reports that examine the substantive outputs of large MUN events – the quality of debate, the policy frameworks proposed, the logistical architecture required – are particularly rare. This article attempts to address that gap by offering a structured report on GMC Conference 2026, the third national edition of the GECA MUN Club’s annual conference at Government College of Engineering, Aurangabad.

GMC Conference is a student-run initiative that has grown steadily since its inaugural edition in 2024. Unlike MUN conferences at larger, more resource-rich institutions, GMC Conference operates within the constraints typical of a government engineering college: limited budget, no dedicated conference infrastructure, and an organising committee composed entirely of undergraduate students who simultaneously manage academic workloads. That it has reached its current scale is itself a finding worthy of documentation.

This article draws on the post-conference booklet produced by the International Press Corps (IPC) at GMC Conference 2026, on committee records, on secretariat documentation, and on the authors’ direct involvement in the organisation and administration of the conference.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Theme and Dates

GMC Conference 2026 was held on 17 and 18 January 2026 at the Government College of Engineering, Aurangabad – also known as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar – in Maharashtra, India. The conference operated under the theme *Legacy in the Loom of Leadership*, a formulation chosen to reflect both the institutional history the conference has been building across three editions and the broader aspiration that participants would leave equipped not merely with knowledge, but with the disposition and capability to lead. The loom, as a metaphor, evokes the deliberate, patient, thread-by-thread construction of something durable – an appropriate frame for what MUN, at its best, attempts to do.

Scale and Participation

The 2026 edition brought together 370 delegates, 18 executive board members, and a 40-member organising committee. Participating institutions numbered more than 20, representing approximately seven Indian states. Delegations travelled from cities including Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur, Delhi, Shillong, and Gurugram, making this the geographically most diverse edition to date. The total prize pool for the conference was INR 1.5 lakh, distributed across nine committees (Table 1).

Table 1. Growth of GMC conference across three national editions (2024–2026).

Edition	Year	Delegates	Committees	Prize Pool
1st National Edition	2024	250+	5	INR 1,00,000
2nd National Edition	2025	350+	7	INR 1,25,000
3rd National Edition	2026	370	9	INR 1,50,000

Organising Structure and Secretariat

The conference was organised by the GECA MUN Club under the guidance of Faculty Advisor Prof. Vijayshri Injamuri. The senior secretariat comprised the Secretary General (Anurang Sarda), Director General (Nikita Poduval), Deputy Secretary General (Kaushiki More), and Chief Administrator (Nimish Bangale). The International Press Corps was led by Head of Journalism Ishan Khare and Head of Photography Preeti Pania.

The executive board of 18 members was drawn from institutions across India, with several members having extensive MUN experience at the national and international circuit level. Committee chairs and vice-chairs were selected through a competitive application process that assessed research capability, procedural knowledge, and prior MUN experience. This approach ensured that the quality of moderation matched the substantive ambition of the agendas.

The organising committee of 40 undergraduate students was responsible for logistics, delegate management, hospitality, documentation, and event coordination. This team was the operational backbone of the conference, and its size relative to the number of delegates – approximately one OC member for every nine delegates – reflects the manpower-intensive nature of large-scale student-run MUN events.

Committee Structure and Agendas

GMC Conference 2026 featured nine committees spanning international bodies, United Nations specialised agencies, and domestic Indian legislative and executive forums. The committee selection for each edition reflects a deliberate balance between familiarity – retaining committees that participants can prepare for using established research frameworks – and novelty, which keeps the conference fresh for returning delegates and signals the organisers’ ambition. The 2026 edition was notable for introducing the circuit’s first Joint Parliamentary Committee and for reviving the double delegation format in the UNSC Crisis Committee, both discussed in greater detail in Section 4 (Table 2).

Table 2. Committees and agendas, GMC conference 2026.

S.N.	Committee	Agenda
1	UNSC CCC	Deliberations on the Legitimacy of Preemptive Military Action Amidst Nuclear Proliferation and Strategies for the Protection of Civilians in Active Conflict Zones.
2	UNCSW	Advancing Women’s Leadership and Safety in United Nations Peacekeeping and Field Missions.
3	UNODC	Discussion on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants across African and Middle Eastern Countries.
4	UNGA DISEC	Strengthening Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Compliance and Verification.
5	JPC ✓ (First on Circuit)	Deliberation upon the Digital Personal Data Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2024, following a legislative stalemate in the Rajya Sabha.
6	UNHRC	Reflecting on the Universal Periodic Review’s Achievements, Challenges, and New Reform Directions in 2026 (Completion of 20 Years).
7	Lok Sabha	Sports Governance Reform in India – Implementation and Implications of the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025.
8	AIPPM	Discussion on the Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls and Strengthening Electoral Integrity.
9	IPC	International Press Corps – reporting, photography, and analysis across all committees.

NOTABLE FEATURES AND MILESTONES OF THE 2026 EDITION

Introduction of the Joint Parliamentary Committee

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is a constitutional mechanism in the Indian legislative framework used to examine specific legislative proposals with participation from both houses of Parliament. Simulating a JPC in a MUN context is substantially different from simulating a United Nations committee: the procedural framework draws on Indian parliamentary practice rather than United Nations rules of procedure, and the subject matter is necessarily rooted in domestic Indian law and policy. To the best of the organisers’ knowledge, the JPC at GMC Conference 2026 was the first committee of its kind on this MUN circuit.

The agenda – the Digital Personal Data Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2024 – was selected for its contemporary relevance and constitutional complexity. The Bill had faced a six-month stalemate in the Rajya Sabha, making it an active and contested policy question at the time of the conference. Delegates were required to engage with the constitutional principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability as they applied to data governance, national security exemptions, and the independence of the proposed Data Protection Board. The quality of debate in the JPC was, by the assessment of the organising team and IPC reporters, among the highest at the conference – a finding attributable in part to Chair Akshat Awasthi’s deep professional familiarity with technology policy.

Revival of Double Delegation in UNSC CCC

The United Nations Security Council Crisis Committee (UNSC CCC) operated with a double delegation format, in which two delegates jointly represented each member state. This format, uncommon in student MUN events and revived at GMC Conference 2026 after an absence from the circuit, places demands on participants that go beyond standard individual delegation: delegates must not only research and articulate a national position but must coordinate their representation in real time with a partner, negotiate internally before negotiating externally, and manage the interpersonal dynamics of shared diplomatic representation.

The agenda – pre-emptive military action in the context of nuclear proliferation – was particularly well-suited to this format. Questions about the legitimacy of first-strike doctrine, the scope of civilian protection obligations under international humanitarian law, and the accountability gap in Security Council decision-making generated sustained, high-quality debate. The double delegation structure added a layer of diplomatic realism that enriched both the debate experience and the pedagogical value of the committee.

Agenda Design and Thematic Breadth

The nine agendas at GMC Conference 2026 collectively covered a substantial range of contemporary policy concerns: nuclear security and pre-emptive military doctrine; gender equity in multilateral peacekeeping; transnational organised crime and migration; biological weapons verification; digital privacy and data governance; human rights review mechanisms; sports governance and judicial oversight; and electoral integrity. This breadth was deliberate. The organising team's agenda selection philosophy – articulated explicitly in pre-conference communications – was to choose topics that are live, contested, and consequential, rather than historically settled or primarily theoretical.

This approach places higher preparation demands on delegates but yields more substantive debate. It also ensures that the intellectual labour of conference preparation has direct educational value: delegates leave GMC Conference 2026 having engaged in serious study of policy questions that will shape the world they are entering as professionals and citizens.

The International Press Corps

The IPC at GMC Conference 2026 operated as a full journalistic unit embedded within the conference. Participants assumed roles as either news reporters or photographers and were required to research all eight substantive committees prior to the conference to enable informed real-time reporting. IPC members attended committee sessions, conducted interviews, produced written dispatches under deadline, and submitted work for editorial review by Head of Journalism Ishan Khare.

The IPC model serves several educational functions. It develops research and writing skills that are distinct from, and complementary to, those developed in standard delegate roles. It trains participants in the ethics and craft of journalism. It creates a permanent documentary record of the conference. And it introduces the concept of media accountability into the conference ecosystem, since committee proceedings are subject to journalistic scrutiny. The reports produced by IPC journalists at GMC Conference 2026 form part of the primary record on which this article draws.

LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

GMC Conference 2026 was originally planned as a three-day event: 16, 17, and 18 January 2026. In the weeks preceding the conference, municipal corporation elections were announced in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar for 16 January, rendering it infeasible to host a large-scale conference on that date. The organising team was required to compress the entire conference into two days – 17 and 18 January – with minimal lead time.

This required a full restructuring of the conference schedule: session timings were extended on both days, breaks were reorganised, and all committee allocations were compressed without eliminating any

planned debate time. The outcome – verified by both the secretariat and IPC reports – was that not a single hour of scheduled committee debate was lost. The two-day conference delivered the full substantive programme that had been designed for three days.

This episode illustrates a broader point about the operational realities of student-run conferences: logistical disruptions of this kind are not exceptional; they are a predictable feature of conference management at this scale, particularly when external administrative events – elections, examinations, institutional holidays – intersect with conference schedules that must be fixed months in advance. The capacity of the GMC Conference 2026 organising team to absorb this disruption without visible impact on the delegate experience reflects both the robustness of their planning and the depth of their commitment.

Additional logistical considerations that characterise student-run MUN conferences at this scale include accommodation coordination for outstation delegates, management of the registration and credentialing process for 370 participants, catering, AV and room logistics for nine concurrent committee sessions, and management of the prize and awards administration. Each of these represents a non-trivial operational challenge managed entirely by undergraduate student volunteers alongside their academic responsibilities.

EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Competency Development Through MUN Participation

The educational literature on MUN has consistently identified a range of competencies that the format is particularly well-suited to develop. Roux (2012) and Pashkevich and Tasner (2014) document improvements in research, critical thinking, and oral communication among MUN participants [1, 3]. Meerts (2009) situates MUN within the broader tradition of negotiation pedagogy, arguing that simulation-based learning produces more durable skill acquisition than lecture-based instruction in diplomacy and international relations [4]. More recent work has emphasised MUN's role in cultivating what Oxfam (2015) and others have described as global citizenship competencies – the attitudes, values, and dispositions associated with informed, engaged, and responsible participation in an interconnected world [5].

GMC Conference 2026 operationalises these competencies across all its committees. In the UNSC CCC, delegates develop strategic argumentation and an understanding of the legal and ethical dimensions of military doctrine. In the JPC, they engage with the legislative process and constitutional law. In the UNHRC, they examine the gap between normative frameworks and implementation practice. In the AIPPM, they navigate the intersection of democratic process and political interest. The breadth of the conference's committee portfolio means that different delegates encounter different intellectual challenges – but all encounter the fundamental MUN demand: to understand a position that may not be your own, and to articulate it with precision and conviction [6].

Interdisciplinary Character

GMC Conference 2026 was organised by a club embedded in an engineering college, and a significant proportion of its delegates were engineering students. This is worth noting, because the agendas chosen for the conference – data privacy legislation, biological weapons verification, electoral roll management, sports governance – are not the natural intellectual territory of most engineering curricula. The conference thus creates a deliberate interdisciplinary encounter: engineering students are placed in the position of thinking seriously about law, governance, international relations, and political economy, while students from social science and humanities backgrounds may find their assumptions challenged by the rigour and precision that their engineering counterparts bring to argument.

This kind of interdisciplinary encounter is difficult to engineer within the formal curriculum of most Indian universities, where programme structures are highly specialised. MUN conferences at engineering institutions may be one of the more effective informal mechanisms for producing it [7].

Organisational Learning for the OC

The educational value of GMC Conference extends beyond the delegate and EB experience. The forty members of the organising committee engage in a sustained, high-stakes project management exercise: planning a large event over six months, managing vendor relationships, designing communication materials, handling financial administration, coordinating across teams with different functional responsibilities, and problem-solving under pressure when things go wrong. The municipal election rescheduling described in Section 5 is a particularly clear example of the kind of adaptive management challenge that the OC must navigate.

The skills developed through this experience – project management, stakeholder communication, resource allocation, crisis response – are directly transferable to professional contexts. For engineering students in particular, this kind of large-scale team project complements the technical project work of their curricula with the human and organisational dimensions of execution that are often underemphasised in undergraduate engineering education [8].

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS

This section provides a brief account of the thematic contours of debate in each committee, drawing on IPC reports and organiser documentation. These summaries are intended to give the reader a sense of the substantive quality and intellectual character of the conference rather than a comprehensive record of proceedings.

UNSC Crisis Committee (UNSC CCC)

The UNSC CCC examined the legal and ethical dimensions of pre-emptive military action under conditions of nuclear proliferation. Delegates engaged with the tension between Article 2(4) of the UN Charter – prohibiting the use of force – and evolving doctrines of anticipatory self-defence. The committee produced substantive argument on civilian protection obligations under international humanitarian law, with delegations divided on whether the scale of potential nuclear harm could justify pre-emptive action that inevitably entails civilian risk. The double delegation format produced notably more nuanced positional argumentation than is typical of single-delegate Security Council simulations, with intra-delegation deliberation visibly enriching the quality of the national positions presented [9].

UNCSW

The UNCSW deliberated on advancing women's leadership and safety in United Nations peacekeeping and field missions. The committee engaged substantively with the intersection of gender and conflict, examining how intersecting vulnerabilities – gender, ethnicity, economic status – compound risks for women in conflict-affected regions. The delegate body included representations from states with substantially different domestic gender policy landscapes, producing a productive tension between universal normative commitments and nationally specific implementation realities.

UNODC

The UNODC committee on human trafficking and migrant smuggling across Africa and the Middle East engaged with one of the most operationally challenging areas of international law enforcement: the coordination of cross-border criminal intelligence and victim protection across jurisdictions with differing legal frameworks and institutional capacities. Delegates examined the Palermo Protocol framework and proposed measures for digital victim identification, intelligence sharing, and the establishment of legal migration pathways as structural alternatives to irregular migration routes that trafficking networks exploit.

UNGA DISEC

The DISEC committee on BWC compliance and verification addressed what is perhaps the central structural weakness of the Biological Weapons Convention: the absence of a formal verification mechanism. Delegates examined the implications of this gap in the context of emerging biotechnological capabilities, including AI-assisted biological research, and debated confidence-

building measures, budget enhancement proposals, and national legislation frameworks as partial substitutes for an effective multilateral verification regime. The committee also engaged with the contemporary relevance of historical compliance concerns, including alleged violations by multiple state parties.

JPC

The JPC on the DPDP Amendment Bill, 2024 produced the conference's most procedurally distinctive debate, drawing on Indian parliamentary rules of procedure and requiring delegates to engage with constitutional law, data governance practice, and the political economy of digital regulation. Opposition members raised concerns about RTI exemptions, Data Protection Board independence, and the chilling effect of broad security exemptions on journalism and whistleblowing. Government members emphasised the need for certainty, predictability, and protection from misuse. The constitutional framework of legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability provided a shared analytical reference that structured what might otherwise have become an ideologically diffuse debate.

UNHRC

The UNHRC's twentieth-anniversary review of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism provided an opportunity to assess one of the UN human rights system's most significant procedural innovations. Delegates engaged with empirical data on UPR implementation rates – Vietnam cited an 84.7% implementation rate for fourth-cycle recommendations – while also examining the structural gap between recommendation and action that remains the UPR's central limitation. The committee engaged substantively with questions of judicial independence, educational access, and minority protection, though the IPC noted that the gap between acknowledgement and practical remedy was a recurring theme in delegate discourse.

Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha simulation on the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 engaged with the governance failures of Indian sports federations: nepotism, financial misappropriation, caste-based exclusion, and the absence of accountability mechanisms. Delegates examined the Bill's provisions on democratic elections in sporting bodies, term limits, and judicial oversight, situating them within the broader history of Supreme Court intervention in Indian sports administration. The committee also addressed the protection of athletes from federation retaliation, identifying legal backing as a prerequisite for a professional and fair sporting culture.

AIPPM

The AIPPM on Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls produced the conference's most politically textured debate, simulating the interactions of party leaders in a domestic political forum where every policy argument carries electoral consequence. The committee examined the SIR process, immigrant voter registration in border states, ECI administrative failures, and the proposed Aadhaar–Voter ID linkage as a verification mechanism. The debate was characterised by a tension between substantive policy analysis and the rhetorical strategies of political representation that the format naturally encourages – a tension that is itself educationally revealing [10].

International Press Corps (IPC)

The IPC produced written dispatches and photographic documentation from all eight substantive committees across both days of the conference. Reporters were required to have background knowledge of all committee agendas prior to the conference. The IPC's editorial output ranged from hard analytical reporting on UNSC proceedings to observational commentary on delegate performance in UNODC. Head of Journalism Ishan Khare provided editorial oversight and wrote the IPC's reflective overview piece, which serves as one of the primary records of the conference.

DISCUSSION

The GMC Conference 2026 case raises several questions worth considering for institutions contemplating the embedding of MUN or similar simulation-based exercises into undergraduate education.

First, the question of scalability. GMC Conference has grown from 250 to 370 delegates in three years. This growth has been managed by a student committee that turns over significantly each year, as founding members graduate and new members join. The knowledge transfer challenge this creates – how to sustain institutional memory and organisational capability across generational change within the club – is a genuine management problem, and one that mirrors challenges faced by many student organisations attempting to sustain activities of increasing complexity.

Second, the question of agenda design as pedagogy. The decisions made about which agendas to include in a MUN conference are, in effect, decisions about what students will be required to learn. The GECA MUN Club's explicit preference for live, contested, consequential topics over historically settled ones reflects a considered pedagogical position. Whether this approach produces better learning outcomes than a more conservative agenda design is an empirical question that the conference does not currently have the evaluation infrastructure to answer, but it is one worth investigating.

Third, the role of the IPC as an institutional knowledge-production mechanism. The IPC's journalistic records provide the primary documentary basis for this article. In the absence of the IPC, the conference's substantive proceedings would leave no systematic record beyond the memories of participants. The IPC thus serves not only as a learning environment for journalist participants but as an archival function for the conference as a whole. This dual role – pedagogical and documentary – is underappreciated in most MUN structures.

Fourth, the international trajectory. The announcement at GMC Conference 2026 that the 2027 edition will be an international conference raises both opportunity and risk. The opportunity is significant: an international MUN conference at a government engineering college in Marathwada would be genuinely unusual and would substantially expand the diversity of perspectives in the committee rooms. The risk is operational: the logistical complexity of managing international delegates – travel, documentation, accommodation, communication – is substantially greater than that of a national conference. The 2026 edition's demonstrated capacity to absorb unforeseen disruption is encouraging, but the transition to international format will require commensurate growth in planning rigour and institutional support.

CONCLUSION

GMC Conference 2026 is the most substantial edition of a student-led MUN conference that has grown consistently over three years at a government engineering college in Maharashtra. With 370 delegates, nine committees spanning international and domestic policy forums, a geographically diverse participant base, a high-quality executive board, and a documented capacity to manage significant logistical disruption without sacrificing substantive output, it represents a meaningful achievement in undergraduate-led conference organisation.

Beyond the logistics, GMC Conference 2026 demonstrates what MUN, at its best, can accomplish in the Indian undergraduate context: the creation of a space in which students from engineering, law, management, and the social sciences encounter each other and the complex problems of the world they are entering, and are compelled to think carefully, argue rigorously, and listen seriously. The theme – Legacy in the Loom of Leadership – captures something real about what the conference aspires to build, edition by edition, in the students who pass through it.

The authors hope that this report contributes to a richer documentation of MUN as a pedagogical practice in the Indian undergraduate context, and to the visibility of the work being done at institutions

– like Government College of Engineering, Aurangabad – that are often absent from the academic literature on experiential and simulation-based learning.

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Author Contributions

Anurang Sarda: Conference conceptualisation, secretariat leadership, article writing. Nikita Poduval: Academic framework design, committee oversight, article review. Kaushiki More: Organisational management, logistics documentation, article review. Nimish Bangale: Conference administration, institutional development, article review. Ishan Khare: IPC editorial direction, primary journalism documentation, article contribution.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors are members of the GECA MUN Club and served in organisational roles at GMC Conference 2026. The article is a conference report authored by organisers and should be read with that positionality in mind. No external funding conflict exists.

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