

The Hindu College Debating Society

In association with The Hindu College Old Students' Association

Presents

The **8**th Premchand Memorial
Parliamentary **Debate**

17-20 January 2011

www.premchanddebate.in

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I. The Format

I.1 Tournament Format

I.1.1 Premchand 2011 will consist of 40 teams from 20 or more institutions. There will be 5 preliminary rounds of debating, followed by the octo-finals, quarter-finals, semi-finals and the grand final. Thus each team is assured of participating in at least 5 debates.

I.1.2 For the first round, teams shall be matched up randomly. For subsequent rounds power match ups will be followed. After the five preliminary rounds, the top 16 teams sorted by win/loss record and speaker scores respectively will break into the octo-finals. Further details on scoring and tabbing shall be provided to all participants on the first day.

I.1.3 Each preliminary debate, the octo-finals and the quarter-finals will be judged by a panel of at least 3 adjudicators, one of whom will be the designated Chairperson. Each semi-final will be judged by a panel of at least 5 adjudicators. The top 7 judges of the tournament will judge the grand final. For a team to win a debate, it must emerge victorious on a majority of the adjudicators' sheets. This is so for definition challenges as well. In exceptional circumstances, it is possible that one or more preliminary debates are judged by a single senior adjudicator.

I.2 Debate Format

I.2.1 Premchand 2011 will follow a modified 2 on 2 Cambridge style of Parliamentary Debating. In each debate, there will be two teams, called Proposition and Opposition. There are two speakers per team, namely the Prime Minister & Deputy Prime Minister [side Proposition] and the Leader of Opposition & Deputy Leader of Opposition [side Opposition].

I.2.2 Three Motions will be released by the organizers of the Tournament once all matchups have been announced. In each debating room, a coin will be tossed, and the winning side will choose its role for the upcoming debate. Both teams then get a **common minute** to rank the three motions in order of preference [1st, 2nd or 3rd]. The 3rd preference for both teams will be crossed out, and in case of an impasse the

motion to be debated will be selected by toss of coin amongst the remaining 2 motions. The teams get **20 minutes** of preparation time before debating commences.

I.2.3 It is the prerogative of the Proposition to decide whether they want to prepare in chambers or outside. If they wish to prepare in chambers, it is the duty of the Chairperson to ensure that members of the Opposition, members of the adjudication panel and any spectators vacate the room for the next 20 minutes.

I.2.4 Printed and prepared materials **may** be accessed during the preparation period. No access to electronic media or electronic storage or retrieval devices including but not limited to personal computers, netbooks, tablet PCs, mobile phones, PDAs is permitted after the motions have been released. Printed and prepared materials may be accessed during a debate but may not be used during a speech.

I.2.5 Teams are strictly **banned** from communicating or seeking help from any third party including but not limited to coaches, seniors, other members of their contingent once motions have been released. **Any team found violating rules I.2.4 or I.2.5 will automatically forfeit that round.**

I.2.6 The Proposition can choose to debate the motion as it stands or to define it in suitable terms, **within the scope of the pre-defined theme for the round** [see section III].

I.2.7 The order of speaking is Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Leader of Opposition. These four speeches are called **substantive** or **constructive** speeches. These will be followed by the Interrogation round [see below]. Once the Interrogation round is completed, each team will summarize their respective positions and why they think that the debate should be awarded to their side in **Reply** speeches, with the opposition replying first. The debate ends at the completion of the reply speeches.

I.2.8 Walkovers Any team that fails to report to the correct room within **5 minutes** of match ups being announced will forfeit that round. The same holds for any team not ready to begin debating within **2 minutes** of completion of preparation time. A runner will be assigned to each match. His/her job will be to guide the teams to the correct room and help the Chair in the smooth conduct of the match.

I.2.9 Interrogation Round At the end of the four substantive speeches, the teams shall be asked to cross examine each other in the format of a 1 on 1 interrogation, with one speaker from the opposition commencing the questioning by choosing any one speaker from the Proposition. Next, one speaker from the Proposition chooses one from the Opposition for interrogation. The same is repeated again with the remaining speakers on either team. Each speaker will question for **3.5** minutes. The teams are expected to use interrogation as a means of logically exposing errors and inconsistencies in the arguments of the opposing side.

I.2.10 Guidelines for Interrogation:

- **Introduction of new lines of argument is not allowed in the interrogation round**, though new examples are permitted. Any such matter introduced in the interrogation round will be ignored by the adjudicators.
- Both questions and answers should be kept brief and to the point. The Chairperson can step in if he or she feels that a speaker is stalling or wasting time.
- The examining team may request the Chair to interrupt the answering team in the event of the following:
 - o That the latter is wasting time
 - o That the latter is introducing matter irrelevant to the question
 - o That the latter is introducing arguments not previously stated in their constructive speeches.

The Chair may or may not accept the request. The decision of the Chair will be final.

- The Chair may direct the examining team to keep their questioning precise and brief, in the event that the questions are being used to further expand their case.
- The Chair may choose to disqualify questions that are deemed irrelevant to the purpose and scope of the debate.
- Under exceptional circumstances, the team being examined may ask the Chair to intervene if they feel that are not being given enough time to answer.

II. Time Limits

II.1 Preliminary rounds, octo-finals and quarter-finals:

II.1.1 Each Substantive speech – **6 + 1 Minutes**

The speaker will be given a minute count on request. The timekeeper/Chairperson will give a single knock of the gravel at the completion of the first minute, another single knock at the completion of the sixth minute and two knocks at the seventh minute. Each speaker will get a grace period of **20 seconds**. **Any points made by the speaker after the 7:20 mark shall be ignored by the adjudicators.**

II.1.2 Once the Prime Minister completes his/her speech, the Leader of Opposition will get a minute to prepare. The other speakers will not be given any preparation time. Both teams will get a **common minute** to prepare for the Interrogation round. Both teams will get a **common minute** on completion of the Interrogation round to prepare their Reply speeches.

II.1.3 Each session of Interrogation – **3.5 Minutes**

The Chairperson/timekeeper shall inform the examiner that he/she can ask one **more question at the 3 minute mark.**

II.1.4 Each Reply speech – **3+1 Minutes**

The Chairperson/timekeeper will give a single knock of the gravel at the completion of the first minute, another single knock at the completion of the third minute and two knocks at the fourth minute. Each speaker will get a grace period of **20 seconds**.

II.2 Semi Finals

Each Substantive speech – **7+ 1 Minutes**

Each session of Interrogation – **4 Minutes**

Each Reply speech – **3+1 Minutes**

II.3 Grand Finals

Each Substantive speech – **8+ 1 Minutes**

Each session of Interrogation – **4.5 Minutes**

Each Reply speech – **3+1 Minutes**

III. Themes, Motions, Definitions and Challenges

III.1 Each round will be associated with a theme, with the motions for the round connected to the theme. It is the prerogative of the Proposition to define the motion. The Prime Minister has to lay out the following in his/her speech:

- The **motion** up for debate
- The definition of the **House**
- The proposition's interpretation of the motion and its **context**, which leads to the formulation of the **Case Statement** [the motion as it is finally to be debated].
- The **logical link** between the original motion and the Proposition's case statement.
- The **team split** – basically an outline of the arguments to be proposed by the Prime Minister and his deputy.
- The Proposition's **Burden of Proof** – what the proposition intends to show by the end of the debate.
- The Proposition's **Policy/Model** – if there is one it must come in the Prime Minister's speech in its entirety. **The deputy is allowed a purely clarificatory role in this regard.** A “floating model”, i.e. a situation where some major aspect of the model is presented in the Deputy Prime Minister's speech is not acceptable and any points of the Model occurring in the Deputy speech shall be ignored by the adjudicators.

III.1.1 The Proposition if it so wishes can forego defining the motion and propose it as it stands.

III.2 The Leader of the Opposition has to **state clearly** whether the Opposition **accepts** the Proposition's Case Statement. **Once the Case Statement has been accepted, it is assumed that the Logical Link as proposed by the Proposition holds.** No further contestation on the logical link will be entertained by the house. Assuming that the Opposition accepts the case statement, the Leader of the Opposition has to provide:

- The Opposition's **Point(s) of Clash** – one or two major points on which the Opposition intends to contest the Proposition's Case Statement.
- The **Burden of the Opposition** – what the opposition intends to show by the end of the debate

- **The Team Split** – an outline of the arguments to be proposed by the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy.
- **Part** of the Opposition’s **Model/Policy** [if one exists] must come in the Leader of Opposition’s speech. However, the Deputy Leader of Opposition is allowed to **add** to the policy as proposed by his/her Leader; therefore his/her role may be more than clarificatory in this regard. If the Opposition’s second speaker substantially alters the model proposed by the Opposition’s first speaker, then it is to be considered a **“team slide”** and penalized accordingly. **The entirety of the Opposition’s model cannot appear in the deputy speech** – the Leader of the Opposition has to give fair warning about the nature of their Policy to the Proposition.

III.3 The Leader of the Opposition can choose to **challenge** the definition of the Case Statement on **one or more** of the following grounds:

- **Squirreling** – This is when the logical link supplied by the Proposition is invalid or unclear or altogether absent, resulting in a case statement significantly at variance from the original motion. Additionally, If the Case Statement of the Proposition does not fit the theme for the round [**“out of theme”**] then a challenge based on **squirreling will hold**. As it will if a proposition has chosen to define a motion and yet not given a clear Case Statement.
- **Truism** – These are definitions that are true by nature and thus make the proposed case unarguable. For example – “Human Beings have to eat if they have to live”.
- **Tautological Definition** – Also called **self-proving definition**. This is a definition that cannot be negated using logical means – it is a self proving or circular argument. For example: “No man is an island, and hence man is a social animal”.
- **Time Set** – Limiting the context of the debate to a highly specific period in history, such that the average undergraduate student is not expected to possess sufficient knowledge of it.
- **Place Set** – Limiting the context of the debate to a highly specific geographic or spatial location.
- **Specific Knowledge** – This is when the case as proposed by the Proposition requires expert or scientific or technical knowledge not expected to be possessed by an average undergraduate student.

III.3.1 When challenging a definition, the Leader of the Opposition can either supply an alternative definition of the motion or provide some points in opposition to the original motion [before it was defined by the Proposition]. In either case the Opposition has to discharge its function of opposing the motion. **Failure to do so would lead to an automatic loss for the Opposition.**

III.3.2 In case the Leader of the Opposition fails to challenge the definition of the motion in his/her speech, no further challenge will be entertained. In case the Opposition challenges the definition on multiple grounds, then the **Challenge will hold if the opposition can prove any one of the grounds to be valid.**

III.3.3 In case of a challenge, the Deputy Prime Minister has to:

- Re-state the definition as supplied by the Prime Minister
- State why the Opposition's challenge does not hold and why the Proposition's case is reasonable.
- State his arguments as per the Team Split offered by the Prime Minister to the House.
- In case the Opposition has challenged the case on ground(s) like Tautology, Truism, Time/Place Set or Specific Knowledge, the Deputy Prime Minister is supposed to provide explanation and examples to show how the Opposition could have debated the case.
- The Deputy Prime Minister does not rebut the alternative case supplied by the Leader of Opposition, if any.
- The Deputy Prime Minister's role is purely clarificatory – he can **in no way** add to the definition supplied by the Prime Minister, and/or redefine certain terms and/or extend the definition in any way. Any such addition, redefinition or extension will be ignored by the adjudicators for the purposing of judging the Challenge.

III.4 While judging a Challenge, adjudicators have to keep in mind the following:

- A definition challenge cannot be awarded merely because the Opposition's alternative definition is more "reasonable" or "appropriate" or "suitable", or would result in a better debate.

- The Opposition on challenging the definition is not allowed to make an “**if then else**” argument. That is, once the definition has been challenged, they cannot proceed to rebut the case defined by the Proposition.
- The onus to prove that the definition is unreasonable lies on the Opposition.
- Neither team should abandon either the definition or challenge of its opening speaker.
- An Opposition **automatically loses** a challenge if it:
 - Supplies an alternative definition **and** fails to oppose it.
 - Doesn't supply an alternative definition **and** doesn't oppose the original motion.

IV. Points of Information, Order and Personal Privilege

IV.1 Teams are encouraged to offer Points of Information while a speaker of the opposing team holds the floor. Points of Information may be offered **only** during a substantive speech. Points of Information may be offered only at the end of the first minute and before the commencement of the final minute of the speech [both indicated by the Chairperson/timekeeper by a single knock of the gavel].

IV.1.1 A speaker offering a Pol must stand at his/her place uttering “On that point, sir/madam” or other words to that effect. The speaker holding the floor must clearly indicate verbally or through gestures whether the Pol has been accepted. Pols can be asked only at 15 second intervals – teams violating this guideline or otherwise heckling can be called to order by the Chairperson.

IV.1.2 A speaker holding the floor is encouraged to accept at least 2 Pols during the course of his or her speech. Failure to do so would cause the speaker to be penalized on speaker scores. Failure to offer adequate number of Points Of Information would result in the same.

IV.2 A team may raise a **Point of Order** in situations where they think that the other side is violating the rules or spirit of debating. For example, a point of order may be raised for new matter in a reply speech at the end of the debate. It is generally advisable to raise Points of Order once at the end, so that the flow of the debate is not disturbed. **Please note, that points of order should be raised only on rare occasions.**

IV.2.1 Once a Point of Order is raised, the Chair can choose to accept, reject or keep it in abeyance at his or her discretion. For points kept in abeyance, the Chair must communicate his/her final decision on the point to the other members of the adjudication panel before they begin weighing arguments.

IV.3 A speaker may raise a **Point of Personal Privilege** if he/she believes that he or she has been personally deeply wounded by something that the other side said or did. A Point of Personal Privilege is a serious matter, **and raised only in the rarest of rare instances.** If a Point of Personal Privilege is accepted by the chair, then the offender must be penalized severely in terms of his or her individual speaker score.

V. Adjudication

V.1 Once both Reply speeches have been completed every member of the adjudication panel shall concern themselves with awarding and scoring the debate, both of which shall be done individually for each adjudicator. It is **not allowed** for adjudicators to confer amongst themselves before reaching a decision, **except** in the following cases:

- The adjudicator requires a clarification of the rules. He or she may ask the Chair for the same. In case the Chair fails to provide suitable clarification the Chief Adjudicators of the tournament may be approached.
- The adjudicator failed to properly hear or note down a point. In such an instance he or she may ask the Chair to furnish the required information. The Chair is only permitted to state and **not** explain the point to the adjudicator concerned.

V.2 For a team to win a debate it must emerge victorious on a majority of the adjudicators' sheets. This is so for definition challenges as well.

V.3 Guidelines for scoring teams shall be explained before the first round of the Tournament and will be mentioned on the scoring sheet.

V.4 Once all adjudicators have reached their decision **individually**, the Chair will summon both teams to the room and announce the majority decision. Each adjudicator including the Chair will then explain his or her decision to the teams, who may ask for clarifications. The order in which the adjudicators shall give their feedback is at the discretion of the Chair. Please note that certain rounds of the Tournament may be declared closed by the organizers at their discretion. Teams shall not be provided the decisions of closed round debates until later.

V.5 Both teams and the Chair shall score every adjudicator on his/her decision and the quality of feedback. Guidelines for scoring will be mentioned on the scoring sheet.

V.6 Every debate will be awarded on the basis of matter, i.e. argumentation and logic. While style and organization are important for the purposes of rating individual speakers, debates are **not** to be awarded on these parameters. **Any adjudicator**

found to be awarding debates on the basis of manner or technique shall be disqualified from the remainder of the competition.

V.7 New Matter – Teams are not allowed to introduce new lines of argument during the Interrogation round or in Reply speeches. Any such matter in the Interrogation round or in Reply speeches shall be ignored by the adjudicators. Please note that examples, illustrations and clarifications are allowed.

V.8 Personal Knowledge - Adjudicators must **ignore** any personal, specific or expert knowledge they may have while judging a debate. In evaluating the relative merits of arguments put forth by the two sides, the adjudicator is allowed to use **only**: the record of the debate, logic [but not by reading into a debate] and **common knowledge – information which can be regarded as non-technical general information possessed by the average undergraduate student.**

V.9 Reading into a debate – An adjudicator is said to have “read into” or “entered” a debate when his/her decision is based on an unfair or undue extrapolation of the arguments made by one side at the cost of the other. This is strictly disallowed. Further, adjudicators are not to use their own arguments while judging, no matter how obvious or truthful the argument seems to the adjudicator. Each argument which is considered for the purposes of awarding the debate must have been explicitly mentioned on the floor of the house.

V.10 Prioritizing – Adjudicators must note that debates are **not** to be judged on a point vs. point basis. Therefore a team winning say four out seven points in a debate does not automatically win the debate. Adjudicators are required to rank points in order of importance, and while judging determine which side was better able to discharge its burden of proof.

V.11 Factual Clashes – When two teams clash on a purely factual point, where the veracity of one or the other side cannot be established without the use of specific or expert knowledge, then the adjudicators are duty bound to ignore the point altogether. Therefore, in a situation of “factual clash”, the point in question is ignored for the purposes of judging the debate. **However, if an adjudicator believes that the**

factual clash lies within the domain of Common Knowledge, then he should award the point to the team who he believes is correct.

V.12 Speaker Roles – See section III for what is expected of various speakers in a debate. Speakers not discharging the burden expected of them are liable to be penalized by the adjudication panel.

V.13 Judging Definition Challenges – see section III.4 for the appropriate rules.

V.14 Non-discrimination – Adjudicators will encounter a wide variety of speaking styles during the course of the Tournament. There is no one “correct” or “ideal” style. Adjudicators are encouraged to approach each debate with an open mind – they shouldn’t be too specific in their expectations of technique or style. **A speaker must not be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, sex, nationality, sexual preference, accent, age, social status or any disability.**