

SECC NEWSLETTER #2
JAN-APRIL 2025

from the desk of the Commissioners 2024-25

Chronicles of Cases (Jan - May 2025)

Event Highlights

Movie Screening: Sardar Udham

National Women's Day

Educational Visit to TN Legislative Assembly and Raj Bhavan

from the desk of the Commissioners 2024-25

From starting off as a Coordinator for Events to serving as the Commissioner of SECC, this journey has been one of immense growth, reflection, and transformation—both for me and for the Commission. What began as a learning experience soon evolved into an empowering pursuit for me.

At the outset, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the former Commissioners of SECC & SEC (2023–24) for trusting me with this responsibility. Serving as a Commissioner for SECC & SEC 2024–25 has been a privilege and a profoundly humbling experience. This tenure may have flown by in the blink of an eye, but the memories and lessons it has gifted me will stay etched in my heart for a lifetime. To call it a rollercoaster ride would be an understatement. This role has been a mirror—helping me understand myself better than ever before, with lessons that extend far beyond minutes and mandates. There were times when it felt overwhelming, but I always held on to the vision I had set for SECC: to transform it into a PANACEA—a source for solutions to diverse challenges, driving positive change and holistic improvement for the team.

I owe special thanks to Meenakshi, whose quiet strength and leadership taught me how to hold space, let go of things, and to make decisions with conviction. And to my co-Commissioner, Kaushik Raja P, whose unwavering support and infectious energy kept the flame of our mission alive, even through the most challenging days. Despite juggling personal hurdles and academic pressures, SECC became my anchor—a space where I felt safe, heard, and at home. I am deeply grateful to our professors—Sudhakar Sir, Jeganmohan Sir, Raghukanth Sir, and Satya Sir—for their constant guidance and belief in our vision. Their mentorship has been pivotal in shaping the direction we’ve pursued this year.

Over this tenure, we had achieved milestones that were once mere ideas scribbled on black boards during late-night brainstorming sessions. We dared to dream and went on to set precedents as we hope they will serve as guideposts for those who come next. From conceptualizing events that fostered societal impact, to reminding contesting candidates that there exists an option called “*Reject*,” each experience has been enriching and deeply meaningful.

One moment that particularly stands out was when decisions of the SEC were questioned—and we stood undeterred. We reminded ourselves and others that *Conventions don’t constitute rules*. Our foundation lies in the Constitution, and we have strived to uphold its spirit with clarity and courage.

As I step away from this role, I do so with the hope that the spirit and legacy of this Commission will continue to flourish. May the foundations of ethical governance, inclusivity, and student empowerment grow ever stronger. May SECC and SEC always stand as symbols of courage, conscience, and an unwavering commitment to student rights.

With sincere gratitude and lasting hope,

Karthik Kurimindla

Commissioner, SECC & SEC 2024–25

It is almost fascinating to note that we started our tenure during the April and May of 2024 and April 2025 reached lightning fast. Thus, it is true that time is relative, maybe much more relational to our team than we could experience in classrooms. I believe that most of our cherished times during the late-night works, emergency meetings (truly emergency they are), and looking for the spelling mistakes over the drafted mails... oh my god, were the times that are sculptured in our minds and not any more that these tasks will engulf in our night dreams. Jokes aside, it was the dedication and the hard work that we pulled off for every task that is the mesmerizing tool of achievement we learnt through the Commission. The Commission is a Fujifilm camera, it gives the picture of what true the world is, and how beautiful every single moment can be. The path towards achieving the ability of greater leadership is a fondful gift and we thank the Commission for the same. The winds of Kamikaze were always with us and will ever be blessed upon us; through the mist in the landscape lays the prosperity to do what is the greater good; what was always the just, was the gene of the Commission. To stand for what is necessary, the Commission must experience the dilemma of ethical positions and sail in the boat of law and governance. We sailed, we sailed; we were in the middle of sea, seeking the directions of light; we sailed, we sailed; we saw the shore, we sailed to the shore; we sailed, we sailed; the boat is set on for a new journey, we will sail; we will sail; sail again till the last day. "Accept me as I am. Only then can we discover each other" – Eight and Half (1963), we accepted who we are, and thus we achieved the greatness of what could ever be done.

Kaushik Raja P

Commissioner, SECC & SEC 2024–25

Chronicles of Cases (Jan - May 2025)

1. SLC Speaker 2023-24 – Non-compliance with SECC Verdict (Education Minister Parliament Trip Case), Status Update

A formal case was raised against the Speaker of the Student Legislative Council (SLC) for the academic year 2023–24 concerning the arbitrary and opaque selection of student delegates to meet the Education Minister. Allegations also included concerns over financial expenditures incurred during the visit. Following a detailed enquiry, the Student Ethics and Conduct Committee (SECC) released a verdict on January 19th, 2024, directing the Speaker to convene a meeting with the delegates and submit a comprehensive financial audit report.

Despite the clarity and binding nature of the verdict, compliance was persistently delayed. Over the following year, the SECC issued multiple reminders to the Speaker, requesting adherence to the directives. Faculty-level interventions were initiated, including meetings with the Faculty Advisor of the SLC. Formal reminders were issued both by the Faculty Advisor and, subsequently, by the Dean of Students. Each attempt at enforcement was met with repeated justifications from the Speaker, who cited reasons such as end-semester examinations, Institute Day obligations, and the anticipated transition to a new council.

Given the prolonged and seemingly intentional delay, the matter was classified by the SECC as a Contempt of Court, in line with the provisions of the SECC Constitution. It was subsequently escalated to the Institute Disciplinary and Complaints System (IDCS) for further action. However, the IDCS declined to entertain the case on the grounds that it pertained to internal matters of student governance, which it considered outside its jurisdiction.

Following continued inaction, the Deputy Registrar intervened and issued a formal reminder on April 10th, 2025—a full 447 days after the original SECC verdict—directing the Speaker once again to comply by convening the required meeting and submitting the audit report. In response, the Speaker claimed that the delay was due to the delegates having graduated, although it was established that the majority of them remained on campus and were available for participation.

On April 20th, 2025, the IDCS issued a final order providing the Speaker with a ten-day grace period, setting a binding deadline of April 30th, 2025, for compliance. As of April 25th, 2025, the verdict has remained unimplemented for 462 days since its issuance, with 5 days remaining before the extended deadline.

Status: Pending (462 days since original verdict; 5 days until extended deadline).

2. Complaint Petition 1 - Delay in Release of Minutes of the 4th Student Legislative Council Meeting

A complaint petition was submitted to the SECC by the complainant regarding a delay in the circulation of the Minutes of Meeting (MoM) for the 4th session of the SLC. The complainant alleged that the Speaker of the SLC had violated the constitutional requirement to release the MoM within seven days of

the meeting. The session in question took place on September 28, 2024, and as of October 9, 2024, the MoM had not yet been circulated to the GSB, marking a delay of two days beyond the mandated period.

During the course of the investigation, both the Speaker and the Deputy Head of Secretariat, responsible for documentation and SLC committee affairs, provided their clarifications. They cited the unusually long duration of the meeting, which extended over ten hours, and the subsequent academic load due to the Quiz 2 week starting on October 3, 2024, as major factors contributing to the delay. Furthermore, it was noted that the documentation team was limited in number during the meeting, leading to significant fatigue. Health issues faced by the Deputy Head of Secretariat and the scheduling of quizzes were also presented as reasons for the postponed release.

Upon review, the SECC acknowledged that the deadline was indeed breached. However, it recognized the mitigating circumstances, particularly the academic demands and health concerns that impacted the documentation process. While maintaining that adherence to the Constitution is essential, the SECC offered a degree of flexibility in this instance due to the genuine constraints faced by the individuals involved. The SLC was directed to release the MoM to the GSB at the earliest and to notify the student body of the reasons for the delay.

In conclusion, while the SECC emphasized the importance of upholding constitutional timelines, it also encouraged the SLC to consider formalizing an extension policy for MoM releases during academic pressure periods. The Commission also advised that the SLC improve transparency by informing the GSB in advance if delays are anticipated.

3. Advisory Opinion on the Inter-IIT Fashion Contingent Selection Case

A formal complaint was submitted by a first-year student to the Dean of Students and the Cultural Advisor, with a copy marked to the SECC. The complaint alleged partial behaviour and misconduct in the selection process for the Inter-IIT Fashion Contingent, specifically involving a senior member of the Fashion Club. The student later formally registered the case with the SECC for further investigation.

According to the complaint, the student was initially selected for both the Drama Contingent and as a Makeup Artist in the Fashion Contingent for the Inter-IIT Cultural Meet 7.0. However, she was subsequently removed from the Fashion team without any official communication or valid reason. Furthermore, she reported exclusion from the Drama Contingent's activities due to her previous involvement with the Fashion team. The student sought clarification regarding her removal and also requested reimbursement of travel expenses if she was no longer participating.

The SECC's investigation revealed that while the student's selection had been confirmed internally, her later removal was attributed to budgetary constraints and her non-qualification for the Model position, which she had later expressed interest in. However, her initial selection as a Makeup Artist was not disputed in internal records. The SECC found that no formal email was ever issued to communicate either her selection or rejection, and her inclusion was acknowledged only through a WhatsApp message from a former Fashion Contingent Head.

The Cultural Contingent Heads explained that a senior member had taken charge of coordinating practice sessions after the resignation of the previous Fashion Club Captains. However, the SECC noted that no

such position as “Supervisor” is formally recognized in the Cultural Affairs Secretaries' Rulebook. Despite lacking official authority, the same senior member had made key decisions regarding the team’s composition, including the complainant’s removal.

In their clarification, the senior member cited performance issues, feedback from previous leads, and the complainant’s insistence on dual roles as reasons for her exclusion. However, the SECC found no concrete justification for denying the complainant her originally assigned role as a Makeup Artist, particularly as the team had already confirmed this position to her.

The SECC determined that the senior member did not hold any formal authority to make decisions regarding selection or removal of team members. These responsibilities rest solely with the Club Captains or, in their absence, with the Cultural Contingent Heads and Events Cores of Sangam. The SECC also found inconsistencies in the Cultural Contingent Heads’ explanations, as they had submitted contradictory accounts to the Cultural Advisor and the senior member.

The SECC concluded that the decisions made by the senior member were invalid and issued a disciplinary warning to the Cultural Contingent Heads for misuse of authority and conflicting official communication.

In light of the case, the SECC recommended formalizing procedures for temporary delegation of responsibilities in the event of resignations or removals, mandating official email communication for all selections and rejections, maintaining up-to-date official records of team members, and ensuring that all changes to the rulebook are implemented only through proper amendment processes via the SLC.

4. Financial Misappropriation - Investigation into the Financial Discrepancies and Fraudulent Bills in SAWERA Event

The investigation revolves around financial irregularities and fraudulent bill submissions related to the SAWERA event organized under the I&AR Sphere. Key figures involved in the event's financial management included the I&AR Secretary 2023-24, the Point of Contact for the event, and other members of the CRC team 2023-24.

The I&AR Secretary 2023-24, responsible for overseeing the event’s finances, admitted to negligence but claimed that the submission of fraudulent bills was not directly handled by him. Despite this, there were inconsistencies in the statements provided by him and another key member of the CRC team, raising suspicions of mismanagement and potential intentional deflection of accountability. The fraudulent bills, amounting to a substantial sum, were later found to be manipulated, with discrepancies in the amounts and dates when compared to the original invoices.

The event was budgeted at Rs. 18 lakhs, but the actual expenditure exceeded the approved budget by a significant margin, prompting the need to cover the shortfall through various sources, including personal contributions. Despite these measures, the primary responsibility for financial oversight remained with the I&AR Secretary 2023-24 and a member of the CRC team.

Several students involved in the investigation, including those from the CRC and I&AR teams, failed to attend hearings or respond to communications, indicating intentional delays in the investigation process.

Based on the available evidence, it was concluded that the I&AR Secretary 2023-24 and CRC Head 2023-24 were directly implicated in the financial discrepancies. Their inconsistent statements and lack of clear evidence regarding middlemen suggested that they might be attempting to avoid accountability. The SECC recommended strict measures for financial oversight, including regular audits and transparent management practices, to prevent such incidents in the future. The SECC recommends that STACT conduct further investigation into the implicated individuals and take appropriate disciplinary actions based on the findings.

5. Clarification on Public Interest Litigation Regarding Student Election Commission and Procedural Compliance

A member of the General Student Body (GSB) filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) with the SECC, alleging issues with the Student Election Commission (SEC) related to the conduct of the 2024-25 Student General Elections (SGE 25). The complainant raised concerns over procedural fairness and transparency, requesting that the SECC address these issues publicly.

The SECC reviewed the submission and determined that the complaint did not meet the legal requirements for PIL admissibility. The SECC found that the complainant failed to provide sufficient evidence or substantial merit to qualify the submission as a PIL. Instead, it categorized the submission as a request for clarification.

As a result, the SECC decided to address the concerns privately, while ensuring transparency by publishing a redacted version of the response on the SECC's official website. Additionally, the SECC noted that the circulation of the PIL via the Announce List violated the Institute's Mail Moderation Policy, which requires election-related discussions to be held on a dedicated platform.

6. Complaint Petition 2 - Delay in Release of Minutes of Meetings by Student Legislative Council 2024-25

A complaint was filed by a student to the SECC concerning delays in the release of Minutes of Meetings (MoMs) for several Student Legislative Council (SLC) 2024-25 sessions. The complainant highlighted that MoMs were either not released or were delayed beyond the permissible timeline of one week as outlined in the Students' Constitution and SLC Rulebook.

The primary violation was the non-release of MoMs for the first SLC meeting, which the Speaker clarified was sent out later but on the approved communication channel. However, the complainant's claims regarding subsequent meetings were valid, as the MoMs were consistently delayed beyond the stipulated period. The SLC Speaker provided several explanations for these delays, citing academic commitments, holidays, and logistical challenges, such as multiple sessions in some SLC meetings and the complexity of certain discussions, especially budget-related matters.

Despite these factors, the Speaker acknowledged the delays and expressed regret for not meeting the timelines set forth. The response suggested that the rulebook be reviewed and revised to introduce more flexibility in cases involving multiple sub-sessions or complex agenda items.

The SECC, after considering the explanations and the importance of maintaining transparency and accountability, emphasized the need for the Speaker and the Secretariat to strictly adhere to the rulebook's timelines. It was also noted that further delays would lead to formal apologies from the Speaker and Secretariat. The SECC further recommended discussions to revise timelines in the event of future budget reviews and other exceptional cases. The Advisor was also notified of the situation to ensure all stakeholders were aware of the ongoing issue.

7. Non-Compliance with Bi-Monthly Report Submission by Executive Council 2024-25 Members

A Public Interest Litigation was filed by a member of the GSB highlighting the failure of Executive Council 2024-25 members to submit their bi-monthly reports, as mandated by the Students' Constitution. These reports were to provide an update on their actions to date and plans for the remaining term, but no records of their submission were found in the Minutes of Meetings (MoMs) of the Student Legislative Council (SLC) meetings for the current year.

The GSB member raised concerns over the non-submission of these reports, questioning whether the Executive Council had met its constitutional obligations. They also called for the public release of any submitted reports, citing the importance of transparency for the electorate. The absence of these reports, it was argued, constituted a violation of the Students' Constitution, and the GSB member suggested that failure to comply could lead to impeachment.

The SLC Speaker was requested to confirm whether the bi-monthly reports had been submitted to the Council and whether they complied with constitutional requirements. A deadline for responses was set, and the SLC was expected to provide copies of all communications and submissions from the Executive Council related to the reports.

The SECC conducted a preliminary investigation into the matter. It was found that only four out of ten Executive Council members had submitted any form of documentation. The SLC Speaker confirmed that repeated reminders were sent to all relevant secretaries, but many failed to comply. The SECC then issued a directive to the secretaries to submit all available documentation, including bi-monthly reports, meeting minutes, budget reviews, and manifesto reviews.

In response, some secretaries, such as the International and Alumni Relations Secretary and Co-Curricular Secretary, submitted their reports, while others, like the Hostel Affairs Secretary, acknowledged delays and promised to submit their documents shortly. However, the Academic Affairs Secretary, Cultural Affairs Secretaries, and Research Affairs Secretary failed to provide any reports or responses to SECC's directives. The SLC Speaker confirmed the ongoing evaluations of secretarial activities but emphasized that the required documentation had not been submitted by certain secretaries.

Given the non-compliance of several Executive Council members and the nearing end of their term, the SECC questioned what additional measures could be taken. The SECC sought feedback on whether more stringent penalties should be considered to ensure procedural adherence in the future.

8. Complaint Petition 3: Against the IAR Secretary 2024-25 for Arbitrary Termination of ARC Head 2024-25

SECC received a grievance from the ARC Head 2024-25 regarding his removal from the said position by the IAR Secretary 2024-25. Upon receiving the complaint, SECC initiated a review of the matter as per its constitutional mandate to uphold fairness and due process.

SECC noted that the investigation remained incomplete as key stakeholders, including the IAR Secretary 2024-25, IITMAA, and the ACR Office, had not provided responses to the clarifications sought by SECC. The IAR Secretary 2024-25 initially cited medical reasons for the delay in response and sought additional time to provide his statement. Preliminary findings from the responses received, including those from the IAR Secretary 2024-25, indicated inconsistencies in the stated reasons for the termination of the ARC Head 2024-25. Although the IAR Secretary 2024-25 holds authority over appointments within the team, SECC determined that the rationale for removal lacked substantiation. In accordance with the Student Constitution of IIT Madras, SECC holds the power to examine the legitimacy of such actions, particularly whether the grounds cited for termination are justifiable.

In light of these developments, SECC issued an interim order suspending the termination of the ARC Head 2024-25 until a conclusive decision could be reached. The ARC Head 2024-25 was thereby reinstated with the authority to perform all duties of the position, including active participation in the recruitment of the ARC Head 2025-26. This interim relief aimed to ensure that no irreversible decisions were made pending completion of the investigation.

The IAR Secretary 2024-25, in response, refused to comply with SECC's writ, alleging defamation and sabotage on the part of the ARC Head 2024-25 and questioning the burden of proof imposed upon him. He further challenged the principle of presumption of innocence applied by SECC and expressed concern over potential misuse of the student judicial mechanism. SECC, in its reply, reaffirmed its impartial constitutional role and clarified that the removal of only one co-head despite shared responsibilities raised serious concerns. It also noted that a similar removal pattern was observed in the Heritage Club. The individuals removed in both instances were actively involved in the derecognition process of the IAR body, raising further concerns about impartiality and retaliation.

Furthermore, SECC emphasized the lack of concrete evidence to prove exclusive culpability of the ARC Head 2024-25 in the alleged defamation. SECC expressed concern over reliance on weak or insufficiently corroborated evidence such as an email copied to multiple recipients. The Commission highlighted that repeated reminders seeking clarification remained unanswered by the IAR Secretary 2024-25, who had earlier expressed readiness to cooperate after recovery.

On April 10, 2025, SECC issued a formal Writ of Mandamus recognizing the reinstatement of the ARC Head 2024-25 and instructing compliance with its interim directive. Upon refusal of the IAR Secretary 2024-25 to uphold the order and continued non-compliance, SECC issued a second Writ confirming the ARC Head 2024-25's status and explicitly stating that refusal to comply constitutes Contempt of Court. Given the conclusion of the IAR Secretary 2024-25's tenure, SECC directed the IAR Secretary 2025-26 to provide the ARC Head 2024-25 with full access to ARC Team communications and operational resources until the completion of the selection process for the new ARC Head. The second Writ of Mandamus served as official confirmation of the ARC Head 2024-25's reinstatement and authorized him to represent the team in all administrative and procedural affairs. It also warned that any further non-compliance would result in disciplinary consequences under the Student Constitution.

Event Highlights

Movie Screening: Sardar Udham

Date: 28th January, 2025

Venue: Central Lecture Theatre (CLT)

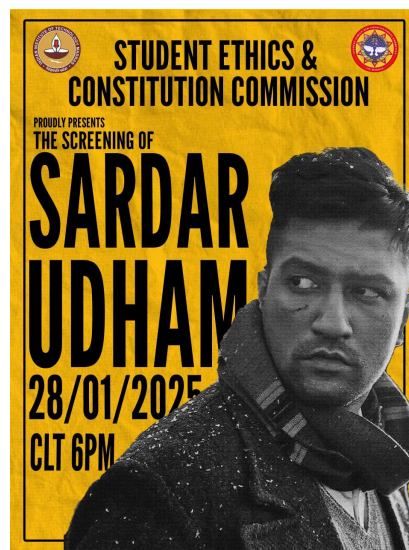
To commemorate the 76th Republic Day, SECC hosted a screening of *Sardar Udham*, a film that pays tribute to the spirit of resistance and the sacrifices made in the fight for India's freedom.

Highlights:

The film portrays the life of Sardar Udham Singh, the revolutionary freedom fighter who avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by assassinating General Dyer's aide, Michael O'Dwyer. Through its poignant storytelling and evocative visuals, *Sardar Udham* sheds light on the brutal realities of colonial rule and the unyielding courage of those who dared to resist it.

The screening drew a packed house, with students fully engaged throughout the emotionally intense narrative. As the credits rolled, there was a shared sense of stillness, a collective moment of processing what had just unfolded on screen, recollecting India's tryst with colonialism and its brutality.

The evening served as a powerful reminder of the resilience that shaped our nation and the stories that continue to inspire it.



National Women's Day

Date: 13th February,2025

To mark National Women's Day, SECC organized a poster making competition that invited students to reflect on and creatively express some of the most pressing gender-based issues of our time.

Themes:

- *The Silent Workforce: Mother, Maid, Machine*
- *Victim-Blaming: A Second Assault*
- *Same Job, Less Pay: The Gender Tax*
- *My Body, Not My Choice?: When the Law Owns a Woman's Womb*

Highlights:

The submissions we received were thoughtful, creative, and impactful. Each participant brought a unique perspective to their chosen theme, translating complex social issues into powerful visual statements. The posters reflected not just artistic skill, but a deep sense of awareness and empathy. It was clear that a lot of thought, care, and emotion went into every submission.

Narrowing it down to just five winners wasn't easy at all. The judging process took time, with a lot of back-and-forth discussion. In the end, we selected five that stood out for their originality, clarity of message, and visual impact.

The winners were awarded Zaitoon coupons worth ₹300 and will be featured on SECC's Instagram page, a small way to celebrate their effort and share their work with a wider audience.

This competition wasn't just about art - it was about starting conversations, raising awareness, and making space for voices that matter.

Winners:

1. Ramya Kasaraneni
2. Pranay Kumar
3. Ajina Ajay
4. Deepak Venkatesan T
5. Nagul Prasath SV



Educational Visit to TN Legislative Assembly and Raj Bhavan

Members of the SECC, along with the winners of the Democracy Duel Quiz, were given a unique opportunity to witness the Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly proceedings live in January 2025. After the necessary verifications, the students were granted access to the visitors' gallery, where they observed the legislative process first-hand. This experience significantly enriched their understanding of:

1. Legislative Functioning – by seeing how bills are introduced, debated, and passed, they gained practical insight into parliamentary procedure beyond textbooks.
2. Democratic Engagement – by observing elected representatives in action, it fostered a deeper appreciation for representative democracy and the importance of active citizenship.
3. Constitutional Values in Practice – witnessing live deliberations helped reinforce the relevance of constitutional principles such as accountability, transparency, and the separation of powers.

Further, a visit to Raj Bhavan has also been organized, offering a rare one-on-one interaction with the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu. This interaction will allow students to engage directly with a key constitutional authority and gain insights into the role of the Governor in state governance.

