

KK LUTHRA MOOT COURT REPORT 2011

Morshed Mannan, Lucy Newton and Max Wilson represented Warwick Law School at the KK Luthra International Mooting Competition in January 2011. They were awarded the second best memorial in the competition and were third overall.

“For the purposes of the mooting competition we had to prepare two Memorials outlining our arguments, one for the Appellants and the other for the Respondents, and had to send it to New Delhi to be marked an entire month before the competition began. It took weeks of research, assistance from Warwick Law Professors and an International Criminal Law Barrister as well as considerable quantities of apples and red bull to complete our Memorials in time for the December 10 deadline. We thought that a harrowing week of all-nighters before the deadline would be the worst of it; little did we know about the Indian visa application process.

After hours of queuing and after retaking a number of passport photos, we managed to secure our visas and we excitedly waited for the 12th of January - the date of our departure. We boarded the plane with thinly-veiled pessimism and it was a feeling that was reinforced after being picked by the very hospitable students of the Campus Law Centre Delhi as they casually remarked that due to the exceptionally high standard of mooting at the competition, we should just “enjoy our holiday”. They reminded us that in the previous year’s competition Cambridge did not even make the Quarter-Finals and became grievously ill in the process. So brimming with confidence, we travelled across Delhi to our accommodation at the International Guest House within the campus of Delhi University.

On the day of registration, we were warmly welcomed to the University by one of the patrons of the moot, Mr. Siddharth Luthra and were able to witness an impressive opening ceremony at the Campus Law Centre. This included memorable speeches by two Indian Supreme Court Judges (Justices Singhvi and Ganguly) and renowned Indian legal academics. The ceremony was also our first opportunity to meet the other competitors. We were immediately intimidated by the size of their moot bundles. While ours was 25 pages, their bundles ran into several volumes and unlike our jet-lagged selves, they seemed very focused. We were fortunate enough to meet the organisers, the judges and many other legal figures in the High Tea that followed the opening ceremony. We were impressed by the standard of organisation and the food that was provided at every break.

We went through the two preliminary rounds of the competition the following day and were constantly challenged by the high quality of judging, where they persistently interrogated us throughout our speeches. It was interesting to note how our style of mooting differs to those practised in other parts of the world. In England we are told to be very formal and reserved while the style in countries like India and the US seem to be much more emotive and adversarial. Nonetheless, despite the high standard of competition, we were informed over High Tea that we had successfully defeated the first two teams and had qualified for the quarter-finals. We were also very pleased to hear that we had been awarded the second best memorial out of the sixty teams enrolled.

We then narrowly managed to beat the quarter-final team, whose institution had won the competition in the previous instalment of the competition. We were very impressed by the quality of the opposition and how thoroughly they had researched each and every aspect of

the moot. Late in the evening over dinner, there was a dramatic pause and the convenor of the moot announced the four teams that had qualified for the semi-finals and C1, our team number was one of them.

With a mixture of euphoria and nervous apprehension, we diligently prepared our extended speeches for the semi-finals in our hostel room. The next day when the early-morning mist was still lying heavy over the city and marathon runners were doing laps around the campus, we left for the venue of the semi-finals: the prestigious Indian Habitat Centre. We were slotted against George Washington University Law School and had already heard of their formidable reputation. The moot began with judges from the Indian High Court firing questions at counsel on both sides regarding nuanced areas of International Criminal Law and judicial procedure in international courts. Unfortunately, we were narrowly beaten by the American team as they believed our style was too restrained compared to their standards. We were awarded third place overall and were given a large set of practitioners texts as a prize from another Supreme Court Judge (Justice Reddy). We were extremely proud of getting that far in the competition, amongst the very dedicated and prepared students from around the world, and relished our opportunity to experience the culture of India.”