

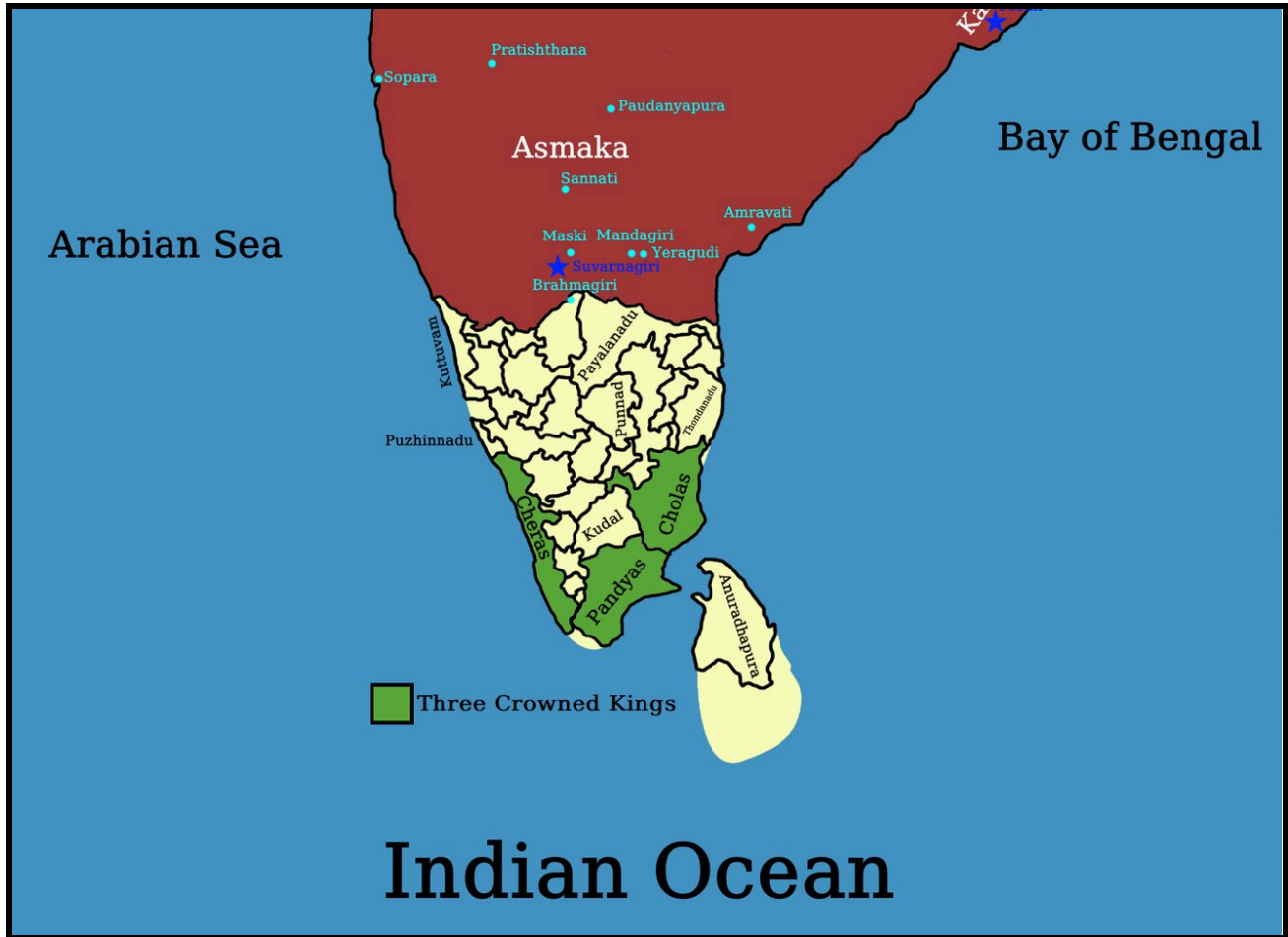
Boston College High School

Model UN Conference

XXXIII



# Establishing the Tamil Confederation



**Chair:** Himnish Jindal

**Co-Chair:** Jayden Goncalves

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## Letter from the Chair

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to BCHMUN 33! My name is Himnish Jindal and I am excited to be your chair for the General Assembly's committee on establishing a Tamil Confederation.

To give a brief introduction of myself, I am part of the Boston College High School class of 2026 and live in Quincy, Massachusetts. Whether it is debating with other delegates, collaborating to create working papers, or presenting resolutions, I have loved every aspect of Model United Nations since I started doing it in the fourth grade. I always enjoy going to conferences where I can meet new people and explore new places. Outside of Model UN, I enjoy doing Mock Trial and leading the South Asian Representation Association here at BC High. In addition, I love taekwondo and tennis, as well as spending plenty of time with my friends and family. With that being said, I am eager to meet all of you at the conference and to see what you can do. Whether this is your first time coming to a Model UN conference or if you have been to many conferences before, we hope to make this a memorable experience for you all!

This background guide is intended to help you prepare for the conference by providing useful information on the topic to serve as a basis for your research. That being said, I expect that you will all thoroughly and thoughtfully do independent research to supplement this information you have been given. Striving to do this will ensure that everyone, including you, has the best experience possible at this conference by being knowledgeable and able to discuss the topic at hand. I am looking forward to seeing you all well-prepared, ready to give some amazing speeches and willing to collaborate with your fellow delegates.

I look forward to meeting you all in March and having an awesome conference with you all. If you have any questions, or would simply like to introduce yourself, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

**Himnish Jindal '26**

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## **Letter from the Co-Chair**

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Jayden Goncalves and I am absolutely overjoyed to be your co-chair for this committee during this BC High Model UN conference. It is a pleasure to be co-chairing aside Himnish Jindal and an honor to work with such esteemed delegates as yourselves on such an interesting topic of the Tamil Confederation.

I am a Junior at BC High and have been doing Model UN for about three years now. At this point, Model UN proved to be an amazing experience for me and as I reflect from my past experiences, I realize just how much growth has come out of each conference and how these conferences have shaped me over the years into becoming the type of man I am today. Model UN is a place for learning new things but it is also a place to meet new people and to have fun. Outside of school I am a part of the Track team, Mock Trial, National Honors society, and other programs. It is my honor to invite all of you to come enjoy this conference with us and please, have fun.

Best,

**Jayden Goncalves '26**

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## **Introduction to the Committee**

This committee is set during a time when the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras, vie for dominance. However, while these kingdoms are powerful on their own, as external threats challenge them, they are tasked with finding a way to preserve Tamil sovereignty and culture amongst these threats. A popular proposed solution to this issue is the creation of a Tamil Confederation, but in light of the rivalries between the dynasties, also an extremely controversial one. You will be faced with the task of balancing the need for unity between rival dynasties with issues regarding the preservation of regional autonomy, creating a solution that will protect Tamil sovereignty, preserve culture, and ensure prosperity among threats of northern invasions and rising powers.

## **Background on the Current Situation**

The current situation takes place during the 10th and 11th centuries CE. During this time period, the region is dominated by the Three Crowned Kings: the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras. Each of these kingdoms has grown and strengthened over centuries, developing economies, militaries, and culture. However, the rise of new powers, as well as external threats faced by these kingdoms has brought these dynasties to a crossroads: one where they must overcome their long-held rivalries to survive. Southern lands are often faced with invaders from Northern kingdoms such as the Rashtrakutas, challenging the Tamil kingdoms' ability to defend themselves. Furthermore, rising powers from Southeast Asia like the Srivijaya Empire, challenge Tamil maritime dominance over the immensely profitable Indian Ocean trade routes—and the wealth and power that comes as a result.

## **Current Political Situation**

The Chola Empire, under the reign of Rajaraja Chola I, is currently at the height of its military and cultural expansion. The empire has taken control of key parts of Sri Lanka as well as run overseas military campaigns using its navy, widely regarded as one of the most powerful in the world at the time. However, while the Chola have risen to dominance, this has increased tensions in the Chera and Pandya empires, who resent the Chola empire's new dominance, fearing that it will lead to the subjugation of their empires. The Pandyas, once powerful, hope to challenge the supremacy of the Cholas and

reclaim their former glory, while the Chera Kingdom aims to maintain its monopoly over spice trade routes. The Cheras, controlling the western coast, also hope to foster maritime connections.

However, Tamil Nadu is faced with many complex internal challenges. Although they share a common Tamil culture, language, and religion, their long-held rivalries are often responsible for conflict between the kingdoms, weakening the overall strength of the region and leaving them more vulnerable to external threats. As a solution to this issue, the concept of a Tamil Confederation has been proposed. The Confederation would unify the Three Crowned Kings, strengthening the collective strength of the Tamil kingdoms and protecting them from the external threats they are facing. However, while this proposed unification is popular, it is also extremely controversial and has sparked debate across the region. While proponents of this idea argue that the unification will prevent the downfall of the kingdoms to the increasing strength of external threats, others argue that it is an attempt to confirm the supremacy of one dynasty over the others, bringing down the sovereignty of the kingdoms within the region. In light of this, the kingdoms have brought the proposition up for formal consideration, leading to debate over whether these dynasties will be able to resolve these issues and create a united Confederation—or if the long standing rivalries between the empires will ultimately leave Tamil Nadu vulnerable to external threats.



## **The Chola Dynasty**

**Goals:** The Chola Empire's main target was to create a vast, prosperous and powerful empire through territorial expansion, self-efficient and strong governance and economic developments in Southern India. The Chola Empire launched many military campaigns to annex the Pandya and Chera kingdoms to expand their empire's borders. The naval forces were very powerful and they controlled trade routes in the Indian ocean. The Chola had a hierarchical system and developed revenue systems based on land accumulation to fund activities and the military. The chola promoted agriculture, using irrigation systems, tanks, canals, reservoirs. The Chola also encouraged domestic and international commerce, which would strengthen their economy as goods that came international cost a lot of money. These efforts ensured the Chola Empire's prosperity and stability.

**Influence and Power:** The Chola Empire gained influence and power over the neighboring kingdoms of the Pandya and Chera, through military strength and governance. Led by king Karikala Chola, he won the battle of Venni in which he defeated the Pandyas and Cheras. He launched decisive military campaigns to defeat the Pandya and Chera and annex their territories into their empire. Under his rule, the Chola navy was strengthened, boosting maritime trade. The Chola's powerful navy controlled the coastal regions of the Pandya and Chera to disrupt their vital trade networks. Economically, the Cholas monopolized trade routes and strengthened their agricultural base to weaken the Pandya and Chera resources. The Cholas built mandirs in the

conquered areas to attempt to assimilate their culture into their rival's lands to gain more influence in the Pandya and Chera regions. Cholas established political dominance by making Pandya and Chera rulers their vassals (holder of land under conditions), integrating them through alliance and tribute systems. These efforts made the Cholas ensured their influence and power in Southern India.

**Key Conflicts:** The Chola empire was a very powerful empire and at its peak, it faced both internal and external challenges. Internally, disputes such as the death of Crown Prince Aditya Karikalan (942--971 CE), caused instability and power struggles within the empire. These power struggles ended up weakening the empire leading to rebellions. Externally, against the Pandya and Chera, the Chola clashed with these neighboring kingdoms. The Chola's military victories against these kingdoms were remarkable, however the constant resistance from them drained the Chola of its resources. Although the Cholas' ability to manage and recover from these challenges helped them keep their power for several centuries later.

## **The Chera Dynasty**

**Goals:** The Chera Empire's main target was to expand and secure control over important trade routes. They sought to keep trade relations with foreign lands. These trade routes brought prosperity and powerful alliances to the Chera Empire. Goods like spice, textiles, and pearls were central and key to the Chera Empire's economy. Their control over these regions they dominated helped them also dominate the trade routes. The Cheras were patrons of Tamil literature and supported religious institutions which would further expand their influence. They maintained a feudal administration system where the chieftains (Nadu) exercised their rule but at the cost of paying allegiance to the Cheras. In summary, the Chera Empire's main goals centered on territorial control, economic prosperity through trade, and cultural development with the empire.

**Influence and Power:** The Chera Empire gained influence and power over the neighboring kingdoms of the Pandya and Chola through military, alliances, and economic control. By controlling important coastal ports, the Chera's controlled vital trade routes, which strengthened their economic power. They gained a massive accumulation of wealth and resources that enabled them to influence surrounding nations. To maintain power and influence in the regions that the Chera ruled, they demanded tribute from smaller kingdoms/chieftains. The Chera Empire used matrimonial alliances to solidify their power with the Chola and Pandyas to create loyalty and diplomacy which would make

conflicts less likely to occur. Cheras also promoted their culture to enhance their influence over Tamil-speaking regions. The Chera's ability to control trade and form alliances allowed the Cheras to maintain an important role in Southern India's politics and economy.

**Key Conflicts:** The Chera Empire faced both internal and external conflicts during its reign, similar to the Chola. The empire continued to be strong with disputes and as a result, rivalry within the royal families and powerful nobles often fought for power. There was an internal power struggle which contributed to instability in the empire. Due to the power struggle the authority of the Chera made it difficult to maintain control of far away territories. Externally, the Cheras found constant battles with the Cholas and Pandyas over territorial control and trade routes. The empire weakened due to these conflicts which ultimately led to their defeat at the Battle of Venni.

## **The Pandya Dynasty**

**Goals:** The Pandya Empire's main target was to expand its territory and focus their power in Tamil-speaking regions to extend influence. They also sought to have major economic prosperity as it boosted their economy. They did this through trade routes, and having both internal and external commerce. The Pandyas empire, similar to the Chera, were strong patrons of Tamil Culture and literature to expand their influence. The Empire prioritized keeping sovereignty by ensuring stability and longevity in their rule.

**Influence and Power:** The Pandya Empire gained influence and power over the Chola and Chera Empires through military victories, alliances, and cultural influence. The Pandya were in several military campaigns to assert their dominance over the Chola and Chera Empires. They were, at times, successful in defeating their rivals, especially the Cholas who were the Pandyas' most powerful rivals in the region. Through their alliances, the Pandya formed them to strengthen their position in politics. They allied with the Cholas and Cheras against common enemies but when there was a power struggle between the nations, the Pandyas took advantage of weakened positions to assert power over that particular empire. However these alliances were never "set in stone" as they would constantly be shifting and changing due to certain circumstances. Pandya kings promoted Tamil culture and religious practices which helped solidify their

authority. The Pandya Empire challenged the influence and power of the Chola and Chera empires.

**Key Conflicts:** Similar to many large empires, the Pandyas suffered from internal and external conflicts that impacted its stability. Externally, the empire engaged in battles with its rivals with the Chola and Chera over territorial control. The Pandyas also have to fend off other threats besides the Chola and Chera. These battles proved too much for the Pandyas and it weakened the empire. Internally, rebellions from the local Pandyas chieftains weakened their central authority leading to instability within the empire. These conflicts from within and outside of the empire weakened the empire and led to their defeat, similar to the Chera, at the Battle of Venni at the hands of the Chola Empire.

## **Questions to Consider**

- ❖ How should the Tamil Confederation be governed to ensure that the governance structure enables unity and collective decision-making, but still preserves the sovereignty of each kingdom?
  
- ❖ What should the Tamil Confederation do to address the external threats it faces from northern empires and rising maritime powers? How will these actions ensure both military as well as economic stability for each dynasty?
  
- ❖ What steps can the Tamil Confederation take to preserve Tamil culture and identity, while encouraging collaboration between the dynasties? What can it do to maintain this in external relations?

## **Positions**

### **Chola Dynasty**

**Rajaraja Chola I:** Advocates for Chola leadership in the Confederation, emphasizing the dynasty's military and naval strength as key to Tamil Nadu's survival and prosperity.

**Rajendra Chola I:** Advocates for aggressive expansion to assert Tamil dominance. Sees the Confederation as a stepping stone to unifying Tamil Nadu under Chola rule.

**Krishnan Raman:** Focuses on military strategy. Supports a unified military command within the Confederation but insists on Chola control to ensure effective defense.

**Rajaditya Chola:** Highlights Chola martial traditions and opposes compromises that may weaken Chola supremacy. Advocates for using force if diplomacy with the Pandyas and Cheras fails.

**Vikramaditya Chola:** A skilled diplomat tasked with negotiating alliances with the Pandyas and Cheras. Advocates for a Tamil Confederation led by the Cholas but is willing to compromise on specific terms to secure unity against external threats. Believes diplomacy and mutual agreements are essential to overcoming centuries of rivalry and ensuring the Confederation's success.



## **Pandya Dynasty**

**Maravarman Sundara Pandyan:** Opposes Chola dominance in the Confederation, arguing for equal representation and shared leadership among Tamil dynasties.

**Veera Pandya:** Advocates for complete Pandya autonomy but is open to a loose alliance to counter external threats like the Rashtrakutas.

**Sundara Velavan:** Focuses on preventing Chola overreach. Suggests a decentralized Confederation where each kingdom retains full control over its military and resources.

**Parantaka Pandyan:** Supports strengthening alliances with smaller Tamil chieftains to counterbalance Chola influence in the Confederation.

**Ananda Marthanda Pandyan:** Emphasizes the need to preserve Pandya cultural and religious identity within any Confederation, fearing a dilution of traditions under Chola leadership.

## Chera Dynasty

**Bhaskara Ravi Varman I:** Supports the Confederation if it guarantees Chera control over key maritime trade routes and fair economic policies that benefit the western coast.

**Ravi Kulasekara:** Advocates for a naval alliance to strengthen Tamil Nadu's defenses against foreign powers like Srivijaya and Arab traders.

**Kotha Ravi:** Urges the Confederation to prioritize maritime dominance. Supports policies that ensure Chera economic interests remain protected.

**Vikrama Ravi:** Seeks a balanced Confederation with equal power-sharing, believing that unity is necessary to safeguard Tamil Nadu's prosperity.

**Nair (Chief Priest):** Advocates for cultural unity among Tamil kingdoms based on shared traditions and religious practices. Sees the Confederation as a way to preserve Tamil identity, temples, and literature while fostering harmony between Shaivite and Vaishnavite sects.

## **Northern and External Figures**

**Indra IV (Rashtrakuta Empire):** A threat to Tamil unity, indirectly urging the Tamil kingdoms to unite. Opposes any Tamil Confederation that strengthens the Cholas, as it challenges Rashtrakuta dominance in the Deccan.

**Jayasimha II (Western Chalukyas):** A rival power interested in destabilizing Tamil unity. Encourages divisions among Tamil dynasties to exploit their weakened state.

**Maravarman Sri Vallabha (Sinhalese Kingdom):** Opposes Tamil expansion into Sri Lanka. Advocates for alliances with Tamil factions resisting Chola dominance to preserve Sinhalese sovereignty.

**Maharaja Dharmavamsa (Srivijaya Empire):** Warns against Chola naval expansion. Promotes collaboration with Tamil factions focused on trade, while opposing any Confederation that threatens Srivijaya's control over Southeast Asian routes.

**Abu al-Qasim Ibn Ahmad (Arab Merchant):** Supports a Tamil Confederation that prioritizes protecting trade and ensuring safe passage for Arab merchants in Tamil Nadu's ports and seas.

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