



Top row from the left: Sara Jose, Nandana B.S, Amal Joseph Babu, Arathi N Aji, Vyshnavi D Mangalam, Reshma Ravi, Azna K A, Malavika M Nair, Ancila Dickson, Mayuri Tiwari, Parvathy Rajeev, Nikhil K Sajit, Adarsh P, Amala Anil, Gopika G, Ashwin B M, Nila Sathesh, Arundathi A R. Bottom row from the left: Kavya P D, Gopika Manoj, Aneeta Jacob, Treesa Jose, Ria Cherian, Adhithya Aji, Geethu Mohan, Adithya Sebastian, Anjitha Davis, Pooja R, Grace Rachel Kuruvilla, Dhanya K V

Batch 2024-25: Towards their first byline

Amal Joseph Babu

As the convocation day draws near, a bittersweet feeling lingers in the air. The students of MASCOM are preparing to part ways, carrying with them memories of an eventful year. It has been a journey of growth, friendship, and unforgettable experiences that have shaped them into the journalists they aspire to be. From sleepless nights to the pride of seeing their hard work pay off, MASCOM has been more than just an institution; it has been a home.

The air was electric with anticipation as the MASCOM community came together for Swale 24x7 on February 7, 2025. It was a day brimming with activities, creativity, and the spirit of teamwork.

Students worked day in and night out to make it happen. The journey was even more fulfilling as the faculty went out of their way to guide and ensure everyone was doing well. "We managed to pull this off in just two or three days. It was exhausting, but the unity among students and faculty made it possible," said Reshma Ravi, reflecting on the camaraderie that turned sleepless nights into unforgettable memories.

One of the standout moments of Swale 24x7 was Radio Beats 96.4, a live radio show hosted by six students with the tagline Ningalkku Ariyam, Njanum Parayam. For Azna Ashraf, one of the six RJs who hosted the show, the experience was nothing short of magical. "The response from people about

Radio Beats was amazing," she shared. "Being an RJ for the day was truly special and an experience I'll always cherish." Beyond the radio waves, Swale 24x7 offered a kaleidoscope of experiences, like documentary screenings, games and quizzes, and also an exclusive chance to step into the shoes of anchors. By the end of the day, each visitor walked away with a personalised souvenir and content hearts, a testament to the collective effort that made the event a success.

For many students, Hortus 2024, held from November 1 to 3 at Kozhikode Beach, was a transformative experience that offered Mascomites an unparalleled opportunity to step into the real world of journalism. For Grace, a first-time volunteer, the experience



was both challenging and rewarding. "It was my first time being a volunteer for such a huge event, especially one with a lot of celebrated writers and artists," she said. "The experience helped me overcome my fear of interacting with new people." Moments like these made Hortus a grounding experience, giving the students the opportunity to cut through the crowd, interview the guests, and make themselves known; a glimpse into the demands and realities of journalism.

However, September 2024, Onapulari brought a change of pace, infusing the work atmosphere with the festive spirit of Onam. The vibrant pookalam, lively dances, and heartfelt participation from faculty, students, and staff

turned the day into a festival of unity. It was a reminder that MASCOM was not just an institution but a family.

The lessons further continued with Vidyarambham 2024 at the Manorama headquarters in Kottayam. Students documented the event, editing the visuals into mock news packages, a hands-on exercise that honed their video production skills. Weekly lab papers and bulletins, Fourth Estate and Jalakom, were another cornerstone of the MASCOM experience, providing students with constant opportunities to refine their reporting and storytelling. Through articles, two-minute video packages, and bulletins, they got a taste of the relentless, rewarding world of journalism.

Behind every accomplishment was the unwavering support of the faculty. Students fondly recalled how teachers became more like friends, offering encouragement and stepping in to ensure their well-being. "Their support was incredibly motivating. They were more like friends, always standing by us," said Adhithya Sebastian, reflecting the sentiment shared by many.

As the course draws to a close, students reflect on the memories they've created and the lessons they've learnt. The friendships, teamwork, and shared experiences have created bonds that will last a lifetime. MASCOM has not only trained future journalists but also built a community that will carry its spirit forward.

Good journalism demands credibility and investment: Jayant Mammen Mathew

Arundathi AR

"People will rely upon journalists and journalism only if media organisations adhere to credibility," says Jayant Mammen Mathew, the Executive Editor and Director of Malayala Manorama. In an interview with The Fourth Estate, Jayant, who is leading the Manorama group to new heights, shared his notions and aspirations regarding the changing face of journalism.

He has a clear-cut vision of how to grow along with new trends in journalism. On asking about the same, he called attention to the shift towards digital from print. Having said that, he agrees that India still has a strong print dominance. "We started Manorama Online in the 90s, even before Google. This has made us one of the pioneers in digital journalism," said Jayant.

Though there will be a shift of readers from print to digital, Manorama plans on a few things as the next step ahead in the digital era. "We want to make all our digital platforms paid. Just like how Manorama Online is now a paid news website, everything will be



Jayant Mammen Mathew | Photo Credit: ASHWIN BM

paid eventually."

According to Jayant, good journalism costs a lot. The hard work put in to report and write stories and the resources to travel are of great value and can't be taken for free. Nowadays, lots of things are written online and on social media, where credibility always holds paramount prominence. What Malayala Manorama always follows is credibility.

When discussing how business pressure will curtail editorial independence, he said that good stories will always have editorial importance. "We have to ensure that our stories are well edited, fact-checked, and credible as well." He also added that hitting anyone unnecessarily under the belt is not in their fundamentals.

Replying to the doubt raised regarding the existence of print media in the coming ages, he said that print will always exist but will no longer be cheap. "Paying for print will give you excellent editorials." He also emphasised how Malayala Manorama embraces technology. He said that when someone starts fearing technology, they won't be able to work.

Jayant talked about the organisation's plans, including new editorial initiatives. As a first step, Manorama Online has been updated to a premium version. The organisation is also planning to redesign its news app.

He wishes every journalist would continue to follow the fundamentals of journalism while being equipped with technology. With a strong editorial approach, Malayala Manorama is navigating the future of journalism.

"We have to ensure that our stories are well edited, fact-checked, and credible as well."



"I still believe that if your aim is to change the world, journalism is a more immediate short-term weapon."

-Tom Stoppard



Congratulations!



**Arundathi A R
BEST STUDENT
OF BATCH 2024-25**

ART: RESHMA RAVI | CONCEPT: MAYURI TIWARI

[illegible]

Always on the road: My first solo trip

Mayuri Tiwari

The night before my first ever solo trip, I dreamt of a lizard. Not a scenic mountain but a lizard. And here is the thing: I am terrified of them. But in the dream, I actually played with it. I woke up sweaty, confused, and still very much scared. But maybe the dream was telling me something; face your fears, stop being anxious, and go!

Destination: Jim Corbett National Park.

Train: From New Delhi to Ramnagar.

Safari: Booked online through a third party portal, for the government portal, you have to book in advance, months before.

Accommodation: Not booked because I thought I was brave, but in reality a little clueless.

At the railway station, my anxiety spiked again. The train was already on the platform, and for a good two minutes I thought I had missed it. Once I got on the train, I calmed down by doing what all solo travellers do, that is pretending to be mysterious while secretly trembling. Two old men were talking about everything from cricket to poetry to travel. I listened to it like it was a live TED Talk. As we approached Ramnagar, I asked one of them about accommodation and he suggested to me a local motel. I took an auto along at night. When I reached there, I swear the place looked like Bates Motel from Psycho. I hesitated. My brain screamed, "nope!" But my wallet whispered, "yes", as it was a cheaper option. I stayed and plot twist- it was lovely. Clean bed, good food and zero murders unlike Hitchcock's motel.



Next morning, I set off for the canter safari. (Jeep safaris are great, but solo travellers are often charged for the whole thing. Canters are cheaper and come with a free crowd.) However, jeep safari can be booked through third party engagements- in this case they will add solo travellers to anonymous groups. I had booked the Dhikala zone, the area most likely to have tigers. Locals say it's the tiger capital of the world. What did I see? Everything except a tiger. But I did see wild elephants, deer, monkeys, a raw river, and enough bird species to make me feel like I was in a Nat Geo episode.

By evening, the safari ended, and I had a train at 10 PM to return to Delhi. But then my mind said, "Nainital is just 60 km away!" And my inner voice yelled, "you go girl!" (It really needs to hesitate.)

Problem: The next bus was in the morning. Options I had that night:

1) Get a hotel nearby and go by bus in the morning.

2) Take a cab right now if possible.

When I was enquiring with the locals about the transportation, a man nearby said he was a cab driver. After I got into his cab, he casually added, "Hope it is okay if my friend comes along- we will take the Dhikala route, instead of the main route."

Village route? Friend? Jungle? Every horror film I had ever seen flashed in my mind. But did I say no? Of course not. I smiled and climbed in like an idiot with a death wish.

The route was dark with trees, silence, and two strangers in the front seat. Honestly, I mentally drafted my obituary. At one point, he stopped the car in the middle of nowhere to pick up the friend. I nearly jumped out. But slowly, I realised they were just regular people- chatty, helpful, and not axe murderers. In fact, they helped me find a budget hotel facing Naini Lake! It was midnight. I felt relieved.

After all that, I was weirdly pulse.

How Netflix's women are rewriting the story

Grace Rachel Kuruvilla
Sara Jose

—it mirrors our world and the ideals we aim to achieve. While gender imbalances have long shaped how stories are told, recent titles are beginning to challenge these norms. Adolescence, When Life Gives You Tangerines, and You (Season 5) all chart-toppers on Netflix over the past three months, stand out for placing women at the centre of the narrative, portraying them as complex, independent, and empowered protagonists.

In Adolescence, the female characters are not merely secondary figures within the narrative, they are the emotional and psychological engines that propel the story forward. The central character, Jamie Miller, is a 13-year-old boy who faces accusations of killing his classmate. Her presence looms large in the series. Her murder triggers each character's journey, with her lack of presence influencing the developments and discoveries. Briony Ariston, the clinical

psychologist, emerges as the series' moral centre. She digs deeper into the psychology of the characters, especially Jamie. Her insistence on uncovering the "why" behind Jamie's actions forces both the characters and the audience to confront uncomfortable truths about how social media fuels teen misogyny. Similarly, Manda Miller, Jamie's mother's realisation that she failed to recognise the early signs of trouble in her son's life is also shown. Together, these women do more than support the plot; they are the spine of Adolescents.

When Life Gives You Tangerines

At the centre of this Korean series are three generations of women. Ae-sun the dreamer, Geum-myeong her daughter and Ae-sun's mother. It highlights something that most women-centric art frowns upon: maternal sacrifice. It brings to the forefront working-class mothers. It is not the voiceless, quiet presence we often see represented but the loud, strong-willed ones. It shows how women are born with pain built in. The pain of choosing the life they want and the life they are supposed to give. How mothers and daughters pass down both love and wounds. At the same time,

the series doesn't reduce them into emotional creatures that are dependent on the men in their lives but capable of physical and domestic labour, often invisible yet essential.

You Season 5

In its final season, You pulls the curtain back not just on Joe Goldberg but on the trail of women he killed or the one's life he destroyed.

This series doesn't glorify the charming predator trope; it highlights how women managed to resist, particularly Marianne and Nadia. Their arcs subvert the "damsel in distress" formula and highlight how women navigate psychological manipulation, reclaiming agency even when the world refuses to believe them. It gives a clear answer to the people who claim violence against women is due to their own mistakes or with their consent. It shows how certain men feel entitled to the body and lives of women. The women in the series manage to stand back up and come together to put an end to their predators instead of running away.

Final season feels especially relevant and important at a time when people are more aware of manipulation and the impact of true crime stories.

2024-25: An eventful journey for student journalists

Adithya Sebastian

The MASCOM batch of 2024-25 encountered a year so eventful it could well have been a live newsroom simulation. As major developments unfolded across the globe, journalism students learned from the world's very pulse.

The year began in the shadow of the Israel-Hamas war, which has so far claimed the lives of around 1,706 Israelis and over 55,000 Palestinians. The ongoing humanitarian crisis became a lesson in war reporting and media ethics.

The war in Ukraine intensified. A BBC Mediaton investigation found that 2024 was the deadliest year yet for Russian forces, with 45,287 confirmed deaths. Based on open-source data from cemeteries, memorials, and obituaries, more than 106,000 deaths have been identified, with estimates placing the real toll between 164,000 and 237,000. Students followed how data-driven journalism shed light on war's hidden costs.

United States re-elected Donald Trump as its 47th President, defeating Kamala Harris. Trump's return to office has unsettled the global economy, as his sweeping trade tariffs triggered retaliatory responses from multiple countries. Rishi Sunak stepped down in the United Kingdom, making way for Keir Starmer. Canada welcomed Mark Carney as Prime Minister.

In a historic moment, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected Pope Leo XIV, the first American pope, on 8 May 2025, pledging dialogue and reform. India experienced a troubling rise in communal violence. The Centre for Study and Secularism reported 59 riots in 2024, up from 32 the previous year; an 84% increase. The Kuki-Meitei conflict in Manipur alone resulted in over 250 deaths and the displacement of 60,000 people. Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar were identified as major flashpoints.

Environmental catastrophes also shaped the year. In Kerala, the Wayanad landslides on 30

July 2024 killed 298 people, with 254 identified through DNA testing. Unofficial estimates place the toll as high as 357.

Across the globe, the Amazon fires devastated large swathes of forest, and a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in Myanmar on 28 March 2025 officially killed over 3,085, with independent sources estimating up to 3,600 deaths amid slow rescue operations.

By the final months of the year, India-Pakistan border tensions offered fresh challenges for journalistic interpretation. Coverage of diplomatic statements and military manoeuvres sharpened students' skills in geopolitical reporting.

Even without being in the ground, MASCOM students lived through journalism's full spectrum; conflict, politics, disasters, and diplomacy, absorbing the facts and the ethics, techniques, and critical lenses that define the profession.

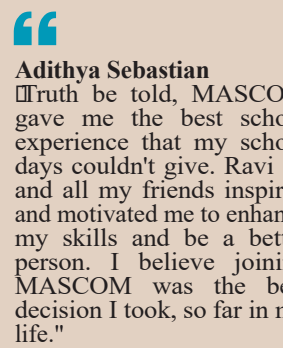
2024-25 was not just a year of headlines. It was a year of becoming a journalist.

A dozen hopes and experiences



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Adithya Aji
"MASCOM gave me invaluable exposure to the world of journalism and countless opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. The hands-on experience of covering stories and running bulletins was both thrilling and enriching. The days spent at 'Manorama Hortus' will always remain a cherished chapter in my life."



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Adithya Sebastian
"Truth be told, MASCOM gave me the best school experience that my school days couldn't give. Ravi sir and all my friends inspired and motivated me to enhance my skills and be a better person. I believe joining MASCOM was the best decision I took, so far in my life."



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Amal Joseph Babu
"Mascom has been a roller-coaster ride! It was such a good experience. I am highly grateful for the year of learning, growth and a amazing people I've met along the way. Shine on guys!"



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Ancila Dickson
"I came to MASCOM to see what living life on a routine would feel like. Now, I am leaving with a job and a new routine. I am grateful for each day and every person I have met during the past ten months"



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Ashwin B M
Mascom was a great learning experience. I faced challenges, doubted my path in journalism, but with faculty and friends' support, I regained motivation and improved. I will miss Kerala food very much."



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Arundathi A R
"This was a huge learning curve in my life! MASCOM has took me through all highs and lows and imparted the courage in me to chase my dreams."



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Grace Rachel Kuruvilla
"The thing I'm going to miss the most about Mascom is the friends I made here. We became each other's support systems during the late-night work and shared stress."



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Malavika M Nair
"I came to MASCOM simply to explore journalism, but it became a journey of discovery. I learned, unlearned, and evolved. Each story shaped me, every challenge sharpened me. What began as curiosity turned into clarity, carving my path in media with purpose, passion, and the power of truth."



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Mayuri Tiwari
"It was a fine learning experience. I picked up some basics like interviewing, chasing stories, field reporting, and met a few good people along the way."



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Parvathy Rajeev
"The education was great. Had a very knowledgeable journey with the faculty! That's my cherished takeaway."



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Sara Jose
"Farewell MASCOM, grateful for the memories and friendships that will stay with me forever."



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Reshma Ravi
"MASCOM was a great experience for me. I discovered what I truly love to do after coming here, thanks to the support and guidance of the faculty. It really helped me gain clarity about my path forward."