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LAB PAPER OF MANORAMA SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION



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 Satheesh, 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 ust an institution; it has been a

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 Mascomites an unparalleled opportunity to step into the real world of journalism. For Grace, a firsttime 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 providing students with constant opportunities to refine their reporting and storytelling. Through articles, two-minute video packages, and bulletins,

journalism.

As the course draws to a close, students reflect on the

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 Adhitya Sebastian,

reflecting the sentiment shared

memories they've created and experience, the lessons they've learnt. The friendships, teamwork, and shared experiences have created bonds that will last a lifetime. MASCOM has not they got a taste of the only trained future journalists relentless, rewarding world of but also built a community that will carry its spirit forward.

Good journalism demands credibility and investment: Jayant Mammen Mathew

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



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.

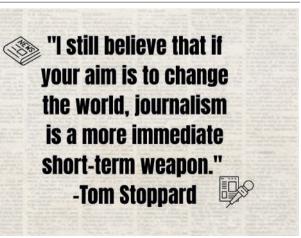
Replying to the doubt raised regarding the existence of print media in the coming ages, he said that print will always exist but will no longer be cheap. "Paying for print will give you excellent editorials." He also emphasised how Malayala Manorama embraces technology. He said that when someone starts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

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, factchecked. and credible as well.





Kerala teachers 'unprepared' to implement new anti-drug policies

Chengannur: Teachers across Kerala schools have expressed unprepared to be anti-drug policies. Current schemes like had limited success in curbing new policies will fail to deliver meaningful results without addressing these shortcomings, proper training and support. However, police officers argue the main obstacle.

training in understanding what drugs are available in the market and how it affects people. Such training will help us identify which students are



mental health enforcement would help. We also need complete support from parents and police for these actions," says Mr George Binuraj, a teacher in charge of the 'Vimukthi' anti-drug cell in

opportunity to engage with students from a young age; they can guide them toward positive activities like sports and talent festivals instead of turning to drugs. Although the government and officials are keen to announce the new policies, they rarely organise workshops to gather teacher

Excise Preventive Officer M Sreekumar, teachers' lack of preparedness is mainly due to schools, many teachers don't attend them as they think it's solely a student concern. Some teachers purposefully don't interfere as it might damage their career if politics or student welfare commissions get involved. There is a limit to which police can get involved; even the ones who publicly oppose drug use are sometimes later found using substances. Teachers will be able to create a comfortable environment for them," he says, emphasising the importance of teachers in

these campaigns. He also underlines the steps a teacher can take when they identify a student using drugs, Instead of causing a scene, they should talk with the child in private and be supportive.

talking with them, within 24 hours, they should bring the student before a counsellor. Then, the teacher should communicate the issue to the try to get the information about the supplier from the student and then contact the police." Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan has announced the

launching of an anti-drug campaign targeting students from the lower primary level academic year, Kerala schools will introduce special campaigns and anti-drug cells to curb substance abuse among students. Teachers are expected to play a crucial role as first responders, identifying cases and guiding affected

the power of cross-border

Artists from across borders

have shared music. But again,

politics and music are different.

The responsibility to protect

the nation lies with the

government. As musicians, we

collaborate freely. But during

sensitive times, we must not

create internal issues. There are

already challenges from

neighbouring countries such as

trouble inside? We must trust

those leading the country. We

don't need to agree with every

decision, but unity is the need

of the hour in difficult times.

Our soul should be Indian first.

How do you see the

connection between music

In South Indian music,

spirituality is at the core.

Almost every composition

praises a form of God, whether

Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Swathi Thriunal

Rama Varma, or Shyama

Shastri. Many of these songs

come from the Samaveda. To

truly express a composition, you must feel its spiritual

essence. When you feel it, you

can express it better. That's the

and spirituality?

China, Bangladesh. Why add to the

Pakistan,

Kottayam's power couple: Solomon and Christy



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Adhithya Aji

Kottayam: The quest for fitness has made a couple the champions. Solomon Thomas and his wife, Christy Solomon, made the firm decision to prioritise their health and wellbeing after witnessing their parents battle with lifestyle diseases like diabetes. Their route to fitness started with the Kalathipady in Kottayam. They used this gym as the training ground for powerlifting. The journey led them to become ultra-fit, with Mr and Mrs Solomon winning the national powerlifting championships for men and women, respectively.

They won the gold medals at the National Powerlifting Championship recently held in representing Kerala. This achievement by a husband and wife together winning gold medals in their respective powerlifting categories at the Solomon Thomas was a wrestling state champion during his school and college days. Solomon focused on bodybuilding as a photographer in Malayala during unwavering dedication earned him the title of Mr. Trivandrum

in 2019. "We were determined that we would not compromise on our physical health. So we both decided to work out and live sugar-free", said Mr Solomon. His wife, Christy, joined him in this personal health mission, and it became a passion fueled by a competitive spirit. Christy was a housewife with no sports background. She began

working out with her husband at their own gym. With Solomon's unwavering support,

powerlifting in 2022. remarkable success in their consecutively since 2022, and Christy joined the winner's circle in 2024. In 2025, they

Mrs Solomon urges more journey. "Women should come more into the fitness field no matter what age group they belong to. After a certain age. fitness journey has improved her health, relieving her of joint pain and other bone-related

The Solomons' new journey girls as well as individuals in Under their guidance, most of them have won medals at competitions. These winners include working professionals their determination and spirit,

With steadfast confidence, Solomon Thomas and Christy at Solomon's Gym will realise their potential to become State champions." Their own track record and that of their students stand as living proof of this

Dr L Subramaniam: In times of crisis, patriotism must take precedence over musical ties

violinist and Renowned composer Dr. L. Subramaniam was recently awarded the Padma Vibhushan, one of India's highest civilian honours. on what the recognition means to him, the journey of the Indian violin, and his thoughts on music, culture, and the role of artists in times of national

Congratulations on receiving the Padma Vibhushan. What does this award mean to you?

Any national recognition brings joy, but being recognised in your own country feels very special. To me, this is a recognition of my father's hard work. The violin was mostly seen as an accompanying instrument in Indian classical music. In the West, they often thought of the Indian violin as folk music, something played sitting on the floor. But my Indian violin a solo instrument on the world stage-like in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Sydney Opera House, Royal Albert Hall-where Indian violin had never been heard before in that way. He developed new techniques so that the Indian

the Western violin. As a result, I had the chance to collaborate with some of the greatest legends globally. Today, the Indian violin is respected as a solo instrument in classical music. My father is no more, but I feel this award is his. I am just collecting the fruits of his effort, and it is the first time this honour has gone to a violinist from India, so it belongs to all violinists. That makes me very happy.

Do you ever worry about the future of Indian classical

Not at all. In the 60s and 70s, options were limited. If you played the violin, you had to accompany someone. If you didn't get opportunities or a job at All India Radio, you had no career. Payments were also low. But after we established the Indian violin as a solo instrument, things changed. Many young people have come up. I also explored crossover music-playing with symphony orchestras like the New York Philharmonic and London Philharmonic and doing fusion work like Conversations with Stephane Grappelli. That became very successful. I also worked with Herbie Hancock,



George Duke, and many others. Now, even in India, there are so many successful music groups violin-along keyboards, bass, and drums. That did not exist earlier. These young musicians are doing amazing work. So I feel happythere are far more opportunities today than when I started.

Do you think today's pop culture is affecting traditional **Indian music?**

Culture is something we must stay rooted in. Our music expresses our culture. Outside influences will come, but if we are grounded, we can use those influences to grow without losing our essence. Our classical music is ancient. Even today, we still play the compositions of great saints like Purandara Dasa, Tyagaraja, and others from centuries ago. British rule changed our thoughts, dress, and systemsbut our culture stayed alive. So, the pop culture won't erase Indian music. We must adapt but never forget our roots.

What is your take on current

Pakistan, especially since music has always built bridges across borders?

Politics and music are two different things. When it comes to national security, I believe in standing with the country. I am an Indian-completely and deeply. If our people are attacked, the government has a duty to protect us, and they are doing their best. Compared to 30-40 years ago, India is in a very different place today. Economically and musically, we've made great progress. I have collaborated with musicians of different genres and communities. Music is always there. But in times of crisis, we must support our country. Look at Israel-when there was war, even the opposition supported the government. We need that kind of unity. In our history, we lost many things because we were divided. The British ruled us by dividing us. If someone is attacking your family, will you still argue against defending them? I feel very strongly about this. We must first be Indian in our soul.

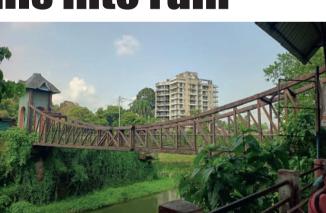
In the past, artists like Mehdi Hassan enhanced our Hindustani classical tradition. Doesn't that show

beauty of our classical music. **Neglected vision: Pala's hanging** bridge falls into ruin

Pala: The hanging bridge of Pala, popularly known as the 'London Bridge', is in total neglect just five years after its inauguration. In 2020, when Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated it, the bridge was part of the state's green tourism initiative. Once envisioned as a landmark project to transform Pala into a green tourism hub, the structure is now rusting, overrun with wild grass, and inaccessible to

the public.

Constructed on 45 cents of land near the Pala town bus stand, the iron bridge was modelled after London Bridge and features an entrance designed to resemble the iconic Pala Church. Measuring 2 metres in width and 30 metres in length, the bridge was intended to be a key link in a broader tourism circuit connecting the high ranges of



أمحم ومقامته فالمنافقة فقامون فالمفافي والمقامية والمقامة والمقامة والمقامة والمقامة والمقامة والمقامة أرافه والمقامة

Kottayam and Idukki. The bridge was built for Rs 5 crore, sanctioned by the then-Finance Minister K M Mani.

The bridge has remained closed to the public since its inauguration in Authorities have failed to explain the delay, drawing criticism from residents and

activists. "The completion and inauguration of the bridge happened in 2020, but even after five years, it is still not open. This reflects a serious lack of transparency and accountability," said Joy Kalarickal, President, Civil Rights Committee, who has consistently followed up on the

Joy says that he has ubmitted multiple complaints to various officials. "In 2022, I approached the district the collector, tourism department, and the Chief Minister himself. But none of them responded. They have all remained silent," he said. The bridge would have elevated Pala as a major tourism destination, leveraging its strategic location and cultural heritage. However, its current state of disrepair has turned it

and wasted public resources. Locals fear that without immediate intervention, the structure will deteriorate beyond recovery. As the dream of positioning Pala as a gateway to eco-tourism fades, the community is left with an idle monument—a stark reminder of a project that promised much but delivered

into a symbol of official apathy

KSRTC's 'Ullasayathra' offers budgetfriendly travel this vacation season

Sara Jose

Kottayam: The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation's (KSRTC) ambitious tourism initiative, 'Ullsayathra,' has emerged as a major success story this vacation season. It is drawing extensive participation from travellers across the state by offering budget-friendly travel experiences. This economical travel facility provides a complete journey to various tourist destinations inside Kerala.

Travellers widely praise the project for its affordability, comfort, and ease of booking, which is often facilitated through local depots and WhatsApp groups. The project thus successfully utilises KSRTC instead of letting buses stay idle on holidays.

The ticket price for each trip varies depending on the

destination and package experience at an affordable the journey, a smooth and fare covers transportation and entry fees to tourist spots and

accommodate up to 48 passengers, ensuring both safety and comfort throughout

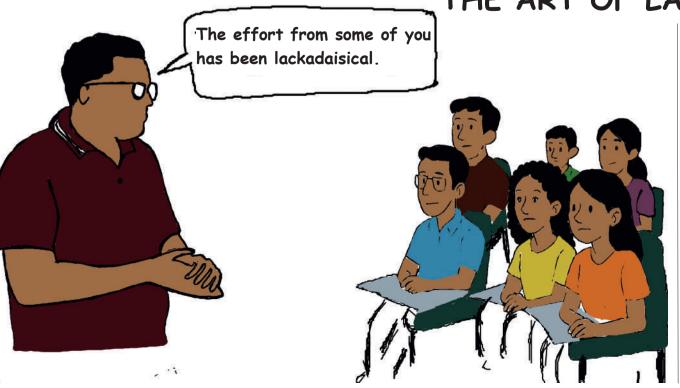


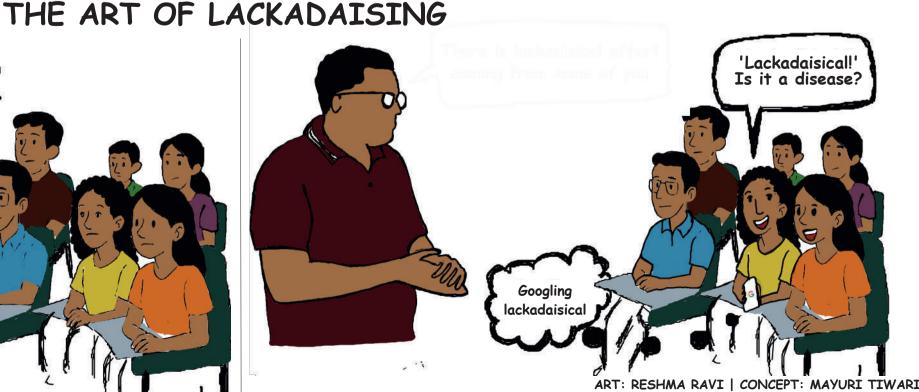
said Sudheer T B, Coordinator Budget Tourism Cell, Piravom

Depot. Popular tourist spots featured in the Ullasayathra packages include hilly destinations like Munnar and Vattavada and unique water-based experiences such as the 'Sea Ashtamudi' trip, conducted in collaboration with the Kerala State Water Transport Department.

Ullasayathra also includes dedicated pilgrim trips, offering devotees a budget-friendly way to visit important religious destinations.

With its rising popularity and efficient use of existing resources, KSRTC's Ullasayathra has emerged as a model for public sector-led tourism in Kerala. It makes travel accessible, affordable, and enjoyable for everyone.





Students recall Hortus experiences ahead of convocation

Kottayam: The students of MASCOM who are preparing for their convocation recalled that took place in November 2024. The festival was the first of its kind by the Malayala Manorama. The journalism students were invited to participate as volunteers and MCs (Master of Ceremonies) for the three-day festival.

Hortus took place Kozhikode, a city known for its culture, literature and art. For MASCOM, the opportunity was new and came as an unexpected addition to their enthusiasm participate and the details of the festival assured the institute that the event will end up being beneficial for them.

screening and the rest were taken as volunteers at different venues of the festival. The students were also able to use their experiences to hone their reporting and writing skills.

Before the class set off to Kozhikode, the director of the institute, A Ravi Shankar had given them tasks to talk to people and report on the stories they found around the venue. "I think Hortus was a great event for the students to learn from. It was a new place they were in and they even got to see and analyse events and put it in their own words. In short it was a place from which they could learn reporting and writing," he said.

Adithya Sebastian who volunteered at a venue called Children's Pavilion said that the event gave him a lot of confidence to socialise and interact with people. "What I



also said the leader at the venue was so friendly and gave him opportunities to enjoy the

Mayuri Tiwari, who was also a volunteer, was able to meet personalities like P Sainath, L. Krishnamurti, M Mukundan, Aruna Roy, and Mani Shankar Iyer and even got to spend time with them. "I learnt that the people behind big work are also very normal. The sense of

normalcy is what makes people memorable. It humbled

me. Volunteering taught me

that every role matters. It's

about how well you do it, not how big it looks," she said The students who were selected as emcees were able to work on their public speaking skills and confidence. Arundathi A R who was an

helped me improve my

entail. The connections they made also came in handy while the students prepared their lab papers, the weeks

reporting skills, adding to learnt. Therefore, the institute is considering integrating the festival into its journalism

Doctor, Mother, Champion: Anu fights her | 'Swale 24x7': A celebration of media, way to double gold in National Kickboxing

Reshma Ravi

fighter's fists.

Kottayam: Dr Anu, a 35-year-Koodallur Community Health Centre in Kottavam, has carved in a stunning display of strength, speed, and spirit. Swapping her surgical gloves two gold medals at the Championship held in Jaipur. Competing in the fiercely contested 60–70 kg dominated both the point fight and ring fight events, proving that healing hands can also be a

accomplished it while juggling her roles as a doctor, mother of two, and a committed athlete competing against participants who were mostly under 25.

"Someone at the venue even asked me if my child was participating. I didn't say anything. When the match started, they realised I was the

one playing," said Dr Anu. Despite initial doubts about her participation, she was allowed to compete after submitting a consent letter. She went on to silence the critics with her powerful performance.

Dr Anu's journey kickboxing began three years ago, not to compete but to find a way to relieve stress. She had

joined a gym, but it didn't help her mentally. At the time, she was also struggling with physical balance issues, often bumping into objects while

walking or driving. "I used to get hit against wardrobes and even ran into electric poles while driving," she recalled. Concerns over health issues and the tragic

murder of Dr Vandana Das, a doctor who was on duty, prompted Dr Anu to take a significant step. Anu decided to

enroll in self-defense training. With regular training under Santosh Kumar, president of the Kerala Kickboxing Association, Anu transformed herself into a competitive athlete. She says his support was key to her success. "Even when I was unwell or busy, he never told me to stop. He always believed in me," she

Over time, Anu realised that her happiness and mental wellbeing were her responsibility. "Earlier, I used to blame others for my stress. But I learnt that loving myself and doing something for me important," she Kickboxing, she adds, helped her both mentally and physically.
Dr Anu now inspires many,

proving that with determination and support, one can balance a personal life, a demanding profession, and a passion for lab papers, the Fourth Estate and Jaalakam (Malayalam) and a new

addition to the current batch— 'magazines'. The students named the English magazine Recce, while the Malayalam magazine was called "Vaak Through". The students covered the stories, created the layout, and took the required photographs. Most visitors liked the students'

efforts and the skills they

Kottayam: The Manorama School of Communication

(MASCOM) sprang to life on Mascom Day 2025 with the

vibrant energy of Swale 24x7, a

media fest that transformed the

campus into a bustling

and a digital hub all rolled into

one. The day was not just an

event but an immersive

students, educators, and curious

visitors into the ever-evolving

around content created by the

students. The displays included

world of journalism.

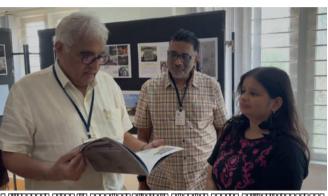
The exhibition

experience

gained at the institute. The Recce featured stories on unfinished architecture with Kottayam as the central focus and special stories from outside Kerala. Ancila Dickson, one of the students, shared her experience: "I had worked on the magazine layout and spent an entire day at the institute to get it done. I remember going back to the hostel in the

morning. So we worked at such

odd hours preparing for the



minds, and moments at MASCOM



event. It brought a sense of closeness between everyone." Parvathy Rajeev, who, along with Ashwin B M, exhibited a display on Artificial Intelligence in Journalism, said,

"The most rewarding part was

the appreciation from the management members and the positive responses received. It was appealing and decent."

Broadcast journalism took centre stage with a live anchor

team, shared, challenge was meeting the deadline. Every part was related to journalism, so I think Swale showcased journalism well to visitors."

The screening of studentmade documentaries added a cinematic flair to the day. These short films tackled diverse subjects with creativity, integrity. Malayala Manorama Group, appreciated the depth of

made-up tea shop, a symbolic and magazines, it embodied the spirit of journalism. The event also featured a photo exhibition by MASCOM students. Each photograph was paired with sharp, thought-provoking taglines, highlighting their

INDIA'S RESPONSE TO ERROR ATTACKS

Pahalgam Terror Attack (Apr 22, 2025)

Attack: The Resistance Front militants involved, 26 tourists killed Target: Baisaran Valley, Pahalgam Response: Operation Sindoor: Strikes on 9





Pulwama Attack (Feb 14, 2019)

Attack: Suicide bombing, 40 CRPF killed

Target: Convoy in Pulwama (J&K)

Response: Balakot Airstrike (On Jaish-e-Mohammad

camps in Pakistan)

Uri Attack (Sep 18, 2016)

Attack: 4 militants involved, 19 soldiers killed

Target: Indian Army base, Uri (J&K) Response: Surgical Strikes across Line of control in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir



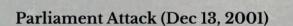


26/11 Mumbai Attacks (Nov 26,

Attack: 10 LeT terrorists involved, 166 killed

Target: Mumbai landmarks

Response: Hafiz Saeed was listed as global terrorist NIA formed (National Investigation Agency)



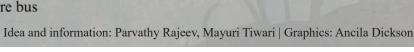
Attack: 5 terrorists involved, 9 killed Target: Indian Parliament

Response: Operation Parakram: 500,000 troops mobilised

POTA 2002: Anti-terror law

Transport Cut: Samjhauta Express, Delhi-Lahore bus





MASCOM students explore **Kottayam: A legacy of letters** and landscapes

Kottayam: During their stay at Kottayam, the students of MASCOM set out to explore the scenic beauty of the place. The students clicked some captivating pictures as well. They experienced the serene flow of Aruvikkuzhv flow of Aruvikkuzhy waterfalls, the landscape of Muppayippadam, a cherished

houseboat travel Kumarakom and the sight of setting sun at Eerayilkadavu bridge.

The students came across these places while they traveled around the district as part of their reces. The places they visited, did not just give them ideas for articles, it also offered









them great memories travelling with friends.

Kottayam is situated on the central part of Kerala, close to the Vembanad lake. The backwaters, rivers, the paddy fields and the hills around the town make it a perfect getaway spot, not just to relax but also to learn.

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. 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.

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

Accommodation: booked because I thought I was brave, but in reality-a little

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 alone 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 twistit was lovely. Clean bed, good food and zero murders unlike Hitchcock's motel.





lived there all his life. As we

chatted over a cup of chai, he said, "People come here

looking for peace, but forget to

slow down, do what you like,

don't follow the crowd". This

simple line stayed with me. The

trip was not planned, neither

was my budget, so I decided to go back to Delhi.

part scary, part funny, and something I will never forget.

Just a reminder: solo travel is

not always about soul searching in the mountains.

Sometimes, it is just about

surviving suspicious cab rides

and rethinking about your fear

of lizards.

That was my first solo trip-

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 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

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

2) Take a cab right now if

When I was enquiring with ne 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 village 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 suspicious of everything

How Netflix's women are rewriting the story

Grace Rachel Kuruvilla

Media does more than entertain it mirrors our world and the gender imbalances have long 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. Every woman contributes her distinct viewpoint by significantly questioning the boy's story and altering the trajectory of events. Though Katie Leonard, the classmate, is physically absent, her presence looms large in the series. Her murder triggers each character's journey, with her lack of presence influencing the developments and discoveries.

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 workingclass 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, outwit, or endure him, 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.

This final season feels especially relevant and important at a time when people are more aware of manipulation and the impact of

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

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

The war in Ukraine intensified. A BBC Mediazona 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

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.

On the diplomatic front, the

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

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 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

Across the globe, the Amazon fires devastated large swathes of forest, and a 7.7magnitude 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 course, India-Pakistan border tensions offered fresh challenges for journalistic interpretation. Coverage of diplomatic statements and manoeuvres sharpened students' skills in geopolitical reporting.

Even without being on 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

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

Parvathy Rajeev

takeaway."

The education was great.

Had a very knowledgable journey with the faculty!
Thats my cherished

A dozen hopes and experiences



around me- even of the hotel's

caretaker, but then I ordered

coffee, talked to my brother on

the phone just in case I disappear, and fell asleep.

The next morning, I felt really tired. Even after sleeping

for hours, I was still sleepy.

Nainital was too crowded,

which made me lose interest.

But I still went out. I did not

follow the usual tourist spots.

Instead, I walked around on my

own, hiked to China Peak,

explored the Eco Garden,

checked out some nearby shops

around the Mall road and

After trekking to China Peak,

met a local shopkeeper who

bought books.

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



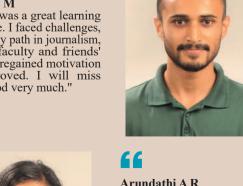
Adhithya Aji
"MASCOM gave me invaluable exposure to the world of journalism and countless opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. The hands-on experience of covering stories and running bulletins was both thrilling and enriching. The days spent at 'Manorama Hortus' will always remain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



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



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."



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

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.'



Malavika M Nair ☐ 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."



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."



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.'



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



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."



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