special approval from the Regional Transport Office.

# Prenups in India : Marriages at stake

Present generations support prenuptial agreements more, choosing practical living over traditional beliefs. For many who wonder what are Prenuptial agreements, they are contracts made by couples are contracts made by couples before marriage to decide how assets and finances will be handled in the event of a

assets and finances will be advance.

They view prenups as a smart way to handle money and keep relationships clear, protecting both the people involved. This change shows a modern and practical view of marriage, focusing on stability and planning ahead. While these agreements are common in Western countries, prenups are still new and unclear in India and are not recognized by law.

"In current days we cannot predict the relationships, it's better to get into these contracts so that we can end our relationship hassle free when needed," says Sravani

Marisetty, a student.
A survey by Shaadi.com
found that about 37% of
respondents supported
prenups for financial security
and clarity. However, many
still distrust prenups, fearing
they undermine trust and
commitment.
"Indian courts have limited
experience with prenuptial

experience with prenuptial agreements due to their rarity and unclear legal status. When prenups are presented, courts examine their fairness and voluntary nature.

voluntary nature.

The agreements that are one-sided or made under pressure are not upheld,' says Mani Sahith Pujari, Junior advocate in the High Court for

advocate in the High Court for the State of Telangana.

Despite the legal issues, Prenuptial agreements have benefits like protecting wealth or family property, stating who handles existing debts, and stopping one partner from being responsible for the other's debts. They reduce the chance of cheating, protect children's inheritance rights from past relationships, and ensure fair support for a partner who is in a weaker

position.

But not everyone is on board with this idea, public opinions on prenuptial agreements in India are wide. Marriages in India are seen as a sacred, lifelong commitment influenced by religious and cultural beliefs, Planning for a divorce with a prenup can seem pessimistic or pessimistic disrespectful.



As the generations change, their ideologies differ. "Being a government employee I was also financially independent but we never had all these foreign policies. I didn't even see my Husband's face till the day of our wedding. We lived together for 57 years as a very happy couple," says 82-year-old-year-old Rajalakshmi. He further criticized younger generations for starting marriages with negative thoughts by agreeing

to prenups and not taking weddings seriously, viewing them as mere events without understanding the customs and traditions involved.

As societal attitudes evolve, prenuptial agreements may become more common in India. Especially the younger generations may push for clear legal recognition of prenups. This can lead to more open discussions about finances and discussions about finances and responsibilities in marriages, these agreements may become in Indian marriages, reflecting a practical approach to marriage planning and security.
53 year old Narashimha

53 year old Narashimha Murthy says, "Differences exist in all relationships, but when they become toxic one should end it, but they should try to hold the relationship till the edge, as resolution of marriage will impact children and families,"

However, the traditionalists suspect these kinds of ideologies would put the term marriage and relationship as take, which can have a major effect on the traditions and Indian culture.

## Vehicle modifications wreck havoc



Kottayam:

From grating high-decibel noise to blinding headlights, the nuisance from illegally modified vehicles have become a nightmare for motorists in the streets of

motorists in the streets of Kottayam.

High intensity LED lights are one such modification, this blinds motorists coming from the opposite direction increasing the chances of accidents. The other problem causing modification are the 'aftermarket exhausts'. These modifications help an enthusiast to make his bike sound more impactful at the cost of suffering to other drivers. Such aftermarket exhausts can affect eardrums adversely.

adversely.
"One of the reasons I modified my bike is that I can not afford my dream

superbike. So, I just invested eight thousand on aftermarket exhaust, and now at least the bike sounds similar to that," to can only be made with said one motorbike owner who wishes to remain

onymous. However, vehicle owners are Another noise polluter, air still installing the after-market



horns have been associated with panic attacks. These horns produce sounds which are much higher than the allowed 112 decibels.

A Supreme Court judgement in 2019 banned any vehicle modifications that

exhaust, tinted film, air horn, fancy number plates, coloured lights, and making other alterations to their vehicles at the local shops.

The authorities claim that their hands are tied. "We can't take any action against any of

these shops, as our jurisdiction is limited to the vehicle only," said Vel Gautham, Motor Vehicle Inspector. He added that the department conducts regular patrols and fines motorists who violate the traffic laws. "Last month we

intotals with violate the traffic laws. "Last month we had a revenue of around one crore seventy lakhs, including other traffic violation offences in Kottayam district," he said. Despite 63% decrease in the registered cases for vehicle modification from the April 2023, these violations continue to remain high. As from 1st April 2024 to 31st April 2024. Motor Vehicle Department, Kottayam has filed 379 cases for time the filed 379 cases for time filed 379 cases for time filed 379 cases for fancy number plates, 30 cases for coloured lights, and 85 cases for other vehicle alteration such as alteration of exhaust. alteration of exhaust, tampering body structure in Kottayam district.

### Demolished, but not rebuild, delay creates chaos



Kottayam: Taxi Drivers in Kottayam continue to face inconvenience as the reconstruction of the Thinmalkara bus stand hasn't started since it's demolishing months ago. The delay in rebuilding the crucial infrastructure which has caused frustration and raised eyebrows about the promises Municipality made. The old bus stand had fallen into disrepair due to age, and

into disrepair due to age, and was demolished in November to make way for a new bus stand. However, since then there has been no progress on the construction of the bus stand. The ground is currently used for various purposes,

including hosting functions and parking space for vehicles. Because of this, passengers are forced to wait under the sun or in the rain, while taxi drivers struggle to manage their businesses. "The government assured us that work on building the new

that work on building the new bus stand will start after the election," said Joseph Varghese, Convenor of the Taxi Drivers Association Kottayam, But as of now the construction of the bus stand has not begun. The taxi drivers are concerned about the development and are frustrated with the delay in work. On the other hand Kottayam municipality has different opinions about the construction. "There are no current plans for the construction of the bus stand because plans and funds have to be finalized and the proposal has to be approved construction of the bus stand



Abandoned: Site of the demolished Thirunakkara but

stand.
by the council for starting the construction," said Assistant Executive Engineer Anila Anna Varghese of the Kottayam Municipal Kottayam Corporation.

The delay of bus stand construction is becoming a problem for both passengers and taxi drivers who are facing continued inconvenience. "Our everyday

Lankan alumni reflect on MASCOM Journey

becoming more challenging due to the bus stand's reconstruction delay, there is no longer anywhere to wait while it rains or gets hot" said Sandeep, a resident from Kottayam. Due to the demolished old bus stand and the uncertain status of constructing a new one, immediate steps must be taken

address

## Living with Alzhiemers : A family's journey of love and loss



failing to recognise one's reflection. John Tharakan goes through every time he sees the mirror. He has forgotten his face. John was a devoted family man and a dedicated employee of the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL). In 2013, doctors diagnosed him with Alzheimer's disease, which came as a bolt from the blue

Alzheimer's disease, which came as a bolt from the blue for him and his family, especially since there were no apparent symptoms in the beginning.
"The first symptom I remember is when he was giving a speech during a wedding ceremony. He suddenly got stuck at a particular point and could not move on. It was a topic that he must have talked about ten times. It was a very normal incident but I felt something was wrong," said Rebecca, John's wife.

John's wife.

Similar instances prompted the family to take him to a doctor.

In the coming months, they were in and out of hospitals and finally came to know that their beloved John Achayan (as he is popularly called) was

to the research published in

Science Advances, the team led by Ujjaini Dasgupta, faculty of Amity University,

Editor : Steffy Samuel

going to lose his memory.
According to Lancet- a well-known medical journal,
Alzheimer's is going to be one of the leading causes of death
globally by 2050. The
National Library of Medicine
website says that the estimated
dementia prevalence for adults
aged 60+ in India is 7.4%, and
it is growing. Alzheimer's is
also a type of dementia. The
implications of this disease
affect the family members
more than the patient. Many
family members can never

family members can never come to terms with the fact that their beloved one will, in some years, lose all their memories.Rebecca was faced with a similar situation. She

with a similar situation. She could not accept it and spent days and nights studying the disease, reading everything she could find in books and the internet. It took her years to accept that there was no cure for it. The first phases included difficulty remembering people, which then proceeded to difficulty recognising things." Sometimes he would not be able to recognise something as simple as a carrot. He would have a puzzled look on his face when we tried to explain what a we tried to explain what a carrot was," recollects Rebecca.
From there, the journey has

been slow and painful. John has stopped speaking. He only makes sounds and feeble murnurs. Despite Rebecca's best attempts to prevent him from losing his writing skills by giving him giving him exercises, John has lost the ability to hold a pen. However, through all this, his family

stands strongly by him. His youngest daughter, Reshmi has shifted from Pune to Kottayam to help her mother.

John and Rebecca Tharakan However, it is

patients.

Many families may not have the time to look after these

to neip her mother. John and Rebecca Tharakan However, it is Rebecca who is the pillar of strength for the family. She does tasks like shaving and cutting John's hair. Even the grandchildren pitch in: they take their beloved Appachan for his evening walks after coming back from school. It is doubtful if John understands what his family goes through to support him. But he is fortunate to have a loving family that stands by him through this illness. This is not the case with all the patients.

facilities. There is still a lot we have to learn about this disease and the care that must be given to its victims." says Thomas Cherian, National Treasurer of ARDSI (Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India.) ARDSI has special care facilities for Alzheimer's patients in Thrissur and Calicut.

#### Scientists develop precise anti-cancer hydrogel therapy

Centre for Biotechnology, has Amita George laid out the molecular mechanism by which the DXT-CPT-Gel works on mice turnour cells for different Harvana DXT-CPT-Gel works of turnour cells for different agains subtypes of breast cancer. pioneering search the Regional Centre for Biotechnology in Faridabad and Amity University in Haryana has recently developed a cutting-edge hydrogel-based anticancer drug delivery system. This innovative approach targets cancer cells directly and significantly reduces the toxicity typically associated with chemotherapy. Named the DTX-CPT-Gel Therapy, the hydrogel has been packed with two potent anti-cancer drugs, docetaxel (DXT) and carboplatin (CPT). According to the research published in Science Advance of the control of the co entre for Biotechnolo

The DXT-CPT-Gel can be administered close to the tumour. In contrast, the usual delivery of chemotherapeutic drugs involves injection into the veins (intravenously), circulating them through the body. According to Dasgupta, an injection site close to the tumour site will avoid unintended effects on faraway tissues making the process minimally invasive. "The DXT-CPT-Gel may be beneficial for cancers less responsive to immunotherapy responsive to immunotherapy or when a combination therapy approach is needed". The results were promising, showing a significant

reduction in tumour volume reduction in tumour volume and an enhanced immune response that could potentially lead to long-term protection against cancer recurrence.

The attacked cancer cells release certain biomolecules known as damage-associated molecular patterns.

(DAMPs). (DAMPs). These molecules activate the dendritic cells - a type of immune cell that boosts the immune system response by showing antigens on its surface to other cells in the immune system. Cancer cells are not usually recognised by the dendritic cells as foreign but the DAMP molecules are identified and the immune identified and the immune system can get ready to attack the cancer cells. The dendritic cells that act as the body's surveillance system, alert and

cancer cells. This memory

cancer cells. This memory helps them recognise and attack the same cells if they appear again in future.

The T cells are trained to be specific and attack only the cells that contain the same markers as the ones they initially encountered, making the immune system highly precise. Besides attacking the primary cells, this therapy also helps the immune system find and destroy cancer cells that have spread to other parts of the body (metastases) if they are the same type as the original tumour. "We have not pinpointed the precise neoantigens. There is a lot more research to be done on his. We intend to elucidate this aspect in our forthcoming this aspect in our forthcoming research endeavours", says Bajaj. While this research is still in its early stages, its implications on cancer



Tharushi Weerasinghe

**Kottayam:** Every academic year, MASCOM welcomes one Sri Lankan exchange student as part of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Scholarship programme. Over the years, this programme has produced a slew of journalists who have excelled in their respective careers. Many attribute a large part of their success to their time at MASCOM.

their success to their time at MASCOM.

Kris Thomas, Content Director at Roar Media was one such exchange student in 2016. "My time at MASCOM was amazing," says Kris. He noted that it was one of the first times he made contacts outside his comfort zone and found and compiled stories that could be considered international. "It gave me a lot of insights and opportunities that helped me build my career, that easily propelled me forward by a few years, to say the least."

Many alumni felt that the

opportunity to explore India's diversity grew their unconventional storytelling skills. "Visiting Tamil Sri Lankan refugees for the first time in 30 years, sharing a meal with them on the camp floor and travelling to Rameswaram understand Indo-Sri Lankan fishermen's issues were unforgettable moments," said 2017 salu 2017
student Piyumi Fonseka,
who was the Deputy Editor
of Investigations at the
Daily Mirror Sri Lanka,
and a correspondent for
Thomson Reuters
Foundation. She claimed
that MASCOM taught her
to pursue unique stories
with resilience, which has
shaped her approach to
journalism ever since. "The
life-long friendships I
formed were also
invaluable," she added.
Apart from the
opportunity to explore
"unknown territory", the
education they received
under MASCOM's stellar
faculty is something all student Pivumi Fonseka

faculty is something all alumni are grateful for. "I alumni are grateful for. "I had a great experience writing and compiling The Fourth Estate under the guidance of the faculty there, who shaped my way of thinking," said Kamanthi Wickramasinghe, Deputy Editor of Features at the Daily Mirror Sri



Mascom alumni Piyumi and Kamanthi on Mascom Day Photo credit: Piyumi and Kamanthi

Photo credit: Piyumi and K Lanka. She was a student at MASCOM in 2019. Kamanthi recalled that convincing her trainers about the potential in a story pitch was often so tough that it made her self-reflect on critical questions. before she proposed an article idea. "We were article idea. "We were always encouraged to consider impact and purpose in the stories and interviews we would do," she said. According to

amanth
Wickramasinghe, this
robust training paired with
the constant encouragement
to present new ideas and be
creative shaped some of the
best days in her career as a
journalist. She fondly
recalled the relationships
fostered during her time fostered during her time here - "I also cannot forget the wonderful friends I made in Kerala who are like my extended family."





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