

PRIME NEWS

Man dies, wife injured in first trip outside India

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ROAD ACCIDENT:

Couple in Malaysia for youngest son's graduation

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It was the couple's first foreign visit. Their youngest son had invited them to witness him receiving his electrical and electronics engineering doctorate scroll at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) here.

R. Chandramouleeswaran, 75, and C. Lalitha, 65, of Chennai, India, were travelling in a rented car with their son, C. Sridathan, 32, and his two friends from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) when they were involved in an accident at Km105 of the East Coast Expressway near Maran on Oct 12.

Chandramouleeswaran was killed on the spot, Lalitha was left with spinal injuries, Sridathan fractured his pelvic bones and his two friends were injured.

Yesterday, Sridathan was seen trying to hold back tears when UMP vice-chancellor Datuk Dr Daing Nasir Ibrahim handed his doctorate

scroll to him at Kuantan Medical Centre here.

Garbed in a graduation robe and bonnet, Sridathan, said although he had achieved his dream, the absence of his parents, who had been his pillar of strength, was agonising.

He said he had wanted them to be present during the convocation ceremony on Oct 17 badly.

"I made the arrangements and this had to happen. This is the first time they were travelling outside India.

"They were as excited as I was when I fetched them at the airport. They were supposed to attend my graduation and visit several places in Malaysia before the three of us returned to India."

Sridathan is scheduled to travel back to Chennai on Sunday to be with his mother.

"My parents were very close. I managed to keep my father's death a secret until the day my mother left for Chennai last week. I remember telling her to remain strong for our sake."

Speaking about the accident, Sridathan said they were on their way here when a vehicle crashed into them from behind.

"My parents and I were in the rear passenger seat and suffered serious injuries. I was warded at Hospital Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah along with



C. Sridathan receiving his graduation scroll from Datuk Dr Daing Nasir Ibrahim at Kuantan Medical Centre yesterday. Pic by Rafi Mamat

my mother and friends, while my father's body was taken to Jengka Hospital," he said, adding that his father's remains had been flown back to India for burial.

The bachelor said he would remain in India until his mother had recovered before returning to UMP to secure a post-doctorate fellow-

ship at the Engineering Faculty.

UMP International Office director Associate Professor Dr Ainol Haryati Ibrahim said the university had provided all the necessary assistance, including counselors to help Sridathan's family members and friends cope with their traumatic experience.