

Headline **Matchmaking websites flourish in India**
Date **14 Feb 2010**
MediaTitle **New Sunday Times**
Section **World**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **153,409 / 295,000**

Language **English**
Page No **35**
Article Size **78 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **1,080**
PRValue **3,240**



Matchmaking websites flourish in India

MUMBAI: From the overweight and transsexuals to people with HIV and those supposedly afflicted by negative planetary positions, the Internet dating game in India increasingly has a website for everyone.

And with Valentine's Day on Sunday, the specialist sites are seeing a rise in hits.

"There's always an increase in activity around this time of year," said Megha Singhal, who with her sister runs a portal for larger lonely hearts — www.overweightshaadi.com.

"Valentine's Day is still a big deal here. Everyone wants a date," said the 21-year-old economics.

Marriage — or *shaadi* in Hindi — remains a corner-

stone of society in conservative India, with hundreds of matchmaking sites concentrating on finding their members suitable life partners rather than casual dates.

Long-established portals like www.shaadi.com, www.bharatmatrimony.com and www.jeevansathi.com offer general searches. Would-be brides and grooms can be selected by age, caste, religion, language or where they live.

But Singhal and others say that niche matrimonial sites can often be more effective.

Yazdi Tantra, a computer consultant in Mumbai, runs www.theparsimatch.com, one of a number of websites for the dwindling community of followers of the ancient Zoroastrian faith. — AFP