

ALUMNI MEET

For two days in the searing heat of May, CDS was bustling with activity with almost two hundred people young and old strolling around the campus, reliving memories. Alumni across thirty batches of students, staff and even members of faculty had assembled here on the 12-13 May, this being probably the first Alumni Meet of this magnitude hosted by CDS. Events had been planned out for the two days; yet many chose to let themselves meander around the campus, pleasantly reminded of familiar sights, smells and sounds that had been everyday experience for them years, even decades, ago when CDS was home to them during their prime. Yet many said that CDS never ceased to be their home, and that this Alumni Meet was almost a 'homecoming'.

After a formal inauguration of the Meet in the company of the Chairman and other luminaries, we got down to business - the business of having fun, refreshing memories, and sharing them with all those present here. Members from each batch beginning 1975 right up to 2004 related their experiences at CDS. Though some of us on the organising team feared that members of one batch may not really relate to the experiences of other, especially older, batches, we were proved wrong time and again, with all across batches bursting into peals of laughter every time a funny anecdote about a teacher or a fellow scholar or the good old canteen and hostel was related. Well, we guess whether an incident happened in 1975 or 2005, whether it concerns an older generation of scholars and teachers or a new, relating experiences about our *alma mater* is something every CDS-ian can relate to with ease.

We also had a session of a few scholars both young and old sharing their current pieces of research. But the real charm about the entire Meet was that many of the alumni were accommodated in the hostels...an arrangement that required meticulous planning by the current scholars and administration, and which yielded wonderful results, with almost every alumnus telling us that reliving hostel memories right here in the hostels was by far the most nostalgic part of the Meet. The canteen was again bustling, with people recognising their old tables and chairs and windows...and their fish pond.

After a brief cultural programme in the evening in our refurbished amphitheatre, an interesting event took place - 'couplespeak!' This event was specially thought of by the current scholars as an occasion for all those who discovered not only their academic futures, but also their life partners at CDS. With the crowd cheering and throwing witticisms at every 'CDS-couple' that came up on stage, it was indeed an evening to remember. And the food was great too.

The next day began with the tree planting session. Each batch was given one sapling for planting in designated places around the campus, literally to let the memories sprout and grow.

Apart from all the fun and laughter, it was important for us to take a moment to thank Prof. K.N. Raj. A short and dignified session thanking Prof. Raj followed the tree-planting, with a

small team of people visiting him at his home presenting him the birthday card a few of the current scholars had created for him.

After yet another memory-evoking and rib-tickling session of relating moments at CDS, the memento presenting function followed, closing with an interactive (and highly essential) session on creating a CDS Alumni Association.

Those who went back were still in a dreamy state, spellbound for a couple of days. The current scholars, of course, are keenly waiting for their own Alumni Meet sometime in the future.

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(Courtesy CDS Chronicle)