

# 1976 Eco batch reunion at Loyola College

M Balasubramani

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Chennai: It was time for a group photo at Loyola College and the proceedings were delayed by a few minutes as one of the members was late. "Even after 40 years you still have not inculcated the habit of coming on time," said a voice mockingly from the group making everyone break into laughter.

This was not just another group photo taken in a college, but the reunion of the 1976 Economics batch of Loyola College.

After close to 40 years, the classmates gathered together and were chatting and teasing each other, savouring the moment which even made the current batch of students wait and watch.

Fifty six alumni had gathered on the college premises to take part in the reunion. After the photoshoot, the participants assembled in a hall where the day began by taking attendance with their original roll numbers.

Talking to 'News Today' on the sidelines of the event, recently retired ADGP T Rajendran, who is an alumnus, said things have changed a lot. "I used to come to college from Shenoy Nagar by 27C, get down at Sterling Road and ask for lift," he said.

Rajendran said the idea for the reunion surfaced two years ago and they decided to go ahead though people thought it would be difficult.

"My friend Gerald Arputhasamy, fondly called Gerry, took up the task of tracking all our friends and found all 76 classmates with some assistance from me and two of my other friends. Unfortunately, nine of them are no more." The members at reunion saw their classrooms and hostel rooms and recollected memories.

Gerald, an alumnus and the organiser, said elaborate arrangements have been made so that the day would be as it was 40 years ago.

"We have even made arrangements to ensure that the mess food is the same as it was 40 years ago," he said.

During the event, a souvenir was released by 1976 batch professor Lurthsamy which was received by secretary and correspondent of the college, S Lazar

Talking of his mood during the reunion, the former ADGP said this was definitely one of the most happiest moments of his life. "Despite reaching various levels in our career and life, we feel the same friendship that we had during our college days. In fact, 19 classmates who were staying abroad have also come for the reunion," he said.

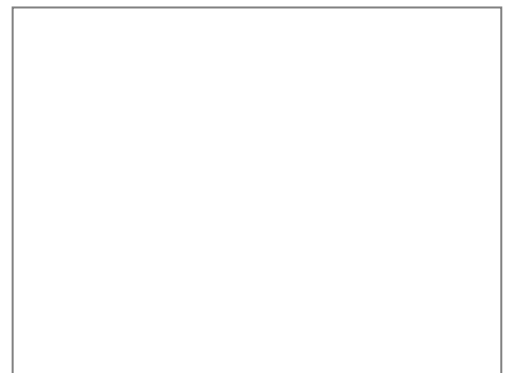
Travelling down memory lane, Rajendran said his most memorable moment during his college days was during the Emergency period. "That was the first time when I actually saw so many policemen and then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi also visited the college."

Dilip Vellodi, founder and CEO of Sutherland Global Services, who is also from the 1976 batch, said it was a priceless day. "This is the achievement of a lifetime and happy that many of you have made it. It's like coming back to class," he said.

Former professors were also present during the event and homage was paid to the lost friends and teachers.

The event will be followed by a grand dinner at MGM with the families of the classmates also taking part.

CAPTION



Old students of Loyola College at a reunion in their  
alma mater today.

(Inset) Former Chennai city Police Commissioner T Rajendran.

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