



Tamil Nadu copes with the deluge

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Cover photography courtesy: *Tamil Murasu*, Tamil daily.



Tamil Nadu recovers from the deluge

With characteristic determination, Tamil Nadu has bounced back after the recent rains. The state has come to terms with nature's fury for the second time in a year. Life is slowly returning to normal after cyclonic storms and incessant rain battered coastal Tamil Nadu for over a month, causing hardships to thousands of people. Lives have been lost, dwellings destroyed, crops inundated, businesses affected by damage to machinery and goods, with water entering everywhere, flooding workplaces, streets and roads, marketplaces, schools and colleges in several parts of the state. The official machinery swung into action and many public-spirited individuals and organisations lent helping hands to the people affected by the rains. Despite all the problems, life goes on and people go about their work unmindful of the discomfort. For a rain-starved state, the transformation to a state of plenty has been an extraordinary experience.

The Sanmar Group has responded to the poignant situation by substantially supporting the government's relief efforts in both Tamil Nadu and neighbouring Pondicherry.

Photographs courtesy: *Tamil Murasu, Daily Thanthi, Dinamani,* and *Deccan Chronicle.*



Danish diplomat feted by Consul General



N Sankar shaking hands with His Excellency Ulrik Andreas Federspiel, Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Denmark at the dinner.

N Sankar, Hony. Consul General for Denmark, hosted a dinner to His Excellency Ulrik Andreas Federspiel, Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Denmark, on 14 November 2005. A distinguished gathering of business and other dignitaries attended the reception. N Sankar proposed a toast to the Permanent Secretary on the occasion and welcomed the gathering. For the chief guest of the evening it was an opportunity to interact with the local opinion leaders.



L Lakshman of the Rane Group and N Ravi of The Hindu.



N Sankar hands over a memento to His Excellency Ulrik Andreas Federspiel while N K Ranganath, CEO Grundfos Pumps India Pvt Ltd, looks on.

Fifty years in the TNCA senior division league

Alwarpet Cricket Club's distinction

(Alwarpet Cricket Club (ACC) is one of the teams sponsored by The Sanmar Group – participating in the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) senior division league in which it has completed more than 50 years)

At a function organised by The Sanmar Group to highlight the 50th year of Alwarpet Cricket Club in the senior league and felicitate V A Parthasarathy (VAP), the Secretary of the Club, speakers hailed the contributions VAP has made to Tamil Nadu cricket.

N Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group, the current sponsor, described ACC's achievement as a "unique milestone" and "a benchmark" in city cricket. He referred to VAP as a "person totally committed to cricket". He added, "The league here is the best run in the country".

N Srinivasan, President, TNCA, complimented VAP for the role he played in establishing the Club House and guiding ACC to achieve a rare distinction. "TNCA without VAP will not be what it is today", he declared amidst cheers. N Ram, Editor-in-Chief, The Hindu, and a former captain of ACC, hailed VAP's



enthusiasm and resourcefulness in running the team under the umbrella of the sponsors. Former BCCI President A C Muthiah admitted that the TNCA owed a lot to VAP's energy and enterprise. S Viji of the TVS Group admired VAP's ability to network and described him as "Value Added Parthasarathy", appreciating his work ethos and commitment.

From l to r: N Ram, Editor-in-Chief, The Hindu, R B Alaganan, past President, TNCA, V A Parthasarathy, Secretary, Alwarpet CC, N Srinivasan, President, TNCA, N Sankar, past President, TNCA and A C Muthiah, past President, Board of Control for Cricket in India.

A section of the audience including (l to r) M Subramanian, U Prabhakar Rao, M Gopalakrishnan, S R Jagannathan, K Prem Kumar, R Ravichandran and T G Thyagarajan in the first row.



N Sankar delivers convocation address at Anna University



N Sankar delivering the convocation address. Others in the picture are (l to r) Tamil Nadu Governor S S Barnala, Anna University Vice Chancellor Dr D Viswanathan and K Ramalingam, Chairman, Airports Authority of India.

Things have now definitely improved in many ways. The focus has switched to imparting knowledge, rather than passing examinations. Syllabi have been modernised to keep in touch with the changing technologies of the day. But one thing I can say with pride has not changed - the graduating classes from these institutions continue to be the cream of India's emerging technical manpower.

N Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group was the Chief Guest at the 26th Annual Convocation of Anna University, Chennai, on 3 November 2005. The Tamil Nadu Governor and Chancellor of Anna University Surjit Singh Barnala, the State Education Minister C Ve Shanmugam, and the Vice Chancellor Dr D Viswanathan were present at the glittering function. N Sankar, delivered the convocation address.

We reproduce below the text of N Sankar's convocation address in full.

I am genuinely delighted and honoured to be present on this occasion when another group of bright and enthusiastic young minds prepares to leave the portals of academia, and embark on productive careers, and at the opportunity to address them. One reason for this pleasure is that I myself am an alumnus of Anna University, or

perhaps I should say one of the current constituents of Anna University, having graduated from the AC College of Technology forty years ago. As my mind goes back to that time, I marvel at how things have changed. Guindy, and particularly the environs of Guindy Engineering College and AC Tech were then fairly quiet and sleepy, with none of the hustle and bustle that you see today, both within and without their compounds. IIT Madras was just graduating its first few classes. Academic life was at a much slower pace, probably reflecting the slower paced life styles of the time. The academic evaluation system was different, with the dreaded annual exams always in the minds of the students. This was before the days of the semester system, open book exams, and so on, and we had to take exams in thirteen different subjects over a fifteen-day period, including two Sundays. Things have now definitely improved in many ways. The focus has switched to imparting knowledge, rather than passing examinations. Syllabi have been modernised to keep in touch with the changing technologies of the day. But one thing I can say with pride has not changed—the graduating classes from these institutions continue to be the cream of India's emerging technical manpower.

Anna University is now a huge institution with about 240 colleges under its umbrella. From these it graduates over 50,000 students each year covering the whole spectrum of Engineering and Technology. There are several Centers of Excellence and Institutes in specialised areas. I would dare say that Anna would rank among

the top global technical universities. Similarly, Guindy, with its many technical institutions, like the College of Engineering, The AC College, IIT Madras, and the many other departments located around here, would bid fair to be a world-ranking center of technological education, comparable, for example, to the research triangle around Raleigh, North Carolina in the US. It is indeed a privilege to be present here today as Chief Guest.

Investment destination

You are all aware that of late Tamil Nadu, and particularly the environs of Chennai, have been attracting huge investments in the areas of Software and Information Technology, Business Processing, Automobile and Auto Component manufacture, not to mention a whole host of other engineering-based industries. Apart from the other advantages that Chennai and Tamil Nadu offer, there is no doubt in my mind that one of the main reasons attracting so many multinationals and Indian business houses here, is the availability of large numbers of well educated engineers and technologists. Anna University can proudly lay claim to being one of the main factors behind the industrial and economic advancement of Tamil Nadu.

All of you graduating today are on the threshold of your careers. You have a wide variety of choice. You could study further, you could take up jobs where you utilise the knowledge and skills you have acquired, you could enter into areas of research, or you could think of building upon the technical foundations you have gained with a management degree. The student of today is very well networked globally, and I am sure all of you have already mined and processed the relevant information you need to make this choice—probably most of you have already made it. Notwithstanding this,

I thought I would talk to you on a few issues, not necessarily linked, but which I feel are important points for you to consider at this stage.

Economy on a high

The Indian economy is now on a high. It is finally beginning to achieve the growth rates that were always talked about as being possible, but somehow were never achieved. If industry and economy are clocking 7 – 8% growth or more this year, it is on the basis of some very strong fundamentals, and not a flash in the pan. India is integrating herself with the global economy on a permanent basis. The liberalisation measures started in the early 90's gave Indian industry the shock treatment it needed. Decades of protectionism had resulted in Indian businesses producing goods which were sub-standard in quality, and selling them at prices unrelated to their global values. The lifting of the veils of protectionism, and the dismantling of licencing and industrial controls in 1991, all resulted in a sudden surge of competition. There were several businesses that were unable to meet this challenge and went under. But happily, a large proportion of industry has restructured itself and emerged from the fire in much better

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*At the convocation (l to r): N Sankar, the State Education Minister
C Ve Shanmugam, Tamil Nadu Governor
S S Barnala, Dr D Viswanathan and
K Ramalingam.*





Current trends in the western world are that as nations develop, forces build up within them that mitigate against establishment of large capacities of heavy industry, and these economies seem to gravitate more and more towards the secondary and tertiary consumption sectors. This holds out the opportunity for countries like India to become the manufacturing powerhouses of the world.

shape, producing goods of international quality and cost, and invading and securing markets all over the world. The benefits to the Indian consumer are obvious. He has access to all sorts of products produced here or imported, many at prices significantly lower than to a consumer in other parts of the world. Product quality is also international.

Today as an Indian you can hold your head high – Indians occupy the highest positions around the world as Chief Executives of huge global corporations, are among the top rungs of most of the major Universities in the world, are top Doctors at leading hospitals; Indian entrepreneurs are being counted among the world's leaders in their fields, and so on and so forth.

From the global economic point of view, India is perhaps second only to China in terms of its potential and importance over the next few decades. There are reasons for this.

Pool of manpower

India offers three very valuable attractions to global industry. Firstly, a huge and growing market; secondly a very attractive manufacturing destination; and thirdly, an ever refreshing pool of excellent manpower.

All three are equally important. Current trends in the western world are that as nations develop, forces build up within them that mitigate against establishment of large capacities of heavy industry, and these economies seem to gravitate more and more towards the secondary and tertiary consumption sectors. This holds out the opportunity for countries like India to become the manufacturing powerhouses of the world. To illustrate, just ten years ago if some one had said that the world's largest refinery would be located in India, he would have met with severe skepticism, but with the current on going expansion of Reliance Petroleum's Refinery to 50 million tons, they will easily outdistance the next largest competitor. Mittal Steel Limited, the world's largest steel producer, and many others are setting up huge scale grassroots steel plants in Eastern India.

But more important, India also offers a huge market for most manufacturing products and services. The per capita consumption in India of any product you take is today only about 1/4th or 1/5th that of even countries like Thailand and Malaysia, let alone the western world where per capitas are very much larger. Thus, if we catch up with the consumption levels of even our closer neighbours, the multiplier effect of India's one billion population will ensure demand for most products and services at double digit rates for several years to come.

Lowest capital costs

Equally, India offers the opportunity to set up manufacturing units at perhaps the lowest conversion costs anywhere in the world. The capital costs of setting up green field projects are significantly lower here, as are the costs of conversion once the units get underway. Both these arise primarily from the significantly lower cost of our excellent Indian manpower—the engineers, the technologists,

accountants, lawyers, software specialists, and what have you. The rest of the world has awoken to this fact, and this has resulted in the flood of technology companies from around the world setting up research or basic engineering or design and development centers here in India—GE, Ford, Microsoft, Intel, Emerson Electric, Amazon, Alcatel, etc., are already here, and the queue is long.

All this leads me to hold the firm belief that India is on the threshold of several decades of high growth. This should be a heartening factor for those of you bidding to enter the world of industry and business today.

The next point I would like to make is that when you receive your degrees and diplomas today, you must appreciate that you hold in your hands something that is very valuable on a global assessment. The forethought of the leaders of our nation in realising the value of education and taking it to large numbers of the Indian population through heavy subsidies, has resulted in a fairly low cost of education. Even with the recent upward trends in fees, you have all acquired an education which would have cost many times more elsewhere. But the earning and productive potential of that education is no different from that of one earned in the US or UK or anywhere else. The market for brainpower is global.

Another point you should consider is what exactly earning the engineering degree has taught you. While no doubt you have been immersed in a variety of courses in various fields of technology and engineering, all of which are relevant and important, I personally found that the most valuable take away from my engineering degree, was that it taught me to logically analyse problems and issues, and work to their solutions. This is a technique that you use every day in

solving problems in say, heat transfer or machine design or reaction kinetics. But this methodology lends itself to application in many fields.

Advantages of engineering background

Let me talk to you from personal experience. In 1967 I came back from the US and joined our group as a management trainee. At that stage my education was all in Chemical Engineering, where I had a bachelors degree from AC Tech and a masters degree from an institution in the US. But I found I was dealing mostly with financial matters, and knowing nothing of double-entry book-keeping, trial balances or other accounting and financial matters, I was all at sea. But once I understood the basics, I found that my engineering background was very helpful in terms of being able to visualise problems and issues, and analyse them for solutions. I must point out that this is not an approach practised naturally by say, accountants. They are numbers - and calculations - driven, and their approach is more rule-bound, and somehow they do not generally have a macro appreciation of the problem. For example, in comparing different financing flows and their costs, techniques that we use in engineering like calculations of heat flows and

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A section of the audience at the convocation.



resulting temperatures, came in handy. Within a short period I found that I had gained a reputation as some sort of an expert in finance, although I was still ignorant of accounting principles or tax laws and so on. For many years I kept this opinion to myself, that of the engineering discipline being what had given me this edge. It was not until I read the very same sentiment expressed by Jack Welch, the legendary Chief of GE, in his memoirs—of how education as a Chemical Engineer had helped him enormously in his management of different aspects of business. It is only after reading this, that I started espousing this view strongly in public. In fact, in our own group companies I insist we look at any problem in a logical four-step process:

- **Define** the problem
- **Analyse** the issue
- **Decide** a solution
- **Implement** the solution

A simple tool, but properly used it yields good returns. Every one of you have by virtue of your education the seeds of such processes in you – use them well.

Value of discipline

Leading on from here, this technique that engineering teaches you is nothing but a discipline. One of the Webster's Dictionary definitions of discipline is 'adherence to a rule or system of rules i.e., an orderly or regular pattern of behaviour'. Discipline so defined will stand you in good stead in all facets of life. When you join a company or other institution, you will find they have their own rules and codes of conduct, and your discipline will be in adhering to them. The education that you have received so far makes it easier for you to accept discipline, and this discipline will in turn result in your completing your tasks quicker and more efficiently. I know that of late, there have

been issues in this campus and elsewhere, resulting from some initiatives of the University management, but when you look at it from the macro perspective that discipline is a way of conducting your affairs and of addressing issues and problems in your work, and not just the less important matters of personal appearance and behaviour, then I think you would begin to appreciate the value of discipline.

Moving on, I have one thought that I would like you to consider when making your choices regarding your future. Over the last several years, you are all aware that a very large proportion of the best minds graduating from our leading technological institutions like Anna University, have pretty much given up engineering and moved on to fields such as finance, or general management. In these areas also, the education that they have received has helped them shine brightly, but there is no doubt that the hard technical areas are beginning to feel the non-availability of the best minds. At the time I graduated in the 60's, most of the graduating engineers went on in their fields. If they continued their education, they took up MS or Ph.D programmes in a specialised field of engineering. If they took up employment, it was as manufacturing or sales or design engineers. However, in the last twenty years or so, I would hazard a guess that a very large number of engineering graduates have taken up management courses and moved on to Wall Street and other similar areas around the world. With the industrial progress that India is making, there are going to be huge investments in manufacturing, research, design and development, and the opportunities for engineers in these areas is going to be enormous. I would personally urge all of you to seriously consider sticking to the Technology and Engineering areas you are graduating in,

One of the Webster's Dictionary definitions of discipline is 'adherence to a rule or system of rules i.e., an orderly or regular pattern of behaviour'. Discipline so defined will stand you in good stead in all facets of life. When you join a company or other institution, you will find they have their own rules and codes of conduct, and your discipline will be in adhering to them.

and excelling in them. If the greater proportion of the technical graduates can be convinced to do so over the next few years, I can very clearly see India emerging as a Technology and Manufacturing powerhouse of the 21st century.

This is not an idle claim. You don't have to go very far from here to see the proof of what I am saying. If you drive down the Old Mahabalipuram Road, you will see a very large number of manufacturing and design and development centers, each employing hundreds, perhaps thousands, of engineers and other technicians. Many of them are owned 100% by multinational corporations. No doubt these technological and engineering centers are at present outnumbered by the gleaming steel and glass buildings housing software development and BPO outfits, but keep in mind that these software and business-process units are there ultimately to service the industries and businesses turning out hard products. Their growth depends on the growth of the manufacturing, process and infrastructure industries – the so called 'Old Industry' sector. If therefore a young engineering graduate of today came to me for advise, I would certainly urge him to stick to his knitting.

Change is inevitable

Another important point that I find every one of my predecessors at this function over the last few years has made, and that I would like to endorse very strongly, is of the inevitability of change. Today change is the only constant. The speed of technological advancement is very high, and is accelerating further. The life cycles of products and technologies are continuously getting shorter, as they are overtaken by newer technologies and better products. The Internet is just ten years old. Can any of you think of life without it today? I won't even mention the PC or mobile phone or what have

you. Unfortunately, what this means is that when you receive a degree today, you cannot afford to think that you have completed your education. If you do so, you will find yourself becoming obsolete very shortly. You will necessarily have to continuously educate yourself, as developments of new products, process and technologies happen. Continuing education is essential, not just for improving your position, but just to maintain status quo.

Continuing education

Here, I have a suggestion for Anna University. With the huge numbers of young engineers being employed within a very short distance of this campus, the constituent colleges of Anna University should consider taking up the cause of continuing education in a major way. Short-term courses, perhaps offered after working hours, which enable engineers to upgrade themselves to current developments in their field, would be extremely valuable. I am sure the syndicate is already seized of the matter, but considering its importance I would emphasise an early start.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I realise have meandered a bit, touching on disparate issues, not necessarily cogently, but I hope I have impressed upon you my basic and unshakable belief in the future of India and of Indian industry. The opportunities for young minds like yours are enormous, and more important, growing at a fast pace every year. The potential is there - the future beckons - but what you make of it is in your hands. For myself, I am confident that all of you will make great contributions to our nation's development.

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Madhuram Narayanan Centre celebrates its 16th anniversary

The Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children (MNC) celebrated its 16th anniversary on 12 December 2005. The children exhibited their talents with their parents. They sang and danced for a theatre performance titled, “*Parakkum Theril Sirikkum Kuzhandaigal*”, based on Thyagabharati’s songs. What is noteworthy is that the centre makes it a point to get the parents involved in all its activities as much as possible to ensure that they carry forward the development work at their home. In his welcome address, Air Vice Marshal V Krishnaswamy, Director, MNC, said that it was an important part of their early intervention programme to improve the morale of the parents of

children suffering from developmental delays and mental retardation.

In his presidential address, V Narayanan, Director, Willingdon Corporate Foundation, commended the work done by the centre in helping special children and their families. He appreciated the excellent performance of the children with their mothers and added that it clearly demonstrated the empowerment of the children. He spoke highly of the committed service of the centre and said that it is a valuable resource centre for the global community.

N Ravi, Editor, The Hindu, the chief guest, lauded the centre for setting a ‘valuable precedent’ of what private initiatives could achieve in the objective

Children and parents of the centre who participated at the anniversary celebrations.



of extending equal opportunities to all. He hailed the efforts of K S Narayanan and the Sanmar family for starting the centre and running it so successfully since 1989 as a community service centre. He stressed that primary education is the fundamental right of all children irrespective of their abilities and that schools must adopt a diversity-based approach to education after identifying the diverse needs of the children.

In his message (read out by V Narayanan) K S Narayanan, who could not attend the function, said the centre was disseminating its early intervention programme to various parts of the country through seminars and workshops and wished many more years of committed service to the society.



From l to r: V Narayanan, Director, Willingdon Corporate Foundation, N Ravi, Editor, The Hindu, P Jeyachandran, Director, Vijay Human Services and V Krishnaswamy, Director, MNC, at the anniversary celebrations.

A section of the audience.



The children demonstrate their artistic skills.

Taking cricket to a new pitch

(A tribute to The Sanmar Group's patronage of cricket for nearly four decades by S Thyagarajan, published in The Hindu Metroplus dated 13 October 2005)

Corporate sponsorship acquired a touch of sophistication when the major industrial establishments in the State pitched in to enhance the quality of city league cricket about four decades ago. If India Cements gets portrayed as a trend-setter of this vibrant change, a good measure of credit to pioneering this concept and perfecting a system should go to the quiet, soft-spoken N Sankar, chairman, Sanmar Group. The company sponsors the two major forces in the city—Jolly Rovers CC and Alwarpet CC.

Love for the sport

For Sankar, sponsorship is an article of faith and commitment rather than a

vehicle for purveying a commercial message. This stems from the insatiable love for a sport that he devoutly played and practised in school and college, both here and abroad. Eventually tennis claimed his attention ahead of cricket. Coaching sessions with T K Ramanathan, father of tennis ace Ramanathan Krishnan, consumed quite a bit of time; but the passion for cricket refused to die down. He found time to wield the willow in the ground near his residence.

It is difficult to gauge how many in this generation are aware that Sankar, along with N Srinivasan, president, TNCA, and current managing director, India Cements, formed one of the most

The Sanmar pavilion at the IIT-Sanmar cricket ground, Chennai.



formidable collegiate doubles combinations in the 1960s, donning the colours of A C College of Technology. Sankar even had a stint as president of the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association.

Unalloyed love for sport prompted Sankar to court cricket and support its practitioners. Picking up the threads from his father, K S Narayanan, himself a club level tennis player, Sankar re-defined the whole aspect of sponsorship after India Cements began supporting Jolly Rovers Cricket Club in 1966. Since then, India Cements, Chemplast and Sanmar have been in the forefront of sponsorship for nearly four decades. And continue to be vibrant as ever. A fact that needs to be singled out for approbation is this; while several high profile corporate units began pulling out of the sponsorship net for one reason or the other, Chemplast and Sanmar, under his leadership, emerged as role models for professional efficiency. Mafatlal, Sungrace, Tata, JK Tyres, Nirlon, Punjab Communication Ltd., State Bank of India, TVS Chennai, Kunal Engineering, Godrej, Pentasoft, Mohan Meakins, Escorts and SAIL are some of the units that faded from the scene after making a stunning impact in several top notch tournaments. Sankar shows no hesitation in acknowledging the contribution of TVS, *The Hindu* and Dasaprakash in fostering city clubs, and speaks appreciatively of MRF for the efficacy of promoting a brand with outstanding success. While admitting the strains of maintaining the tempo, level of efficiency and putting in place an effective assembly line of talent, Sankar reveals that the cost of maintenance and infrastructure hovers around Rs. 1.5 crore annually.

Success rate

What satisfies him, however, is the success rate of the teams, be it in the city league, *The Hindu* Trophy, or in away tournaments such as Moin-ud-

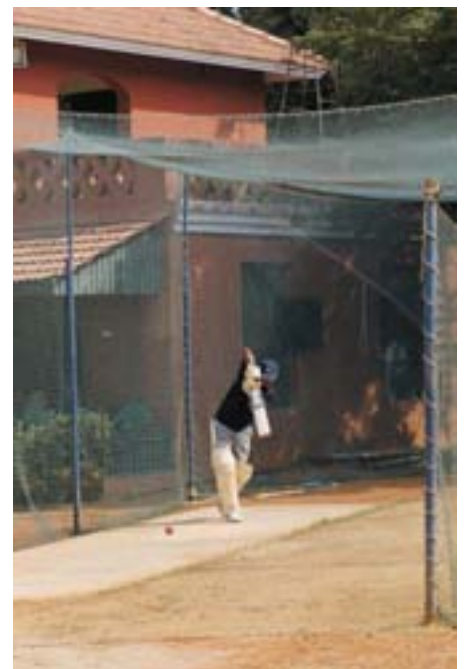
Dowla. He is happy that both the Sanmar sponsored outfits, Jolly Rovers and Alwarpet, will fight for the Palayampatti Shield this year.

To catalogue players who benefited out of the sponsorship programmes is not easy. From K R Rajagopal to P K Belliappa and B Kalyanasundaram, to Test stars such as S Venkataraghavan, Bharath Reddy, B Arun, and L Sivaramkrishnan, down to Robin Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Hemang Badani, Dinesh Mongia and Lakshmipathy Balaji, the galaxy mirrors the confidence and trust enjoyed by players working with an understanding leader like Sankar.

One more area where Sankar spent a lot of energy as cricket administrator—he was also president of Tamil Nadu Cricket Association in 1993-94—related to increasing the number of turf pitches in and around the city. While encouraging the institutions to adopt school and college grounds, Sanmar set an example by developing a superb facility matching international standards at the Indian Institute of Technology. The IIT-Sanmar ground earned the appreciation of players such as Sachin Tendulkar, Richard Hadlee and Neil Harvey. Said the Kiwi legend, “The IIT-Sanmar ground is an outstanding one, the pitches and pavilion there can compare with the best anywhere.”

Sankar’s mission continues with the focus on helping deserving youngsters. Assisted well by Bharath Reddy, the administrative manager, Sankar is endeavouring to give sports promotion a high priority in his company’s milieu designed to offer society a platform to grow.

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Sanmar gifts building to primary school



A child from the school holds centrestage at the inaugural function.

The Sanmar Group has long been involved in supporting schools offering high quality education to both boys and girls. On 9 December 2005, Vijay Sankar, Director, The Sanmar Group, inaugurated a new building at a cost of Rs.2.30 lakh, and donated to the Ellen Sharma Memorial Primary and Nursery School run by the Children's Garden School Society located at Karapakkam, Chennai. In his speech, he highlighted the activities of the Madhuram Narayanan Charitable Trust through which the group has made this gesture. He announced a donation of another Rs.1 lakh towards the school's development work. P Natarajan, Managing Director, Sanmar Engineering Corporation, spoke appreciatively of the good work done by the school.

Vijay Sankar inaugurating the school building.



'A Man of Letters'

V Ramnarayan, (Vice President Corporate Communications,
Sanmar Corporate Division)

Over the years, the New Yorker magazine has provided me great reading pleasure. Its articles and profiles tend to be long, but solid in substance, rich in content. Its style, typography and design have remained unchanged throughout its existence. Perfection in all aspects of production has been its hallmark. I wonder if a typographical error has ever marred its contents.

Humour is an important ingredient of most of the writing featured in the New Yorker; its cartoons must rank among the best anywhere. I have read some of the greatest writers in contemporary fiction and non-fiction for the first time in the New Yorker, the list including Michael Ondaatje, Jhumpa Lahiri and Amitava Ghosh. Salman Rushdie's account of his teenage passion for soccer and his fierce loyalty to the Tottenham Hotspurs, peerless prose that lingers in the memory, is only one example of my favourite pieces of writing in the magazine.

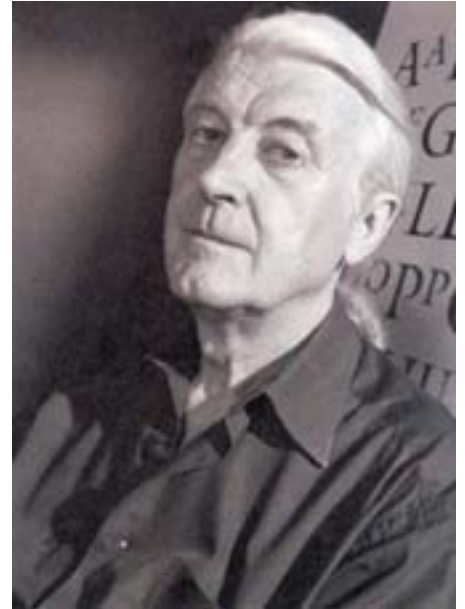
The December 5, 2005 issue of the magazine is a treasurehouse of outstanding content. In it, among other things, longtime contributor Alec Wilkinson pays a tribute to a master typeface designer that makes compelling reading. To quote from the author:

"Matthew Carter is often described as the most widely read man in the world. Carter designs typefaces. He is universally acknowledged as the most significant designer of type in America, and as having only one or two peers in Europe. A well-regarded British type designer named Dave Farey once told a reporter, "There's Matthew Carter, and then there's the rest of us."

The 68-year-old Carter is British and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has designed type for some of the world's leading magazines and newspapers including Time, Newsweek and Business Week, the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Washington Post and the Guardian, London. Verdana, for long the signature typeface of Microsoft, is his creation, especially commissioned for computer screens because typefaces used in the print medium could be illegible on screen. Bell Centennial, the typeface used by A.T. & T in the phone book, and Galliard, used by the U S Postal Service on a stamp, are also his contributions to typography.

Born in London in 1937, Carter inherited his love for type design from his father, a typographer, designer of books and historian of typography. Trained to be an architect, his mother worked as a draftsman. World War II broke out when Matthew was two, and during evacuation, with his father away at the war, the boy learnt to read from an alphabet his mother cut out from linoleum at their new home in Croydon. "Gill Sans, a popular typeface of the time", Carter recalls. Early impressions were made by the books his father had designed that his mother showed him.

Carter was a misfit at boarding school, as he "liked art, which no one considered important, and bebop, which the school disapproved of." At 17, he joined Oxford, but the school suggested he take a year off and come back later, as he was much younger than the other students who had all done military service, something Carter's asthma prevented. His father arranged an internship for



Matthew Carter, type designer extraordinaire.

Upper case, lower case

The alphabet was organised into capital and small letters around 800. The capital letters derived from inscriptions on Roman monuments, and the smaller letters from handwriting. The first book that could be easily carried around was printed in Venice in 1501. It was called a pocket book. It was printed in italic, which was thinner than the other styles of type, and was said to be an imitation of Petrarch's handwriting. Printers kept their letters in cases arranged before them on a table. Each letter had a compartment. Capital letters were kept in the upper case, and small letters in the lower case. How many copies of each a printer kept on hand depended on the work he did. Dickens used a lot of vowels. Lord Macaulay used mainly consonants. Tastes in typography have always been narrow. When John Baskerville introduced a typeface in England in 1757 which was thinner than Caslon, the dominant face of the period, people thought that it was so shocking by comparison that the strain of reading it would make them go blind.

him at a printing company in the Netherlands, in Haarlem, called Enschede en Zone, where he learnt to make type by hand, using techniques that hadn't changed for 400 years. He was one of the last men in Europe to learn to cut type by hand.

After a year at Enschede, Carter decided to pursue a career in typography rather than go back to college. Returning to London in 1956, he moved in with his parents, painted signs and did lettering work. Punch cutting jobs were hard to come by, so he moved to London in 1958, and found work with a group of designers, aspiring to an international style in type design. His work there put him on a magazine cover, and one of his father's friends, impressed by what he saw, helped him to travel to New York, something Carter wanted to do, without knowing exactly why.

The rest of the New Yorker story describes how Matthew Carter evolved as one of the greatest living type designers in the world. I shall confine myself to quoting a couple of inspiring passages from the article and invite the reader to share the joy I experienced reading them.

He gave Carter three hundred pounds, and in April of 1960 Carter arrived in the city. Much of his time he spent visiting graphic design studios. "It's hard to recall, in these days of the global village, how different design was in different places. I had grown up in a type-making privileged situation, and I'd had my year at Enschede and my time in London, and I was cocky, but once I got to New York and saw the level of work the designers were doing—in magazines and advertising, in posters you would see around the city, at the exhibitions I attended, the entire aggregate impression—I was made abruptly and forcefully to realise that I knew nothing." He felt that he was faced with two choices: to slink home or to resolve to stay. "The cowardly part of

me could have gone back to England and pretended I hadn't seen all of this design," he says. "Or I could decide, Wake up, Matthew, you've been living in a fool's paradise. You crossed the Atlantic and found something that knocked you sideways, now it's your move."

In the spring of 1960, the John Coltrane Quartet played its first engagement. Carter was in the audience. Over several weeks, he heard them three or four times. "Sometimes they played the same songs in the second set as they played in the first. Not because they were lazy but because they wanted to surpass themselves, or find something in the music that they hadn't found earlier in the evening. They were that acute. Their seriousness of purpose was a lesson. Four great geniuses who would knock themselves out every night when instead they could have coasted. I felt I could have been dishonest enough to return to England and say I hadn't seen great design. But I couldn't somehow pretend that I hadn't heard the John Coltrane Quartet." As it happened, Carter couldn't find work in the city and went back to England, where he worked as a designer, but in 1965 he was hired by Mergenthaler, whose offices were in Brooklyn.



Impressive heritage show by Sri Sankara Vidyashramam

The Parampara Heritage Club of Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur, initiated the village link programme last year when the children from the school visited Illalur and Echangadu villages. In July this year, the children from those villages visited the school and participated in an interactive session with the club members. They visited the homes of the club members and stayed with them overnight to get the feel of urban culture. The club also celebrated “Madras Day” at the school. Children exhibited their skills by displaying wonderful models of the city’s landmark monuments and buildings. Another programme organised for the club members was a trip to Mamallapuram as part of the project, “Disaster leads to discovery”. Dr Suresh, a renowned archaeologist and a member of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), accompanied the club members.

The Interact Club of the school organised a blood donation camp for the ninth year in succession on 20 November 2005. Thanks to relentless campaigning by the members of the Club, there was a turnout of 347 donors surpassing last year’s number of 293. Rtn George Cherian visited the camp and appreciated the efforts of the volunteers. The officials from the Madras Voluntary Blood Bureau who were the joint organisers of the camp also applauded the work done by the volunteers. It is worth mentioning that the Club has won the Bank of Baroda Rolling Trophy for mobilising the most donors for three years in a row.



Project display by the members of the Parampara Heritage Club of the school.

Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur.



SSCL obtains OHSAS 18000



A view of SSCL Berigai.

Sanmar Speciality Chemicals Limited (SSCL) - Performance Chemicals has been awarded the OHSAS 18000 certification for its Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system.

What is OHSAS 18000?

Originally created from the British Standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems BS 8800:1996, OHSAS 18001 is an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system specification. Developed by a group of certification bodies and various national standards organisations, OHSAS 18001 was designed to enable companies to control their OHS risks and demonstrate their commitment to provide a safe working environment, protect their employees, and improve their performance.

With the success of the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series of Standards, OHSAS 18001 was developed to be compatible with ISO management systems. To allow for easy integration into a company's quality management system, many

sections and sub-clauses are similar, such as management review, document control and corrective and preventive actions.

To obtain compliance, companies must first establish an OHS policy that illustrates the company's vision and commitment to health and safety. Any potential hazards must be determined and identified, and their risks assessed and controlled on an on-going basis. Tactics utilised should be defined and consistent. In order for an OHS management system to be implemented effectively, management should be ready to commit adequate resource to monitor activities and conduct internal audits to identify areas for improvement, ensuring the effectiveness of the OHS management system. Policies and procedures need to be identified and prepared in order to control operations, including emergency preparedness and response plans. Documentation should be accurate, up-to-date, easily accessible and properly controlled.

Benefits of implementing an OHS management system include:

- Reduced work-related accidents and illness
- Reduced costs associated with accidents and illness
- Improved performance through policies and procedures
- Compliance with the latest legislation
- Reduced risk of citations/penalties
- Improved company image by demonstrating a commitment to manage and minimise risks to employees and customers

Effluent treatment plant at SSCL, Berigai.



Chemplast Sanmar Limited

Marine Terminal Facility at Karaikal

On 3 October 2005, at the official execution of the long term lease documents for construction and operation of Marine Terminal facility and use of land within the port limits for the pipeline corridor, senior officials P S Jayaraman, Managing Director, Chemplast Sanmar and V Ramesh, Executive Director, Chemplast Sanmar met with C S Khairwal, Chief Secretary, Government of Pondicherry and Captain Ramkumar, Director of Ports, Pondicherry and exchanged documents.



C S Khairwal, Chief Secretary, Government of Pondicherry and Capt Ramkumar, Director of Ports, Pondicherry seen with P S Jayaraman, Managing Director and V Ramesh, Executive Director, Chemplast Sanmar.



Work on Marine Terminal Facility in progress on the seafront.

A view of the pipeline support structures.



St John Ambulance

Mettur Local Centre wins rolling trophy



The Sanmar sponsored St John Ambulance Association, Mettur Local Centre, was awarded the silver rolling trophy for 2004. Dr R Kumar Senior Manager, Medical Services, Chemplast Sanmar received the trophy from Tamil Nadu Governor Surjit Singh Barnala on 24 December 2005 at the Annual Conference held in Chennai.

The Mettur Local Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, comprising 13 life members, was inaugurated on 24 October 2004 under the Chairmanship of V Ranganathan, Chief Executive - Operations, Chemplast Sanmar. It was decided at the function to conduct First Aid Certificate classes for employees, educate the primary school children on the need for hygiene and to screen the film "Fire - A friend or foe".

Dr R Kumar and Dr R Kailasam, Manager, Medical Services, Chemplast Sanmar, conducted First Aid Certificate classes for 114 employees of all plants at Mettur, Berigai, Viralimalai and

Karaikal and also for 150 primary school children emphasising the need for oral hygiene and cleanliness at the centre. Recognising the enthusiastic involvement of the centre, St John Ambulance Association, chose the centre to receive the trophy.

The originator of First Aid was Esmarch (1823-1908). He was a distinguished Surgeon and went on to become the Surgeon General in the German army at the outbreak of the Franco Prussian War. He was an authority on hospital management and military surgery.

In 1877 St. John Ambulance was formed as a full-fledged voluntary organisation. The objective of the association was to train men and women for the benefit of the sick and wounded, with instructions to pupils on first aid and distribution of useful ambulance material.

St. John Ambulance Association adopted the term First aid officially in England for the first time in 1879.

Each year thousands get trained and gain certificates all over the world. In addition many undergo reexamination to maintain or increase their knowledge level.

These certificates are recognised by Government departments. Under the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules No.95, Schedule 16, Part 2-23-9, 10 per cent of workers need to be trained in First Aid.



The memento, silver rolling trophy and certificate bagged by the Mettur Local Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.



Dr R Kumar, Senior Manager - Medical Services, Chemplast Sanmar, receiving the silver rolling trophy from Surjit Singh Barnala, Governor of Tamil Nadu.

Chemplast rated excellent vendor

Chemplast Sanmar has been rated excellent for the period 1 January 2005 to 30 September 2005 by one of its customers, M/s Goetze India, for Tri-Chloro Ethylene (TCE). The credit goes to the Production, Quality Control, and Logistics teams who have helped achieve this recognition.



Employee of the Year



Saibal Mukherjee of Flowserve Sanmar was adjudged Employee of the Year and honoured during the Group Annual Day 2005. The last issue of Matrix published excerpts of the citation read out to him on the occasion but carried the photograph of his namesake working at Bangalore Genei. We are pleased to correct the lapse and publish Saibal's photograph here.

Farewell to S D Sankaralingam



S D Sankaralingam, Executive Vice President, Chemplast Sanmar, retired on 30 September 2005 after 28 years of service in The Sanmar Group. The company organised a farewell party for him in October 2005.

Here V Ramesh, Executive Director, Chemplast Sanmar, felicitates S D Sankaralingam. Also seen is K S Venkiteswaran, Chief Executive-IR, Chemplast Sanmar.

Legends from the South

J Krishnamurti

George Bernard Shaw called him the most beautiful human being he had seen. Aldous Huxley described one of his talks as “amongst the most impressive things I have listened to - it was like listening to the discourse of the Buddha.” According to Rimpoche Samdhong, a Tibetan monk, “if you feel the compassion that flows from him, you will see there is no limit to him.”

J Krishnamurti, philosopher, sage, teacher, was born on May 11, 1895 at Madanapalli, Andhra Pradesh and died at Ojai, California on February 17, 1986.

Chosen in his boyhood by The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras, to be anointed the next Messiah, Krishnamurti, broke away and evolved into one of the most original thinkers of the 20th Century.

In the words of former president R Venkataraman, “For more than 70 years Krishnamurti went about the world talking to vast audiences, meeting people who came to him burdened with sorrow and attracting the attention of some of the best minds of the century. He touched on all human problems and showed mankind clearly the possibility of a regeneration in the individual and society through self-knowing.”

Krishnamurti constantly questioned authority which people pursued because of fear. “When you realise that you have to find out everything entirely by yourself, inwardly, psychologically, then there is no leader, no guru, no philosopher, no saint that will help you, because they are still functioning on the level of thought.”

Krishnamurti’s iconoclasm was born of extraordinary courage, for the first icon he smashed was one of himself as the world teacher. To the bewilderment of thousands of disciples, he dissolved the Order of the Star – with himself at the head – a movement started by the Theosophical Society. He returned everything including a 5,000-acre estate in Holland that had been gifted to him. This was in 1929. In 1933, with the death of Annie Besant his last link with the Theosophical Society was snapped. Mrs. Besant, whom Krishnamurti loved and respected, had taken him under her wing after C W Leadbeater of the Society had identified him at the turn of the century as the future Messiah.

Twenty years before Krishnamurti’s birth, a Russian clairvoyant, Madame Blavatsky had founded the Theosophical Society in rejection of materialism. In 1882, the headquarters of the Society moved to Adyar, Madras, where it still remains. Mrs Annie Besant, a radical socialist of the Fabian Society, came to Adyar attracted by the theosophical programme of drawing East and West into a peaceful brotherhood. Adept in esoteric practices, Leadbeater saw in young Krishnamurti, “an aura with no trace of selfishness. He invested the boy with a full set of past lives”, forcibly drawing him and brother Nitya away from their simple south Indian life to an upbringing in the Society that combined the ways of western civilisation and training in occult practices. Mrs Besant who met Krishnamurti in 1909, initiated him and Nitya into the Esoteric Section, an inner group who, sworn to obey her, committed themselves unconditionally to the coming of the world teacher.

Theosophical doctrine settled on the belief that if Krishnamurti was properly prepared, the future Buddha would manifest in his body. He was to be the World Teacher, and Mrs Besant did her utmost to protect, educate and provide him with intellectual skills.

Followed years of indoctrination when the youngster underwent what must have been traumatic occult experiences. The battle for the custody of the two boys which ensued between their father Narayaniah and Mrs Besant could have done nothing for their morale either. They were both packed off to England, even as the custody suit was pending, to be educated and trained as English gentlemen. Krishnamurti showed no aptitude for studies but his childhood capacity for silence, observation and attention had evolved into a questioning of the beliefs and practices that sought to deify him.

Much of the introspection that led to Krishnamurti's breaking away from the Theosophical Society had taken place in 1922-23 at Ojai, California, where he had gone with Nitya, in the hope that the dry climate there would help Nitya recover from tuberculosis. Nitya's death in 1925 was a shattering blow which accelerated his disenchantment with the occult that had begun a few years ago.

Beginning from the 1940s, Krishnamurti spoke tirelessly to audiences all over the world until 1983. In his own words, "I have only one purpose: to make man free, to urge him towards freedom; to help him break away from all limitations; for that alone will give him eternal happiness, will give him the unconditional realisation of the Self". People from all walks of life came to listen to him drawn by the compassion of his being, his ability to heal the mind burdened by sorrow. Probing into the human mind, questioning every belief, 'ism' and creed, he defined self-knowledge as the beginning of all wisdom. He had great

empathy for those suffering sorrow but never offered short cuts to happiness. He conversed at length with scientists, psychiatrists, religious leaders, academicians, children, political leaders.

Education was a major preoccupation. The Krishnamurti Foundation schools in India and abroad are testimony to his faith in education. With children he interacted effortlessly. He encouraged them to partner him in enquiries into matters of grave importance. According to Pupul Jaykar, biographer and close associate, "He told the child that academic excellence was essential, but he also spoke of the awakening of intelligence which arose out of observation, self-knowing and compassion."

Krishnamurti had a keen interest in science and technology. He had a childlike enthusiasm for things mechanical which he could take apart and put back. Computers fascinated him. He was aware of their limitless possibilities but "demanded a mutation in the human mind" to prevent domination by the machine.

Before his death, Krishnamurti had said that the body was of no importance. He wanted no rituals to be performed at his funeral. He stressed what he had stressed all his life: the teaching not the teacher, was important. There were to be no successors and the teaching had to be protected from corruption and distortion.

Perhaps the acutest observation on Krishnamurti's work came from the American writer Henry Miller. According to Miller, Krishnamurti, "went to the very source of life for sustenance and inspiration. To resist the wiles and snares of those who sought to enslave and exploit him demanded eternal vigilance. He liberated his soul, so to say, from the underworld and the overworld, thus opening to it "the paradise of heroes".

