



January 2007

A PUBLICATION OF **THE SANMAR GROUP**



Pristine settings around Sanmar – Viralimalai

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Chemplast Sanmar Ltd

Cabot Sanmar Ltd

Sanmar Shipping Ltd

Sanmar Speciality Chemicals Ltd

Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients

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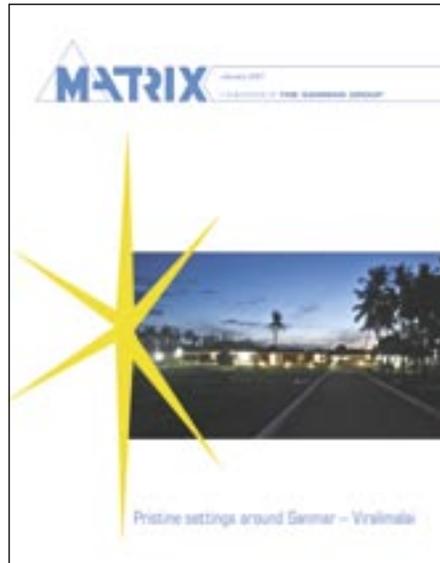
Vishay Sanmar Ltd

Xomox Sanmar Ltd



The Sanmar Group
9, Cathedral Road, Chennai 600 086.
Tel: + 91 44 2812 8500
Fax: + 91 44 2811 1902

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Champion of Humanity Award

for K S Narayanan

At the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce, Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group K S Narayanan was honoured with the 'Champion of Humanity Award 2006'. The other recipient of the award was

Dr SS Badrinath, President and Chairman of the Medical Research Foundation. Speaking on the occasion, Madras High Court Chief Justice A P Shah, the chief guest, referred to K S Narayanan and Dr S S Badrinath as the 'two sons of Tamil Nadu'.

Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman, The Sanmar Group, delivered the acceptance note address on behalf of his grandfather Narayanan.

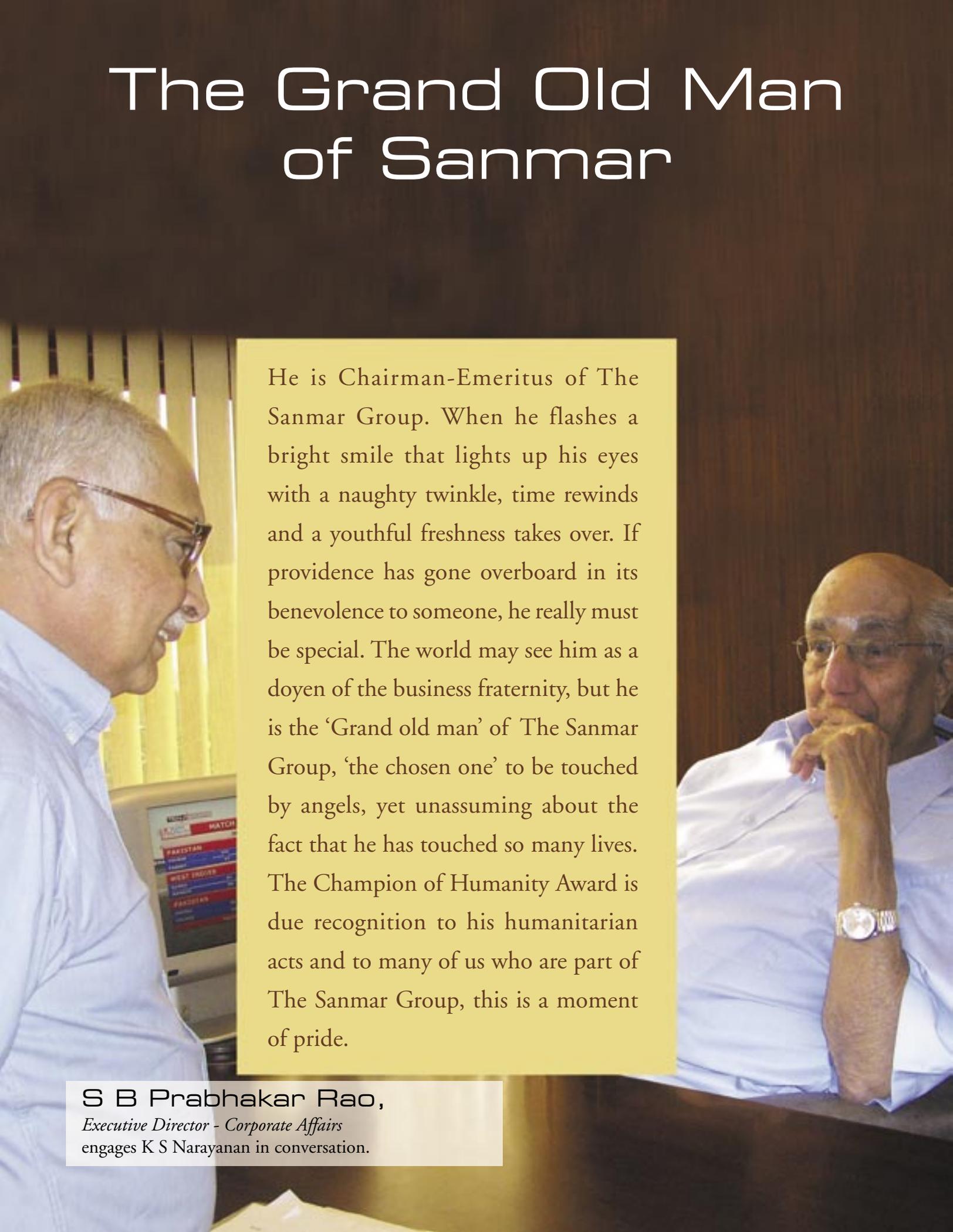


G Subramanian, President, Hindustan Chamber of Commerce (HCC), Justice A P Shah, Chief Justice of Madras High Court, M Balaji, Chairman, Diamond Jubilee Celebrations Committee of HCC, K S Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus, The Sanmar Group, Ashok R Thakkar, Immediate Past President of HCC, at the diamond jubilee celebrations of HCC.

“If I may offer some advice, while the immediate success of any business depends on the business model, the environment, and the efficiency of management, over the long term, it is my sincere belief gained from over six decades of corporate management experience, that ethics and transparency are the two values that should not be sacrificed under any circumstances. High standards on these two heads have enormous spin-off benefits for business, both direct and indirect. Apart from the grace of providence, I believe it is these values that have made me whatever I am today.”

– K S Narayanan.

The Grand Old Man of Sanmar



He is Chairman-Emeritus of The Sanmar Group. When he flashes a bright smile that lights up his eyes with a naughty twinkle, time rewinds and a youthful freshness takes over. If providence has gone overboard in its benevolence to someone, he really must be special. The world may see him as a doyen of the business fraternity, but he is the 'Grand old man' of The Sanmar Group, 'the chosen one' to be touched by angels, yet unassuming about the fact that he has touched so many lives. The Champion of Humanity Award is due recognition to his humanitarian acts and to many of us who are part of The Sanmar Group, this is a moment of pride.

S B Prabhakar Rao,
Executive Director - Corporate Affairs
engages K S Narayanan in conversation.

SBP: Receiving awards is a 'practised habit' as far as you are concerned. At this juncture, what do you feel about this particular recognition?

KSN: I am very happy and honoured. For youngsters may be such recognition could be an incentive. As for me...

SBP: I know you have been avoiding several such recognitions in the past.

KSN: I shy away from this kind of publicity.

SBP: People want role models.

KSN: I am doubly honoured. But I don't like the publicity. If somebody feels I've done something great, so be it.

SBP: You have been managing business growth on one side and you have continued with philanthropic activities as well. How did you start out?

KSN: There has been no plan or sudden clarion call. When people come and ask you for help, you just feel like helping as much as you can. It was sometime in the 60s...

SBP: Much earlier than that you developed the schools and polytechnic...

KSN: You see, we had a colony for factory employees at Sankarnagar and it was very difficult for children to go to a school that was five or six miles away. So we developed the Sankarnagar school. This was in the 50s. Later in the 70s there came a situation when the Sankara schools in Chennai (independent from the Sankarnagar school) were on the verge of closing down. I revived these schools and ever since there has been no looking back.

SBP: You created the infrastructure for technical education and provided the best facilities even in the 50s when it was created.

KSN: Developing polytechnics was a good scheme to train youngsters and make

them employable, be useful to the community and to industry.

SBP: The fact remains that it was part of the philanthropic activities you initiated, especially at a time when education was not commercialised.

KSN: You can put it that way... (laughs). In those days there were very few such institutions. Today there are plenty. The cost of education has also gone up. If you have to get good teachers you have to pay. This ensures quality in education.

SBP: Awards, citations and recognition – you have taken all of it in your stride. However, marketing pundits would say that both from the individual stand point and from the business perspective, it has helped build the brand equity of the group (directly and indirectly). In your heyday you wouldn't have heard of 'brand equity building'. You have laid a foundation for Sanmar by practising ethics and transparency, which are our premium brand values today.

KSN: Those days we were involved in operational activities. There were so many bottlenecks. We never thought of brand equity. It was wartime when I started. Getting machinery, keeping the production going and such were major issues. Sales were never a problem, we sold everything we made. It was not competition but infrastructure that was a problem. Publicity and branding are current imperatives. Earlier it was sheer innovation to address business needs.

SBP: Ethics and transparency – What were the implications then and what are they now?

KSN: In the 50s when you did what is right, what is ethical,



K S Narayanan (KSN)

people supported you. Whenever issues were raised, I could simply talk it out and settle things across the table, with the bureaucrats. Nowadays, you have to 'do right' and it should also appeal to others. It was so simple those days; today things are a lot more complicated.

SBP: In every business you were in, I've known you to drive quality and excellence and adhere to ethical practices. How did you face the challenge from competition and adhere to ethical practices at the same time?

KSN: In the 1940s, whether it was the rubber business or the carbide business, the competitors tried their best to deter me and have my licence revoked. When questions were raised, I invited the authorities to the factory to inspect our indigenous and innovative procedures. Everything was open and there was nothing to hide. When you are right and you can prove it so, detractors are convinced and become your allies.

SBP: Today corporate social responsibility is a buzzword that every corporate promotes and publicises. What was in your mind when you drove this at that time, consistently practising it, especially with no direct pressure in terms of statutory requirements at that time?

KSN: When you earn something you must give something, put something back into society. I felt that I had to do something to make people's lives better. I may have facilitated many initiatives but still credit should be given to the hard work that went into the implementation of these initiatives.

SBP: Your humanitarian activities come out of empathy; you understand feelings and you help.

KSN: Until you asked me, I never gave these things a thought. When there is a good cause you just help.

SBP: Were you challenged more, as a businessman in those days than the current generation of businessmen?

KSN: Those days restrictions and controls were many. We couldn't do all that we wanted to. There was a time when I invited trouble by offering timely and emergency help. Once a fishing trawler from Ceylon strayed into Vizag and was picked up by our men. I got into trouble because I fed and clothed them and funded their return trip to their country!

SBP: Those days we needed clearance to spend on anything, even charity!

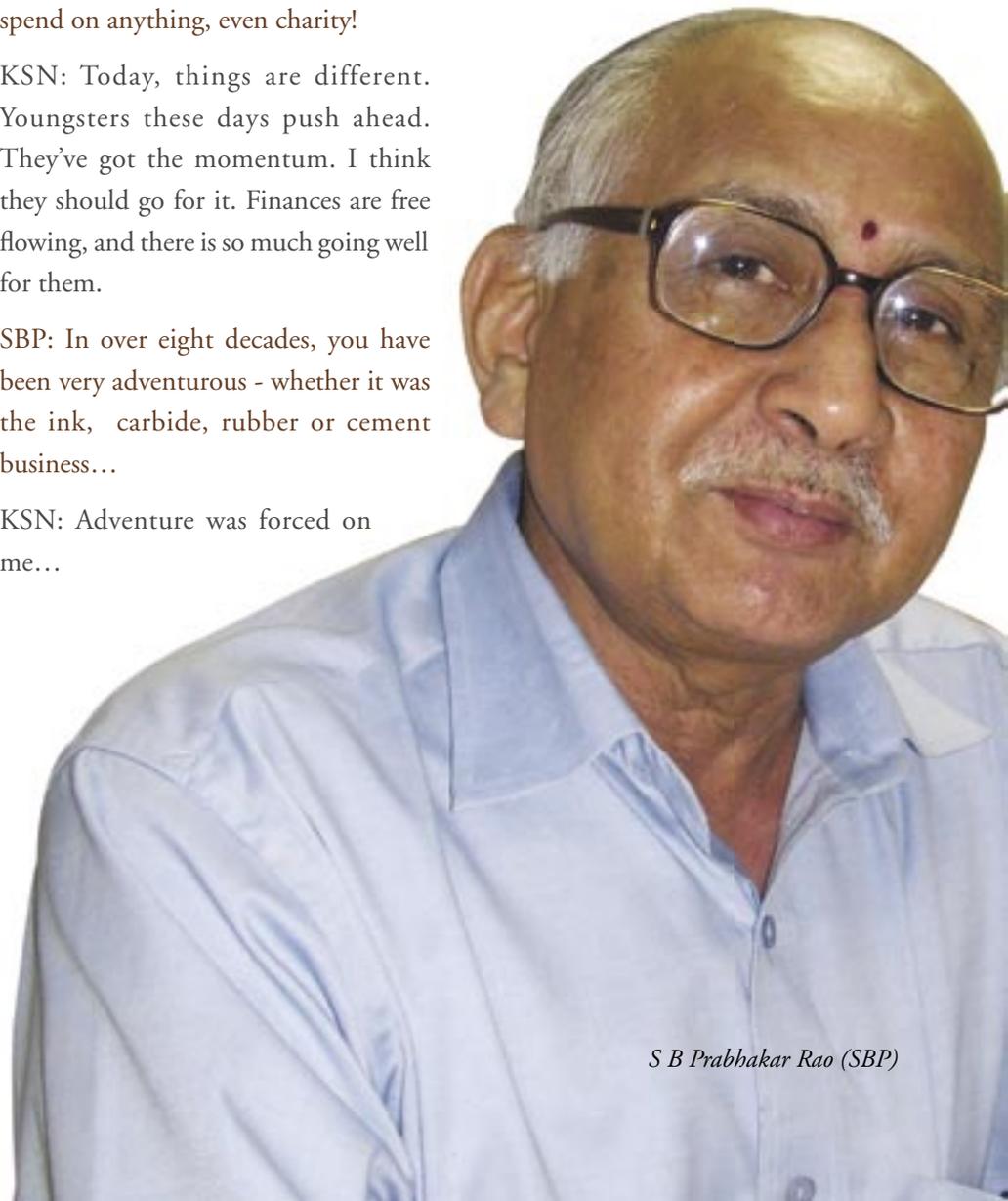
KSN: Today, things are different. Youngsters these days push ahead. They've got the momentum. I think they should go for it. Finances are free flowing, and there is so much going well for them.

SBP: In over eight decades, you have been very adventurous - whether it was the ink, carbide, rubber or cement business...

KSN: Adventure was forced on me...

SBP: Remember that time when the plane landed and the tyres had burst?

KSN: Yes. It would take several months to replace tyres, in India. When a tyre on a military plane burst beyond repair, leaving it stranded at the Coimbatore airstrip, I was asked if I could help. They obviously needed the tyre in a great hurry, and I didn't have much time to think about my options. I asked them to bring the old tyre to the factory for a model. Since I didn't have the technology to make a hollow pressurized tyre, I simply made a solid rubber one that at any rate carried the plane safely to a place where a more suitable tyre could be found.



S B Prabhakar Rao (SBP)

SBP: Don't tell me this was by God's grace and not indigenous innovation!

KSN: Everything is by God's grace. How can I take credit for that which turns out well?

SBP: Can you call to mind the most satisfying moment in terms of accomplishment, a dream coming true?

KSN: The position I am in today is itself a dream. I never dreamed so big. My boys have taken over the reins and built this group, which is way beyond my expectations. I'm an ordinary man who takes each day as it comes. It's just that everything has turned out well for me.

SBP: You always say failures are stepping-stones to success and you have had quite a bout of failures that you overcame.

KSN: It is all providence. One thing led to another. For example, we hoped the carbide from our plant, would be the feedstock for PVC and so on. But ultimately it was industrial alcohol.

SBP: The seedling has become a banyan tree.

KSN: Industry was good and our planning was good. Of course, we had our setbacks due to devaluation of the rupee and the resultant financial crunches. But we did our best and the results followed.

SBP: You are a believer in Karmayoga.

KSN: You can give me all these names. I believe, I am one of the instruments in the hands of God to promote industry and contribute to the benefit of society.

“ I am one of the instruments in the hands of God to promote industry and contribute to the benefit of society. ”



Visitors at Karaikal

Group Corporate Board Members visit the Marine Terminal Facility



Left to right: P N Kapadia, Adit Jain, Mukul Dixit, S Venkatesan, N Sankar, V Nanayanan, M N Radhakrishnan, Anoop Mathur & V Ramesh.



Anoop Mathur plants a sapling at Karaikal.

The Lt. Governor of Puducherry Mukut Mithi at the Facility



The Lt. Governor of Puducherry Mukut Mithi, visited our Marine Terminal Facility site on 24 September 2006. He was accompanied by B V Selvaraj, IAS (Secretary for Education & Tsunami Rehabilitation), Kumaraswamy, IAS (Sec. to LG & Tourism), Sudbirkumar, IAS (Collector of KKL), other local heads of Departments, and VMC Sivakumar, MLA. S Venkatesan, General Manager - Operations, Chemplast Sanmar Limited, is seen taking the visitors around the facility.

New Stars in the Sanmar Galaxy



K Chakravarthy

President - Control Valves Division,
Fisher Sanmar Limited

Chakravarthy has donned many hats during his long stint at Thermax- from process heat division to boiler division, from a corporate role to an operational one, from southern zone to S.E. Asian and Middle East markets, he has lead from both sides of the manufacturing fence. What would he like to do differently?

“I would like to work on the behavioural attributes of the people to channelise them towards the customer; the customer not being an order acceptance number but an entity with a human face. On the JV front, I would focus on understanding JV partners’ requirements and plan capacity and capabilities to meet the same.”



M S Srinivasan

Executive Director-Projects,
Chemplast Sanmar Limited

Srinivasan comes with a unique blend of engineering, operations, marketing, project implementation and IT skills. Hindustan Lever, EID Parry, Atul Ltd and Polaris are the organisations he has worked for. He is a Chemical Engineer from IIT with a Global Management Program from University of Michigan. He has managed various product divisions like bulk chemicals and intermediates, glycerin, nickel catalyst, phosphates, perfumery chemicals and fertiliser plants.



Vijay Phatarphekar

Executive Director- Marketing,
Sanmar Engineering Corporation Limited

Vijay started his career at Ingersol Rand getting a bottom up view of sales in the gas compressors group and migrated to the role of business head getting a top down view of operations in the air compressor group. At RPG, he experienced the full gamut of the financial aspects of the business. As COO of WGSRL (Wellspun Gujarat) he set up the complete ERW pipes business. The common thread in all the products he has handled is the wide exposure to the petrochemicals sector.

“Considering the varied range and synergy between our products, I would like a new approach that is vertical-based instead of being product-based. My challenge lies in bringing about a congruence between business and functions and this will require a fair deal of maturity and sensitivity.”



K Chakravarthy

M S Srinivasan

Vijay Phatarphekar

**Mukul Dixit**

Executive Director-Operations,
Chemplast Sanmar Limited

Mukul Dixit specialises in the chemical industry vertical with expertise ranging from operations management in fluorochemicals, speciality & fine chemicals and fertilizers, to project management in petroleum refineries and petrochemical plants.

“Alongside my leadership roles in my earlier assignments, I emerged as a catalyst for change, having the advantage of being in the ‘cross-over’ age bracket, intermingling with the traditions of the organizations and the emerging business environment. I hope to use this strength, here at Chemplast and lead the operations with a strong feel of the pulse of the people.”

**K R Murali**

Executive Director - Operations,
Sanmar Engineering Corporation Limited

Murali’s experience spans the areas of product planning and development, commercials, running manufacturing plants and IETS (EOU) businesses in engineering services. He has over two decades in the automobile and automotive components sector (Maruti Udyog & Tata Johnson Automotive Controls).

“In both my previous assignments, I was among the first entrants in the company. The critical success factors were to put together a team and move up together. Sanmar is an established organisation where the roads have been already laid over several decades. There is a justifiable sense of pride and achievement among the employees across the organisation. The challenge, however, is to move from a good Indian organisation to a “Best in Class” global organisation in all aspects of the business. I would like to bring synergy of individual and organisational capabilities towards this objective. Going by the warmth and open mind of the people here, I’m very confident that we will be successful.”

**Regie Paul**

Executive Director,
Sanmar Foundries Limited

Regie started his career with TELCO and has worked with organisations like Indian Aluminium and Mittal Steel in Kazakhstan and Romania. At Romania he was CEO of Mittal Steel’s three acquired units - welded pipes, seamless pipes and a mini steel mill.

“I have to be a change agent to enhance every individual’s contribution and develop a consciousness of his real contribution into the development of the business at every stage of his involvement instead of fully riding on the market dynamics.”

As Executive Director at Sanmar Foundries Ltd., he would like to bring about an involvement of all, from the shop floor upwards and work collectively towards improving the customer index.



Mukul Dixit

K R Murali

Regie Paul

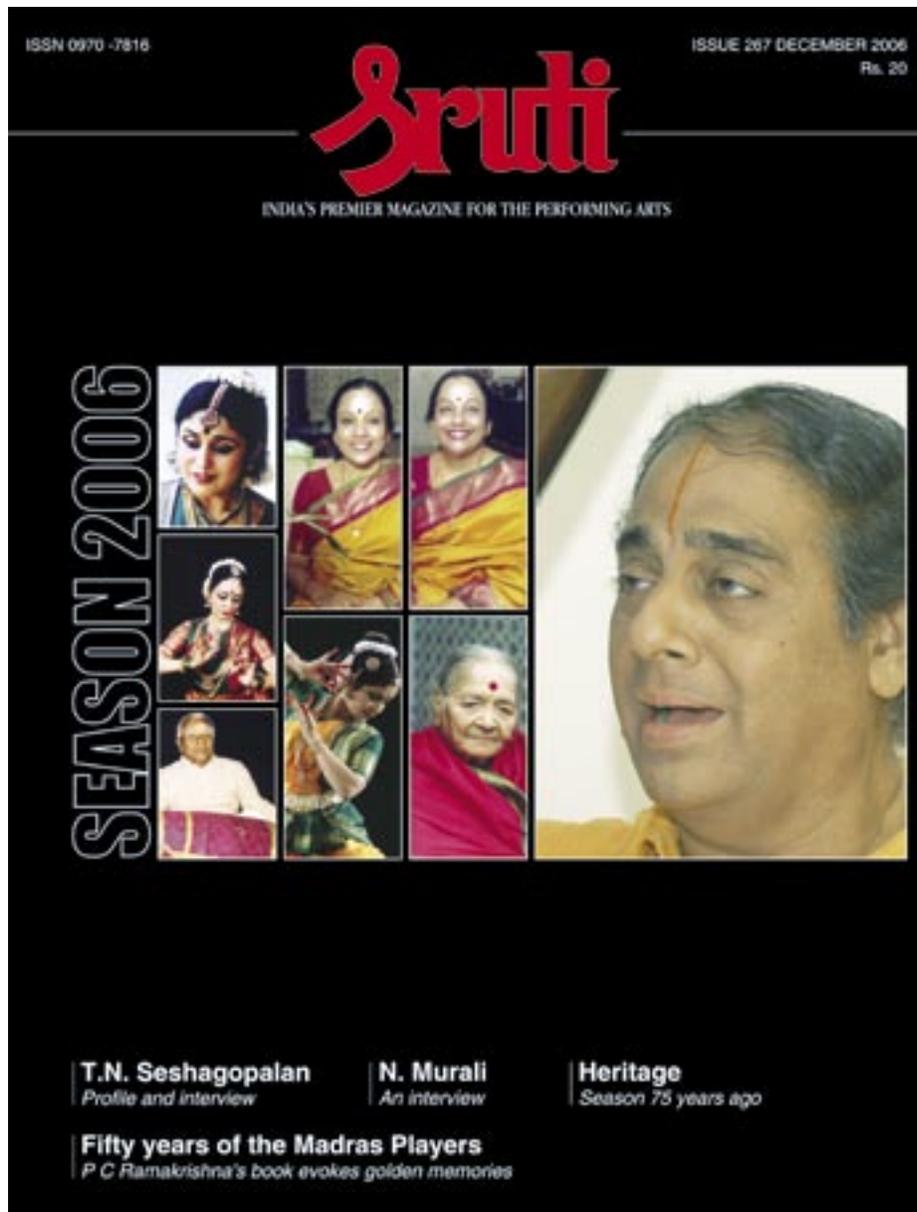
New Look Sruti Launched

Sanmar's entry into arts journalism

The Sanmar Group made an entry into niche journalism when it recently took over the management of Sruti magazine, one of India's leading monthlies devoted to music and dance, now expanding its scope to include other performing arts. The reconstituted Sruti Foundation, the not for profit trust that has been running the magazine from its early days nearly a quarter century ago, has N Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group, at the helm, as well as new entrants V Vaidyanathan and Sukanya Sankar, lending their weight to support existing trustees M Subramaniam and P S Narayanan, who had battled the odds to run a magazine of high quality all these years.

Sukanya Sankar and the editorial team at Sruti, including Editor-in-Chief K V Ramanathan, Executive Editor S Janaki and newly appointed editor V Ramnarayan, have succeeded in giving Sruti a new, colourful look, designed by Pradeep Warriar of Techmark Support Services.

The new look Sruti was launched on 11 December in an elegant function at the Taj Coromandel, Nungambakkam High Road, Chennai, the event being co-promoted by the hotel. An exhibition of rare photographs celebrating Carnatic music from the Sruti archives, to highlight the on-going Chennai December music season, and a wonderfully evocative audiovisual presentation on M S Subbulakshmi by music folklorist and raconteur V Sriram, who had the audience spellbound in a moving and sometimes entertaining tribute to the 'queen of song', who passed away on 12 December 2004.



In his address, Editor-in-Chief K V Ramanathan recalled the history of Sruti, launched by the late N Pattabhi Raman in October 1983, amidst widespread scepticism in the music and dance community as to its future. He paid tributes to Pattabhi Raman's pioneering and indomitable spirit and the great commitment shown by the so-called Sruti parivar, especially after the

founder's death a few years ago, making special mention of S Janaki's devoted service.

Chief guest N Murali, Managing Director of The Hindu, praised the Herculean efforts of Pattabhi Raman and his never-say-die spirit that kept the magazine going, creating a buzz in the music and dance circles and winning the approval of institutions such as the Sangeet Natak



From l to r: Prabhat Verma, General Manager, Taj Coromandel, N Murali, Managing Director, The Hindu, Aruna Sairam, KV Ramanathan and V Ramnarayan at the launch of Sruti magazine.

Akademi. Murali informed the audience that he had a ringside view of what went on at Sruti, sometimes editorial debates going on late into the night, as he was its next door neighbour. He complimented The Sanmar Group for taking up such a worthy cause, and expressed his confidence that the magazine was in very good hands. He also appreciated the steadfast efforts of publisher P S Narayanan over the decades to keep Sruti in good fettle.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks by V Ramnarayan, coincidentally an assistant editor of Sruti when it was launched in 1983 and editor of *Matrix* for over a decade.



The Sruti team with Aruna Sairam.



Sukanya Sankar (right) with Sudha Rani Raghupathy. Chandra Sankar looks on.



Eminent personalities in the field of music and dance attended the launch. Seen in the front row (L to R): Sudha Rani Raghupathy, R Vedavalli, V P Dhananjayan, Shanta Dhananjayan, Dr Padma Subramaniam.

Trade shows & Exhibitions



New Delhi 24-26 October 2006



Constituents of Sanmar Engineering Corporation and Sanmar Speciality Chemicals Ltd made their presence felt at exhibitions and trade shows held in India and abroad in the months of October and November 2006. Sanmar Engineering participated in Power-Gen 2006, an annual event held at the Pragati Maidan Exhibition Centre, New Delhi, in October 2006. The exhibition was focussed on the power sector. Our Foundries representative attended the Valve World 2006, held at Maastricht, the Netherlands in November. Valve World 2006 was the largest ever exhibition for companies across the world to exhibit their products in the valves and related businesses. A special forum on counterfeit valve production and copyright infringement was organised as part of the three day event with the clear goal to stop counterfeit valve products. At the CPhI Worldwide 2006 (Convention on Pharmaceutical Ingredients and Intermediates) held at Paris-Nord, Villipente, France in October 2006, the team from Speciality Chemicals had an opportunity to network with leading industry practitioners (over 1750 manufacturers of APIs, intermediates, excipients and other fine and speciality chemicals) from across the globe.

The participation and interaction in these exhibitions and trade shows have enhanced business value to the group by way of establishing new customer contacts. It was a great opportunity to meet several manufacturers, service providers and traders under one roof.



Paris 3-5 October 2006

Maastricht 7-9 November 2006

Business Challenges – HR Initiatives

K S Venkiteswaran at the seminar

A seminar on ‘Business Challenges – HR Initiatives’ was organised by the Employers’ Federation of South India on 8 November 2006 at Hotel Chola in Chennai. More than 50 HR line and staff functionaries in the middle and senior management level were present. N Venkataramani, Managing Director, India Pistons and President of the Employers’ Federation of India inaugurated the seminar.

The seminar dwelt upon:

- Growth of the Indian economy
- Issues to be addressed to face a high growth business scenario
- Capability building in the light of a huge shortage of skilled, employable manpower
- Promoting commitment
- Building a performance-oriented culture

Chairing the seminar, hosting and summing up the proceedings was

K S Venkiteswaran, Executive Director-IR, The Sanmar Group. Speakers at the seminar were- B Ramachandran, Director-HR, Murugappa Group, G D Sharma, Vice President-HR, L & T (ECC) and G S Ramesh, Senior Vice President-HR, Hyundai Motors Ltd.



From L to R: G S Ramesh, Senior Vice President-HR, Hyundai Motors Ltd., G D Sharma, Vice President-HR, L & T (ECC), B Ramachandran, Director-HR, Murugappa Group, and Shaji Varghese, Senior Vice President (HR), A V Thomas & Company Ltd.

State Safety Award for Chlorochemicals Division

The Chlorochemicals Division (Plant III) of Chemplast Sanmar Limited bagged the second prize for the year 2003 in Group A - ‘Industries employing manhours above 10 lakhs in a year’ under Scheme 1, for the ‘Highest reduction in weighted accident frequency rate as compared to the previous year’. The freons plant at Mettur has so far won six safety awards, reflecting its commitment to conform to safety policy standards by seeking employee participation at all levels. State Minister for Labour T M Anbarasan gave away the award on 11 September 2006.



R to L: T M Anbarasan, Honorable Minister for Labour, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, K A Mohammed Aziz, Chief Inspector of Factories, TN, Dr R Harihara Puthran, AGM - Operations, Chlorochemicals Divn., and R Chandrasekaran, AGM - Safety and Environment, Chemplast Sanmar Limited.

Dawn breaks out at Viralimalai



Sanmar's facilities are set in pristine surroundings and the beauty of the regions are a visual treat. Matrix captures the play of light and the vast expanse of greenery, in and around the Sanmar premises; the beautiful garden county of Karaikal and Mettur, the annual visits of the migratory birds





to Vedaranyam - this issue onwards, Nature around Sanmar is shown captured on camera in all her finery. Featured here is Viralimalai in the light of dawn as the trees and foliage wake up to a day of sunshine. Viralimalai is complete with mini woods, sunny skies and a helipad to boot.



Photographs: S Chakrapani

Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar

Best Interactor Award

Anirudh Balan, a Class XII student of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar, won the 'Best Interactor' from among 3000 interactors. Anirudh qualified for the award ranking first from among 87 participants from over 50 city schools in a competition jointly conducted by the Rotary Club of Madras and the Government of South Australia, on 27 October 2006. The prize is an all-expenses paid trip to South Australia.

L to r: J B Kamdar, District Governor (R.I. District 3230), Mike Rann, Premier of South Australia, Anirudh Balan and George B Cherian, Director, Youth Services, Rotary Club of Madras.



Best Debating Team

The Annual ABS (Association of British Scholars) Debate was organised on 26 August 2006 at the British Council, Chennai, by Tata Steel Ltd., for students of Classes X to XII. The topic for debate - "Developing economies should maintain a low profile on environmental issues."

Anirudh Balan of Class XII secured first place, speaking against the motion. N Kaushik of Class XII came second, speaking for the motion.

They were also declared the best debating team. The winner Anirudh Balan

participated in the National Debate on 4 November 2006 at Jamshedpur, and was a finalist.



Principal Subala Ananthanarayanan and the students Anirudh Balan and N Kaushik receiving the Trophy from Chris Gibson, Director of British Council for south India.



Raffles Scholarship for student

S Sai Visesh, a student of Class IX of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar, has qualified for the Raffles Scholarship, a four-year scholarship awarded by the Raffles Institution, Singapore. This scholarship would enable Sai Visesh to complete his O levels and A levels at the prestigious Raffles Institution of Singapore. He qualified from among 105 other students from the Chennai region.



The British Council International School Award (ISA) is an accreditation scheme in recognition for design and implementation of international activities within the school curriculum. Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School is among 22 schools across India to receive the ISA. Vicki Treadall, British Deputy High Commissioner in Mumbai, presented the award on the 11 October 2006 at the British Council, Mumbai.



MNC's 17th Anniversary Celebrations

It was D-Day for the little Krishnas, their teachers and parents at the Madhuram Narayanan Centre (MNC) on 12 December 2006 when the centre's little ones presented a dance program, "Joyful Times with Krishna" at the seventeenth anniversary celebrations. It indeed were joyful times for both the audience and the little presenters. The patron of the centre K S Narayanan was present at the event.

The chief guest, Dr V Shanta, Chairman, Cancer Institute, Adyar, in her address, expressed her pleasure to be part of the event and cited MNC's activities as an example of commitment and dedication. She said that K S Narayanan has been especially



kind to the Cancer Institute and N Sankar and N Kumar continue with their support towards the institute. She said it was a daunting problem that the MNC faced in handling varied cases of autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, mental retardation and physical impairment. Children make a tremendous emotional impact especially when they are suffering. She herself had experienced it; she sought international

collaboration in the management of paediatric oncology and experienced that awareness, early diagnosis and intervention had resulted in a high percentage of cures. The case of exceptional children, she felt was similar, as early detection, intervention and parental commitment were essential to help the children get into the mainstream. A high percentage of cures is possible only when there is public awareness of the condition. "I can understand how much effort has gone into building this excellent centre," she said. "Service to the needy whether it is socio-economic, suffering - physical or mental, service without expecting any return, is the most ennobling and it certainly is a pleasure to be part of such a program." She wished the institution, all success in its efforts to return all those who seek their help to normal or near-normal lives. She commended MNC's work and highlighted the importance of prevention, research and cure and awareness in managing children with special needs.

Suresh Rao, President of MNC said that the centre was dealing with exceptional children in an exceptional way. Over the past seventeen years, there has been a change in the attitude towards exceptional children from one of sympathy to that of empathy. " Things would not be so well but for the unstinting support of The Sanmar Group. Corporate Social Responsibility, a much talked about phrase now, has been practised by them nearly



*Dr V Shanta,
Chairman, Cancer Institute, Adyar.*

"I can understand how much effort has gone into building this excellent centre."

two decades since this institution was started. N Kumar who has been a silent worker, is mainly responsible for promoting research in this area and it has been a purely non-profit venture." He commended the work of



AVM Krishnaswamy who has managed the institution with enthusiasm for nearly two decades. He hoped that the institution would have its own premises soon, to be inaugurated by K S Narayanan.





Photographs: Mallika, Ramkumar & Deepesh

Employees' Corner

Through the Eyes of Sanmarites - Sri Lanka



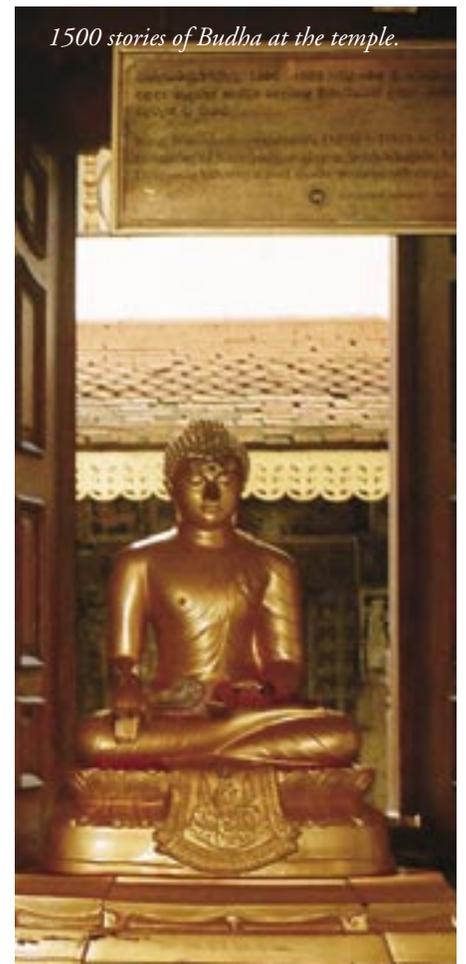
This tusker had stepped on a landmine in Jaffna - Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage.



Temple of the Tooth Relic.

Driving past villages around Kandy, it is evident that there is at least one school in each village. Used cars from Singapore are doing the rounds and are far cheaper here than Colombo. There are roadside shows of vintage cars where Bentleys, Buicks, Rolls Royces and an odd Beetle or Austin can be seen on display.

Sanmar treated the winners of the Brand Equity Contest to 5-day exotic holiday packages. The first prize was a holiday with spouse to Thailand. The third prize winners chilled out on the sands of Goa. The second prize winners went to Sri Lanka. Here is a glimpse of Sri Lanka, as seen by a Sanmarite.



1500 stories of Budha at the temple.



Kandy countryside.



Deepesh Jr at Kandy.

The Indian blue blood and rich merchants of yore apparently didn't have a clue of the joint venture or offshore model for business and trade. They simply applied the land-acquisition model for expansion. These Indian princes and earls took over villages and hamlets in Sri Lanka and made them their fiefdom. The Kandy lake and parts of Kandy were so developed, it seems.

Uphill route to the misty hills of Nuwara Eliya, have Australian pines that hold the soil on the mountain side and lines of avocado trees. The roads are interspersed with good stretches contracted out to Chinese and South Korean firms and the erstwhile Sri Lankan made ones that would keep churning the breakfast you had in the morning. The rain causes landslides that block the roads and the Chinese firms appear to be sitting on a lucrative deal that includes maintenance for 20 years. White tendrils of mountain falls and rivulets that cascade down the rocks relieve the curves and hairpin bends.



Nuwara Eliya – As English as a Gainsborough work of art.



Sri Lankan bride and groom.



Hanuman's vantage point.



A desolate reminder of Sita's grief



Divine footprint on the granite of time.

In and around the mountains of Nuwara Eliya, the chapters out of Sundara Kaandam in the Ramayana unfolds before you. The place where Hanuman stopped to look around to locate Sita now has a temple. Ashoka Vaatika, where Sita was kept in detention is still, unending mounds of dense forest that stretch as far as eyes can see. The Sita Eliya temple is a bleak testimony of the sadness of that chapter of Sita's life. The Botanical Gardens at the foot of one of the hills of Ashoka Vaatika and the 'Humbugs Restaurant' a shanty eating place draws you back from your time-travelling reverie.

Way back to Colombo: The gushing natural water falls, the sounds of the forests echoing all around and the freshness of the air makes you float on the wisps of cloud visible everywhere until you spot the tin roof tenements of the plantation workers on the mountain side. One wonders, was colonialism short-changed for capitalism? But then, even the mountain villages boast of schools with good attendance.



Tea estates at Nuwara Eliya.



The Kuloni river meanders parallel to the road, and the drive is a tango in step with the twists and turns of the agile river. Here is a little village made famous by the shooting of the Hollywood film, 'The Bridge over River Kwai'. If you plan well you can go white water rafting, which is a four-hour trip downstream. There are beautiful little lodges with a good view thrown in if you opt to stay and brave a tumble down the river. Mind the leeches, though.



Ramkumar's family.



Deepesh Jr on the 'Bridge over River Kuloni' aka Kwai.

Colombo brings you back to reality. The Sri Lankan soldiers speaking into their radios, is a visible testimony to the Jekyll and Hyde existence of this strife-ridden island. There was an uneasy calm in the air as the citizens awaited the outcome of the Geneva talks. At the shops and malls, with the slightest clue to your ethnicity, the frustrated outpourings begin. Yet, the place is so awesome that for once, an argumentative Indian couple like us trailed off mid-sentence while the beauty of Sri Lanka had the last word!

Madras to Manchester to Maastricht

S Chakrapani,

Executive Vice President, Sanmar Foundries Limited

When you hear the name Maastricht, you immediately think of Amsterdam, of tulips in bloom and all the exotic locales the dream merchants showcase in the movies. And so it was with me, the dream of experiencing Holland in all her glory, very close to realisation, yet slipping away.

The Schipol airport has somehow been a transit point for me. During the period November '01 to August '04, I transited almost twice every three months en route to Tyco, Houston, for the quarterly reviews. Each time the aircraft touched down at the runway at Schipol, I would think to myself that at least this time I would take a break to look up Amsterdam. It has always been wishful thinking. My first visit to Amsterdam in 1993 vetted my curiosity of Amsterdam. En route to Boston, I took time-off and cruised on the Amstel river and strolled around the market close to Amstel station. You see, I didn't want to get lost in transit or in translation!

The opportunity to visit Holland popped up in 2006, when I was asked to visit the Valve World 2006 exhibition at Maastricht town scheduled between 7 and 9 November '06. Clubbed to this was a customer meeting in England and there also was a compelling need to extend the trip up to USA. The prospect of realising my dream still remained one

– a dream. So it was business as usual and I had to settle for a 'short sight' seeing trip when I went from Madras to Manchester to Maastricht and returned to Amsterdam! A very myopic sight seeing indeed!

The trip from Manchester to Maastricht was very long; I left early morning of 7 November from Manchester airport, transited Heathrow and Schipol, to reach Maastricht late in the evening by 7 PM.

When I arrived at Maastricht town, the good news was that the hotel was bang opposite Maastricht station. I was pretty excited by the prospect of returning to Amsterdam by train. Rail routes are better than flight routes in Holland and I began dreaming of that train journey that would unveil the mysteries of Holland to me.

But prior to that were some basic instincts like hunger pangs that had to be attended to. Sitting all by myself at the restaurant, I glanced at the inedible dishes listed on the menu. All I wanted was a plate full of vegetarian something. The waiter looked at me, listened patiently to my 'out of the world' request for a vegetarian meal and with a promise, dashed off to conspire with the chef to present me with the rare fare. The promise also included a lead-time of fifteen minutes. In what seemed to be a summation of the time adjustment from Madras to Manchester to Maastricht, I was presented with a plate of edible vegan fare. There was a huge dinner plate with a teeny sized bell pepper (capsicum) right in the middle and stuffed with potato, cheese and tomato. I propped up this meagre fare with lots of bread, croissant and tomato soup. I thanked



the chef and went up to my room on the fourth floor.

I spotted many people walking out of Maastricht station carrying food packets. I came down, walked across and found a mini super market inside the station. I picked up some croissant, bread, cheese spread, some cookies, some bananas and a few bottles of mineral water. It ensured that I had enough stock of food in the room and would not stay hungry, should I feel so in the night.

It was cold outside, zero degrees Fahrenheit. I was well prepared with jacket, overcoat, hand gloves, etc., and walked through a part of Maastricht town for about half an hour and returned to the hotel. I could get a feel of the place, as I spent three nights in that town. The days were dedicated to Valve World 2006, the evenings and late nights to the streets of Maastricht.

Returning to Amsterdam, I stopped over at Zoetermeer on the night of 10 November. I looked around some more market places at Amsterdam during the day, still cherishing my dream. And so it was as usual, yet another myopic sight of Amsterdam. Tulips bloom for the Rekhas and the Madhuri Dixits, not for a visiting Chakrapani. So I continue to dream of an experience of Amsterdam! I am an optimist. Dreams are forever. Some day they come true!



An Engineer's Dream

R Ramesh Babu, Xomox Sanmar Limited

Kids have dreams. Kids of my era generally wanted to become engine drivers or policemen when they grew up. I was one of those normal kids who wanted to be an engine driver. Suddenly one day when I was in eighth grade, a bizarre thought occurred to me. Why not become a writer? I will make the rest of the world read what I write and not the other way round. This was my way of taking revenge on the world. But as it happens in all our lives, there comes a time when you have to bury all your dreams and move on by doing what your cousin's third son was doing successfully. So needless to say, I became an engineer.



The dreams were long gone and I was generally leading a peaceful life until one day when I was asked to attend a programme called LARAS. A warning to fellow engineers who are still leading peaceful lives - Beware! This is a leadership development programme where managers are coached to become successful leaders. The facilitator, a highly erudite man, asked us on various occasions during the programme to (1) read books (2) follow your dreams.

The kid in me woke up. 'It's time to follow your dreams. How long will you keep reading?' So I set a goal and announced to everybody that I would start writing. Incidentally, goal setting and sharing are a part of LARAS. We engineers do not take anything lightly. Any goal achievement should be preceded by a PDCA (Plan, Do, Check,

Act) cycle. (By now I'm sure you're aware that as engineers, we do the plan part well and leave the rest to others.)

I took my pad and started writing down my plan. 'Write down your plans to make it happen.' I had also set aside

two weekends towards realising my dreams.

- Go to Google
- Visit Landmark (a prominent bookstore at Chennai)
- Buy a book 'Writing Tips for Dummies'
- Enroll in a course – W (RIGHT) – Booker's Prize or Money Back

Two weeks passed and I took my pad to check plans vs actual.

- Go to Google. Ran up a huge bill in search of free downloads
- Visit Landmark. The guy selling sweet corn close to the bookstore became a close friend of mine
- Buy a book - Writing Tips for Dummies – I am no dummy – So I got hold of a copy of Eats, Shoots and Leaves and also a copy of How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild and Got a Life by Kavya Viswanathan. (Only later did I realise how right I was when I said it was a copy).
- Enroll in a course – W (RIGHT) – Booker's Prize or money back – I am not so ambitious. I just want to realize my dream.

Having had little success with the PDCA cycle, I decided on a different route. I should think like a manager.

Suddenly a thought flashed.

"Target Audience". Before that, what am I going to write? Put pen to paper again.

- A book on management for the hardly working engineers
- Weekly snapshot. ERP for the not so young and the not so old.
- A research paper for HBR on Indian month-end efficiencies.

A look at the list showed that I had gone a little overboard with my manager's thinking hat. I should do a reality check. Better sense prevailed and I decided to test my writing skills by writing an article for Matrix.

Two weeks passed and I got a feeling that I was missing out on something very important. All I had were copies of two books, one a book on how and where to use punctuations and the other a copy (plain and simple). Common sense prevailed at last and I nailed the missing element – I needed a theme.

Another flash: Why not share the experience of realising my dream with my colleagues? Like the "Making Of" documentaries on successful films!

I got down to work and now you know how this article got written. If it ever goes to print, I will have taken a small step towards realising my dream and I will have achieved a goal I had set for myself.

Who knows? Down the road I might be reminiscing about my first article in an in-house magazine to a reporter while appearing for a book reading session.

I know what's coming - "Engineers will never change."

Adieu to Two Veterans

The candles have blown out well before the stamp of these two stalwarts on Chemplast could ever fade away; the roots of a host of things at Chemplast, lead to two names, Marv Larson and S Ramaswamy. Be it the teething troubles of getting a plant on stream or the business battles of falling prices and the pitfalls due to a devalued rupee, these two veterans stood rock solid by Chemplast for more than a decade in its hour of need.



S Ramaswamy
GM, Chemplast
1916–2006



Marvin W Larson
Director, BF Goodrich
1919–2006

S Ramaswamy – A pioneer who set Chemplast a sail

The Chemplast reins in the hands of Ramaswamy to the foray into the land of Rameses, Chemplast's business canvas is quite panoramic. The story of Chemplast began in the able hands of S Ramaswamy, one of the founding fathers of Sanmar's PVC business. Ramaswamy was wellknown in chemical industry circles; someone who was as comfortable in Mettur as he was in New York, a connoisseur of good music, his taste ranging from classical Indian to light music to Frank Sinatra. N Sankar and R Kalidas reminisce about 'Ramo', as Ramaswamy was affectionately addressed by Marv.

R Kalidas was an intern when he first met Ramaswamy. There was no scope for sitting on the bench. A clear agenda was presented to him and he also had to prepare weekly reports. Ramaswamy was a man of precision. "I learned from him that however high up the ladder one may climb, it is important to keep track of the finer details. I had the good fortune of being groomed by him. He was a demanding boss but a good teacher and a guide. I also learned about work-life balance from him". Ramaswamy drove the R & D efforts at Chemplast. "What we have today in chloromethanes and PVC were initiated by him. It was his idea to channelise the chlorine from the caustic soda plant away from the environment and into PVC manufacture. In the caustic soda plant, he initiated the change from diaphragm technology to mercury cell technology. Import substitution was also one of his initiatives. His eyes were set on changes, modernisation and innovation for which he believed R & D was very important. He commanded respect and was a man of few words. The words that he penned were in perfect English."

"He was extraordinarily good with English and drafted in a very persuasive

style," recalls N Sankar. "I learnt from him that it is not about the writer but the reader and what he makes of it that makes a good draft. In his memory, we have instituted the MMA Sanmar Award for Effective Business Communication. Ramaswamy was the only boss that Sankar ever had. "He was a true professional manager and he inculcated a lot of professional management qualities in me, which stood me in good stead. He was a great leader who delegated a lot but took responsibility. I couldn't have had a better mentor. Ramaswamy laid the foundation for what the company follows today in terms of people, quality, systems, reputation and ethics."

Ramaswamy brought in the best of talent and put together a top-notch team for Chemplast. K S Narayanan recalls, "Chemplast ran into a lot of rough weather in the early years. The devaluation of the rupee and fall in prices for products sent us into a tailspin. Ramaswamy kept things going during tough times, motivating and keeping the morale up and holding fort. He was an extremely honest person and a true

professional. During the acquisition of Mettur Chemicals and the joint venture with BF Goodrich, he managed as a true professional leader, steering clear of management politics. He was only interested in the interest of the company."

Sanmar bows down to this great architect of Chemplast, to his leadership and technological acumen, and to a great professional who was way ahead of his times.



*Standing (L to R): R Kalidas, K N Vasanth and P R Mahalingam.
Sitting: S Ramaswamy, General Manager (Chemplast).*

A Marvel of a Man - Marv Larson

The Larson Desk Diary arrived at the Sanmar headquarters as it did every year. But this year, the sender delegated the task and slipped away, ever so quietly. In his passing away, Marv stirred up a wave of memories amongst the people at Sanmar he had been closely associated with.

To K S Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus, Marv was a very close friend. “The friendship was instantaneous, from the moment we met. He was one of the pillars that helped to put Chemplast on its feet. He stood by me during all those years of difficulties I faced in getting Chemplast on stream. I cannot forget the time when there was a breakdown at Mettur. It was well after midnight and he was there with me at the plant helping to get things fixed. I also remember my numerous visits to Cleveland when he and Anne Marie Larson extended their hospitality to me. Marv was the local guardian when my boys went for

higher studies in the US. We’ve had some very good moments together and I am very saddened that I’ve lost such a great friend.”

A young Kalidas met Larson on the day of his interview way back in the late sixties. Marv called him the Jerry Colona of Mettur, referring to the jazz trombonist and comedian of the 1940s. From Japan to India to Iran to Venezuela, every plant set up by B F Goodrich had the Marv Larson stamp on it. Reminiscing on Marv, Kalidas said, “He was a committed PVC man and was instrumental in showing to the world the versatility of PVC compounds. Between the 1970s and 80s Goodrich generated and pushed in the market an unimaginable array of compounds and Marv had a key role to play in this. A man with excellent knowledge of the chemical engineering industry, vinyls particularly, given to a good sense of balance and a man of fine tastes—that was Marv.”

Larson was in charge of the Goodrich plants in the US, Norway, Mexico, Venezuela and the Middle East. He was like a one-man-army coordinating the entire gamut of operations, from marketing, sales, finance and technical in the Indian venture. He was versatile. Sankar, Chairman of The Sanmar Group, very young at that time, remembers him as someone who was very supportive of Goodrich’s JV with Chemplast. “He would be totally involved, be there at the plant with us and ‘feel’ with us. His major strength was that he got into details and would follow up to ensure completion. Unlike most Americans of his time, he was open and comfortable with different cultures.” N Sankar recalled Marv’s flashes of humour. A multi-lingual person, he treated Sankar and his wife Chandra to a Japanese song, ‘Moon over ruined castle’. The wailing tenor made interesting listening, especially at a pre-wedding party. While getting a quotation for distillation columns from John Hoover of L & T, Marv remarked, “John would quote a number and if I didn’t blink he would say ‘each!’” An ardent American football fan, he found English cricket a bit too stiff for his taste. Marv recounted his experience at Lord’s in England during the British Geon days; in the Long Room at Lord’s he spent an hour or two alongside the black-suited, cigar sporting ‘propah’ English. “I watched the game for a while and then said, ‘How do you tell them apart without numbers on their backs?’” He never got invited to Lord’s again! “He was open, friendly, lively, warm and permissible; the solidarity he expressed in the Goodrich-Chemplast partnership is something he will always be remembered by,” recalls Sankar.

The choice of a language for his epitaph is the most difficult for he was at home with so many languages—Japanese, Spanish, Latin and more. Marv Larson was undoubtedly, a marvel of a man. Chemplast salutes this versatile veteran.



From left to right (First row): T S Narayanaswami, H B Warner, Mrs Warner, M W Larson, Mrs Larson, Mrs T S Narayanaswami and Mrs K S Narayanan.

(Second row): N Sankar, K S Narayanan, S Ramaswamy, Mrs Campbell, and Dan C Campbell, Project Manager, Chemplast.

Sanmar Cricketers on Song

Sanmar players in Indian team

Dinesh Kartik, who joined Sanmar at the start of the current season, was selected to tour the West Indies and South Africa with the Indian team. He made an impressive contribution to India's victory in the inaugural Twenty 20 match against South Africa.

Dinesh Mongia toured South Africa with the Indian ODI squad. He made useful contributions, making use of his limited opportunities.

Badrinath and Vijay shine for Tamil Nadu

S Badrinath, the Sanmar captain, has been knocking ever so loudly at the doors of Test selection, with his splendid showing in domestic cricket. Besides being Tamil Nadu's captain and its most consistent batsman, he also performed very well for India 'A' in international cricket. His role in the recent Challenger Trophy was also significant. He has been distinctly unlucky not to be selected for India so far.

M Vijay, our opening batsman, has made a brilliant debut in Ranji Trophy cricket, scoring a half century on his first appearance and 179 in his second match.

Dinesh Kartik's feat

India wicket keeper batsman Dinesh Kartik performed an unusual feat when he cracked an unbeaten 403 in Jolly Rovers's 600 for 1 declared, the highest score in the league, against Alwarpet CC in a first division league match.

The Sanmar cricket teams and their talented bunch of cricketers continued to do well this season, continuing from where they left off last season.

Moin-ud-Dowla Gold Cup

Chemplast, last year's winner of the Moin-ud-Dowla Gold Cup hosted by the Hyderabad cricket Association, was well on course to a repeat performance, when rain forced the abandonment of the final. Chemplast had to be content with sharing the trophy with Hyderabad. R Sathish (178 runs) and R Ramkumar (148) were the outstanding batsmen and Sathish claimed 18 wickets.



KSCA all India invitation tournament

Chemplast won the championship by a big margin when it beat IOC XI by nine wickets in the final. Medium pacers Huzefa Patel (14 wickets), Tinu Yohannan (12), and J P Yadav (10) and batsmen Vasanth Saravanan (418 runs), Dinesh Mongia (181) and Sujith Somasunder (149) were the outstanding performers for Chemplast in the tournament. The scores: IOC 302 in 86 overs and 155 for 6 in 40 overs (C Pujara 64) lost to Chemplast 425 for 7 in 90 overs and 35 for 1 in 4.3 overs.



IOB-YSCA trophy

Chemplast Sanmar 'B', led by Syed Mohamed, won the 37th all India IOB-YSCA cricket trophy by swamping Kochi Refineries in the final. Sanmar players



won all the major prizes: M Vijay (best batsman), R Ramkumar (best all rounder), R Sathish (player of the tournament and player of the final).

Legends from the South:

Rukmini Devi Arundale

Rukmini Devi (1904-1986) was a bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer, inventor of the dance drama form to depict Indian epics, and a pioneering institution builder, whose creation, Kalakshetra, is now an important international centre of arts, attracting scholars from all over the world. A champion of the forgotten or neglected arts of India, Rukmini Devi was one of the persons mainly responsible for the revival of the classical south Indian dance, earlier known as sadir.

Rukmini Devi was born on 29 February 1904 in an upper class family in Madurai. Her father Neelakanta Sastri was an engineer with the Public Works Department, and mother Seshammal was a home maker. Deeply interested in Indian philosophy and culture, Neelakanta Sastri was a scholar who came under the influence of theosophy and moved after retirement to Chennai to the Theosophical Society and its leader Annie Besant. Seshammal was deeply interested in music.

One of eight children, Rukmini Devi displayed an interest in the fine arts from early childhood. Young Rukmini roamed freely among theosophists who came to attend the annual international convention there, and take part in tableaux-like presentations. She studied Greek dancing and participated in plays and was extremely fond of south Indian classical music. Sastri encouraged her in all her activities.

Annie Besant, who then headed the Madras Theosophical Society, took Rukmini under her wing. Around 1917, British educationist George

Sydney Arundale came to Madras at the invitation of Annie Besant to help with her educational programmes and other activities.

In 1920, when Rukmini Devi was only sixteen, she married Arundale, more than 20 years her senior. After their wedding, the couple left on a tour of Europe to further the cause of theosophy. Annie Besant made Rukmini Devi the President of the All India Federation of Young Theosophists in 1923 and in 1925, the President of the World Federation of Young Theosophists.

Travelling with Arundale, Rukmini Devi was exposed to the arts—theatre, music, painting, sculpture, opera and ballet. With her innate sense of beauty and aesthetics, she responded to the various art forms. On a trip to Australia, Rukmini Devi met and befriended the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova. Their friendship nurtured an interest in dance. She went on to learn ballet from one of Pavlova's associates, Cleo Nordi.

Pavlova persuaded Rukmini to study Indian classical dance. She had till then never even seen a performance of bharatanatyam. Captivated by the beauty of the dance form, Rukmini started learning dance privately from Mylapore Gowri Amma, a well-known devadasi of the period. She received full support from Arundale, her brothers, and her mother. Learning the dance further from the great master Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, she took the bold step of presenting it in public during the Diamond Jubilee Convention of the Theosophical Society in December 1935.

Rukmini Devi established a dance



Photograph courtesy: *Sruti magazine*

academy, Kalakshetra, in 1936 and invited the greatest musicians and dance gurus to teach there. Her first student was her brother Sriram's daughter Radha Burnier, now the president of the Theosophical Society. Kalakshetra with thatched roof studios, an atmosphere reminiscent of Tagore's Santiniketan, and classes conducted under trees in the open air, soon grew and young girls from middle class families began to learn bharatanatyam.

Inspired by traditional temple dance-dramas, she started choreographing her own dance-dramas, enlisting support from a galaxy of personalities in the world of Indian music that composed for the performances. Of the 25 dance-dramas she choreographed, the six-part series based on the Ramayana remains outstanding. She even built a special theatre for staging the dance-dramas with the available state-of-the-art facilities. She had excellent taste and a modern mind.

Rukmini Devi had a deep interest in indigenous crafts. With the help of a grant from the Ministry of Labour and Industry in 1937, she established a weaving centre, setting the age-old looms humming, reviving several old designs and colours, and a variety of motifs. Kalakshetra saris are works of beauty and to possess one came to be regarded as a hallmark of high taste. With support from her contemporary, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, she helped revive vegetable dyes and the art of Kalamkari. The Crafts Education and Research Centre at Kalakshetra is an important legacy she has left behind.

Rukmini also made a lasting contribution to children's education. Arundale and she invited the world famous Maria Montessori to the Besant Theosophical High School to train teachers in the Montessori system and run the Besant Montessori school.

Fond of animals from her childhood, she used her position as a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament to plead for the cause of animal welfare. She became the first chairperson of the Animal Welfare Board, doing remarkable work at the international level. Closely connected with the cause of animal welfare was her involvement with the vegetarian movement and the World Vegetarian Congress.

Numerous honours and awards came her way: the Padmabhushan, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the Prani Mitra award, the Desikottama award from Santiniketan, the prestigious Kalidas Samman and many more. Till the end, she was a theosophist and believed in the ancient wisdom of Indian culture.

Rukmini Devi will be remembered as a

renaissance woman, who enriched the nation with the highest artistic traditions and values of life.

Kalakshetra was declared an institution of national importance by an Act of Parliament—the Kalakshetra Foundation Act 1993. It is today recognised as one of the best academies of Indian dance and music and 'a way of life'. The Rukmini Devi College of Fine Arts, The Besant Theosophical High School, The Besant Arundale Higher Secondary School, The Besant Cultural Centre Hostel, the open-air theatre, the weaving centre and Kalamkari unit of the Crafts Education and Research Centre and the Rukmini Devi Museum housing her art collection, mirror the multiple activities of Kalakshetra. They stand as a tribute to this multifaceted woman.

