



MATRIX

April 2008

A PUBLICATION OF **THE SANMAR GROUP**

Sanmar's Transcontinental Strategies

The Sanmar Group

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The Sanmar Group

Sanmar's Transcontinental Strategies



L to R: Arjun Ananth, Jeri Raman, B Natraj, N Sankar (The Sanmar Group), James Luikart, Nick Daraviras (Jefferies Capital) and P Natarajan (The Sanmar Group).

The Sanmar Group, driving a transcontinental strategy, established yet another manufacturing facility overseas, through the acquisition of Matrix Metals, a foundry business in the US. With this acquisition, the Group has established manufacturing locations in four continents – Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. Sanmar's foundry operations in the US with the acquisition of Matrix Metals strategically positions the Group's Metals business at a global level leveraging economies of scope and scale.

The Sanmar Group successfully completed the acquisition of Matrix Metals LLC, a large steel foundry group in North America, with a turnover exceeding USD 150 million for the year 2007. The foundry provides end-to-end services to its international customers through a well integrated operation including machining services. Matrix Metals LLC has three steel foundries – Keokuk Steel Castings, Iowa, Acerlan Foundry, Mexico and Richmond Foundry, Texas, complemented by Nepco International, Houston, the trading arm with sourcing relationships across the world. The manufacturing units have a capacity of about 10,000 tons per annum (tpa) each.

Acquires Matrix Metals LLC, USA



Richmond Foundry Company, Texas



Keokuk Steel Castings Company, Iowa



Acerlan Foundry, Mexico



Some products

The acquisition of Matrix Metals LLC provides a strategic advantage to Sanmar's foundry business. The state-of-the-art steel foundry at Viralmalai near Trichy is being expanded from 10,000 tpa to 30,000 tpa. The complementing capabilities of Sanmar Foundries and Matrix Metals' put together will take the Sanmar foundry business to the top 10 in the world.

Sanmar's relationship with Matrix Metals through its unit NEPCO exists for several years with NEPCO placing products from Viralmalai in the US market. The acquisition along with the expanded domestic capacities will strengthen Sanmar's competitive position amidst its US customers with the advantages of cost efficiency and market proximity and larger market share.

Matrix Metals focuses on speciality steel castings for flow control, locomotive/transit cars, military, construction equipment, track and oilfield equipment. The company enjoys longstanding relationships with its customers like Caterpillar, Fisher Controls, Emerson, Cooper Cameron, Hitachi, Komatsu, Flowserve, General Electric, E M D, Joy Global, Access Oil, etc.

The fully automated domestic steel foundry expansion at an investment of USD 30 million caters to an almost identical market currently being served by Matrix Metals. The Group will leverage the synergy of Matrix Metals and Sanmar Foundries to tap newer segments providing end-to-end foundry

solutions on a global scale combining quality and cost efficiencies.

Sanmar will retain the present management and operational set up of Matrix Metals. The present CEO Roger Cortney will continue as CEO with B Natraj as the Sanmar representative in the US. Matrix Metals operates with an employee strength of 1,300 people.

In 2007, The Sanmar Group acquired an iron foundry, Eisenwerk Erla in Germany. With capacities of 60,000 tpa of steel castings and 50,000 tpa of premium iron alloy castings from world class iron and steel foundries across three continents, The Sanmar Group's Metals business is positioned among the top in the world.

MATRIX METALS to MATRIX

CEO, Roger Courtney's interview with Matrix

Roger Courtney & Matrix Metals

I joined Matrix Metals in 1978 as a supervisor at Keokuk. At that time it was the Cast Metals Corporation. I was 28 when I started. From supervisor to CEO, my entire 30-year career is with Matrix Metals. Sanmar is the fourth owner I'm working for.

On why this acquisition by Sanmar is different from the earlier ones

I'm most excited about this acquisition versus the others. This time around we have a very rosy outlook for the future and the opportunities are very great. This acquisition will position Matrix Metals as a global organisation. Now we are looking at new opportunities, new markets and new synergies.

The synergies

Our organisation has been around for a longer time in the foundry business than the Sanmar Foundries. Sanmar has a greater international presence, with much more contacts and sources for opportunities than we have had. We had all the sales we could handle and didn't have the capacities for more. But now with the expansion and inclusion of Sanmar Foundries, we have enormous capacity to offer. The sharing of expertise, the expansion of markets and customer base will be an exciting challenge.

Matrix Metals with the acquisition, becomes a member of a larger organisation and is now positioned as a global player. We will now be able to uncover opportunities we hadn't recognised in the past.

The challenges

With the shifting of scales, comes the challenges and changes. We will reorient our sales strategy to provide all our foundries with the right work mix.

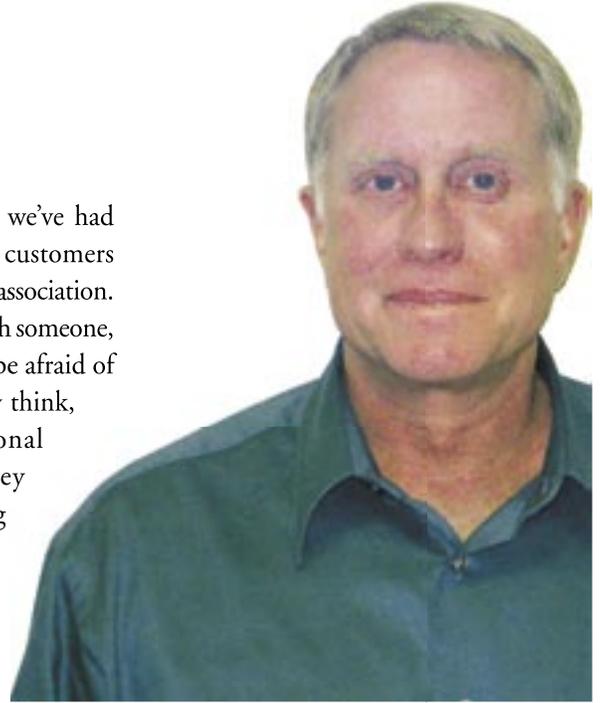
From a customer perspective, we've had very good relationships with customers many dating back to 30 years of association. When you are already happy with someone, the only thing that you could be afraid of is change. Our customers may think, here is this huge international company, now what are they going to change? How is it going to affect us? These issues have to be dealt with.

From the people angle, it's going to be a challenge to bring everyone on to one boat. As is common in all mergers and acquisitions, people always fear - will I have more work, less work or no work at all? For some, it would be just another change. Managing the new strategy, will evolve as we move forward.

As for me, I realise I am part of a larger organisation and I am answerable to it. I had a large group of people reporting to me through each change of ownership and I have supported each new ownership in the past. I will do the same now. We will follow the direction that is set for us.

Cultural issues

In any culture people like to be treated



fairly, openly and honestly. I believe in being open and honest with the people that work for me and to the people I work for. I expect to be treated the same way.

In my past associations with Sanmar, I've had some amount of contacts with the people here. I thought very highly of them and found our goals to be similar.

My staff and I look forward to the challenges and the new relationship that will help us move into the future. I believe the acquisition of Matrix Metals by Sanmar will benefit our employees and our customers in the years ahead.



The sales team at the sales conference.

People at the helm at Matrix Metals



Shrirang Kulkarni



Alfred Kinnard



Michael Taylor



Larry Key

Alfred Kinnard, President, NEPCO speaks to Matrix

NEPCO and its role in the foundry

NEPCO is the trading and outsourcing arm of Matrix Metals LLC. Matrix Metals has long term relationships with its customers. But with increasing overseas competition, our customers said, 'yeah, we love you but cost competitiveness has to be considered.' Then we decided to source offshore and retain our businesses. This was the beginning of our relationship with Sanmar.

NEPCO sources foundry services from countries like China, UAE, and Mexico. When our foundries are unable to fulfill what our customers want, NEPCO outsources it. We also provide value addition to our customers through sub-assembly, machining, tooling, etc.

The rationale for the acquisition

Sanmar had made huge investments in the foundry in India and were

looking to expand in North America. Our relationship with Sanmar is a very close one, more than that of an outsourcing partner. I have had long term relationships with the people here like Raghavan and Murali. We understand Sanmar and we know what they do. Since we were the North American marketing arm anyway, it made a lot of sense for Sanmar to acquire Matrix Metals. The timing was also right and it made a lot of business sense for the two companies to merge. The fact that Matrix Metals is now owned by a company that understands the business is a big positive.

With the merging of Matrix Metals and Sanmar, we will be in a position to focus on what we do best and shift to Sanmar those that they are good at. We can complement each others' services by moving back and forth between foundries and reduce lead times.

Sourcing would continue. I would expect customers would always want the cheapest metals, whether it is from India or North America, China or Mexico. Our

primary area of focus would be to feed all the foundries with the appropriate tons. The trading focus would be China. We would also focus on machining, sub-assembly work and tooling services.

On maintaining product consistency

In lots of cases we've done the tooling in the USA and duplicated those parts in India at Sanmar. We've replicated best practices at both places for optimum quality.

Challenges

All our foundries have been relatively busy. We also do a lot of low volume work especially at Kiokuk. Customers will always want that sort of work. In the event of a slow down, we can adjust.

The positives

Sanmar knows the business. They have a long history of providing foundry services to their joint venture partners. As for me, I've known Sanmar people for a long time, since the 80s. Working with the same team sounds good to me.

Dr Felix Zandman is founder and chairman of Vishay Intertechnologies. Sanmar's relationship with Dr Zandman began with the joint venture between Vishay Transducers and Sanmar Engineering. The JV, Vishay Sanmar Ltd manufactures high precision load cells for the weighing industry and for process automation. Dr Zandman and his wife Ruta Zandman visited India and were at Sanmar on 24 January 08 to meet with the Chairman. Mr and Mrs Zandman attended the dinner hosted by N Sankar. Dr Zandman has had a tough life in the Pre-World War II years and the article below gives an account of his ascension to the world renowned scientist and businessman that he is today. Dr Zandman's biography was translated in Marathi by Sneha Mahajan and released in Pune. 'Vish' esh Parv', the Marathi version of 'Never the Last Journey,' recounts his story from Holocaust victim to head of Vishay Intertechnology. The book was released by Vice Chancellor of University of Pune, Dr Narendra Jadhav.

The Beautiful Mind of Felix Zandman

It is said that a cat has nine lives. For Dr Felix Zandman, founder-chairman of the Vishay group of companies, there have been just as many lives within one lifetime. Since his biological birth into an educated and well-to-do Polish household at Grodno, he was born again several times over - as a resident in a Polish ghetto, a refugee in hiding, a student in France, a professor at the university in Sorbonne, a technological wizard in experimental engineering, a consultant in the US, a jewel in the Wall Street crown and some yet to come.

The quiet demeanour of Dr Felix Zandman belies the nerves of steel within and the chutzpah with which he eluded the Gestapo's dragnet for the 'Juden'. He is not a role model you can emulate.

How can one emulate a man who fire-walked his way through life, unscathed, glowing brighter, rising higher with each challenging life-within-life? One can only marvel at God's special creation that was spared with life-lines time again which he turned round to his advantage with the sheer mastery of the mind.

Explaining the title of his biography, "Never the Last Journey", Dr Zandman said in an interview, "It means never give up, no matter what. In front of death, fight. Always

fight to win. No matter how bleak it is, there is always a way out. It is never the last journey. It also applies to good things. As it goes well it's not the last journey either, it could get even better." This is his walk of life he articulates.



To do nothing but think

Felix's hideout - Exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History Behring Centre.

The stress of oppression

Dr Zandman's childhood was replete with the political and ethnic strife that characterised Poland - anti-Semitic sentiments, the Zionists movements,



Young Felix with Uncle Sender

the Hobson's choice of the advent of the Nazis vs the Bolsheviks. The undercurrent of oppression was something the Zandman family like other Jews in Poland lived with. But they were as prepared for the Nazi outrage as we are today for a flood, a meteor or the burning up of the sun that would end the world. This was the grounding for the making of the mind of Dr Zandman, a mind that grew resilient in defiance to every sleight of hand and twist of fate.

While barely in his boyhood, the 'Boots' stomped over his life, ripping him from the cocoon of loved ones - Father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunts, sisters, all succumbed to the genocide by the Nazis. Boy Felix ran undercover, with the Boots at his heels. His family's employee, Jannova Puchalski, risked her's and her children's lives and sheltered him. His uncle Sender, 15-year-old Felix and a young couple lived in a grave-like trench about 5' wide and 4' deep dug and concealed under the bed in the bedroom.

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them" ...

Quote from the film, "A Beautiful Mind"

They survived the stomp of the Boots in this grave for 17 months! His uncle Sender an engineer, laid some ground rules in this closed-community life they led for those long months - total celibacy, fair division of the one meal they received each day, and the division of space; two people sat while two lay down; there was choice in the seating as well; one got to sit on a pail that was used as a makeshift toilet. They changed positions every two hours. Battling worms and body lice, Felix passed through an academy in the grave with 'private' tuitions from his uncle Sender. He learned algebra, trigonometry and physics, his mind-diamond gaining lustre in the putrid underground.

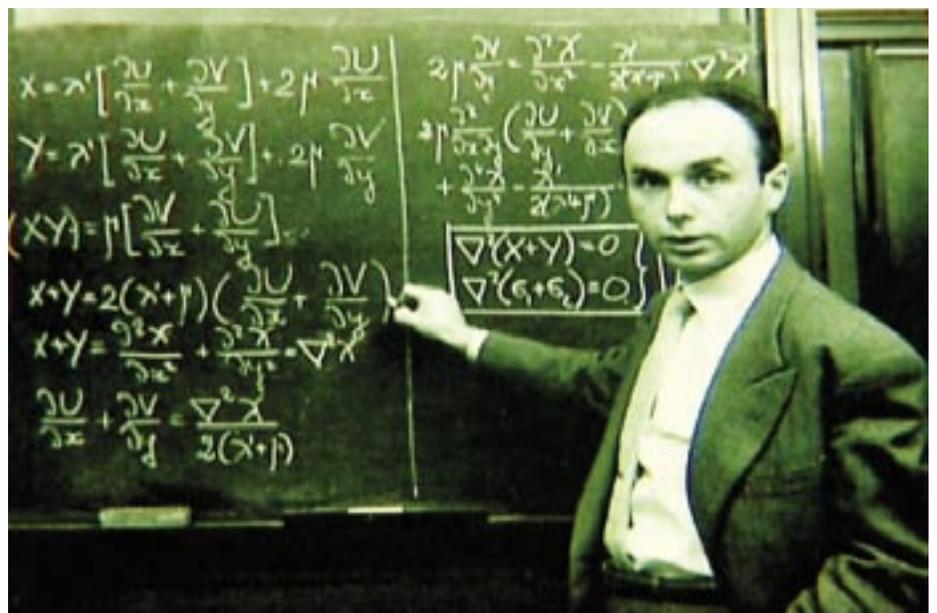
Post war, the stomp of the Boots receded but his mind continued to be haunted by their chase. The imagery of a fugitive stayed with him for a long time. This mental state and the deliverance from oppression can be potent; the rush of anger consumes and destroys. But Zandman managed this anger, never to get burnt. After the war, he and his uncle Sender moved to France where he enrolled in a university and went on to acquire a doctorate in Physics from the University

of Paris, Sorbonne. Professor Zandman threw his light around.

During the Holocaust years, to Zandman and his kin, there was no Schindler or his mysterious list to lay hope on. It was a simple quirk of fate that he lived while most of his family perished. Being spared from the misfortune of your loved ones can overcome you with a nausea of guilt. Zandman spent a good part of his life rationalising his after-thoughts, those unqualified guilt trips. Should he have run after his brave grandfather who willingly walked with his grandchildren, being with them in death? But blessed with a chance, shouldn't he illuminate the world with the light of his mind? There were weak strains that surfaced but he coated it with positive alchemies, never to bust under stress but transcend it.

The mind-works

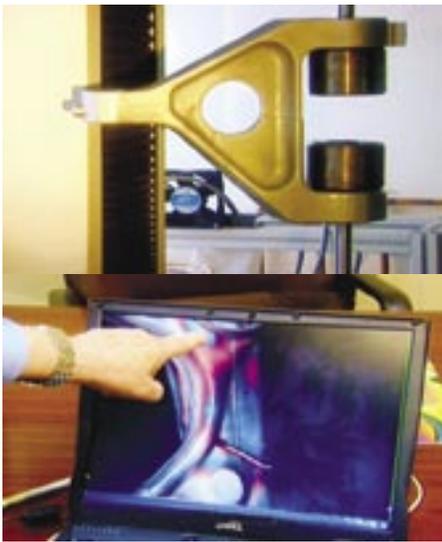
Stress, pressure and resistance seem to be the buzz words that buzzed in his mind all through. He analysed these and came up with theories that, to this day are a boon to the world of experimental mechanics. His engineering inventions made him the most sort-after scientist and special consultant



Elite Visitors at Sanmar

in aircraft and automobile engineering and other areas of applied physics.

In 1950, Dr Zandman invented the theory of experimental stress analysis that provided the technology to pinpoint exact weak spots on a surface when subjected to stress and force. The surface is coated with a special plastic material. When stress or force is applied to the coated area and viewed through an optical instrument with polarised filters there would be a display of colours that would indicate the weak areas on the surface. His invention of the photoelastic coating technology is patented under the trade name of PhotoStress®. He also invented the instrumentation to analyse and measure the stress levels. Dr Zandman's



PhotoStress® technology is used to improve structural design in aerospace, automotive, military, civil engineering, industrial, and medical applications.

Resistors are used to alter the voltage of current to suit the specific appliance. But the resistors used earlier were susceptible to temperature changes. In high precision applications such as avionics and instrumentation, this temperature change could be deadly. Dr Zandman

invented resistors that were neutralised to the effect of heat. Vishay entered the US market with a cheaper, resistor coup – a smaller resistor with a stronger resisting component and a 100 million \$ in sales.

Yet another of his brain-works is the special thermal sleeve on the cannon used in the Israeli Merkava tank. Due to the impact of heat the top of the shell got hotter than the bottom. This made the shell bend down and deviate from its target. At a distance of 1000 yards, the shell would deviate up to 3 feet. Dr Zandman devised a thermos-like sleeve that made the heat spread all around the shell and prevented the bending.

Simple solutions but he thought of it, first!

Patent patriarch at his pinnacle

Dr Zandman set up Vishay with his meagre savings of USD 4000 and financial assistance from the late Alfred P Slaner. Today Vishay Intertechnologies is a USD 2.5 billion enterprise with 70 plants in 17 countries. Some landmark moves that catapulted him to the pinnacle of entrepreneurship were, the setting up of the Dimona plant in Israel, the acquisition

of Dale Electronics, Draloric Electronic, and Sfernice, and the semiconductor businesses of Telefunken and Siliconix. Dr Zandman has published three textbooks and many scientific papers, and holds 39 patents in the United States and abroad. Most of all was the presence of his wife Ruta Zandman, who walked with him up the aisle of personal and professional success.

Dr Zandman received all possible recognitions for his contributions, including the Order of Merit for Research and Invention (France), the Distinguished Contribution Award from the American Society for Stress Analysis, the Franklin Institute Medal for Science, the Legion of Honor awarded by the President of France, the Musser Award for Excellence in Leadership recognised by the governor of The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In between, the pressures of his past life haunted him. With Ruta Zandman at his side, he was able to exorcise past demons, the imagery of the fugitive and the pain, anger and grief that went with it.

This is the story of a beautiful mind that managed anger and oppression so beautifully and nurtured the genius that is Dr Zandman.



Emerson's COO at Sanmar

Edward Monser, Chief Operating Officer of Emerson visited Sanmar Foundries at Viralmalai, Chennai. Emerson has long term relationships with India through its joint ventures.

Interesting to note were some of the common ground shared with the Monsers. Edward Monser graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology and the Chairman, N Sankar acquired his masters there. The two university alumni touched base at Chennai.

Monser and his wife, during their academic years had worked with Dr Felix Zandman's (Refer previous Article) inventions and theories in their research. Mrs Monser is a patent attorney. Both are familiar with the products. On 24 January 2008 Edward Monser and Dr Zandman met at Chennai at the Sanmar premises, during the dinner hosted by N Sankar.

L to R: P Natarajan, M N Radhakrishnan, Edward Monser.



Elite Visitors at Sanmar



M N Radhakrishnan taking Edward Monser around the facility.



N Sankar and Edward Monser.



N S Raghavan with Edward Monser.

Chemplast Sanmar Achieves Zero Discharge of Liquid Effluents

It is a momentous moment for Chemplast Sanmar as it completes the pioneering environment initiative of achieving zero discharge of liquid effluents (ZLD) at its plants in Mettur. The regulatory bodies permit a prescribed level of effluent discharge for industrial units and the company's compliance levels have been exemplary. However, Chemplast Sanmar's goal of going beyond compliance to achieve a total zero discharge of liquid effluents has fructified. The process is successful and ready to go on stream in the coming weeks.



Landmark Events

This pioneering technology sourced from an American MNC is a complex one with various levels of treatment processes -

- a. Removal of suspended solids through primary settler
- b. Removal of oil and grease by air stripper
- c. Chemical treatment and clarification – hardness is reduced from 650 ppm to < 120 ppm



- d. Further filtering and softening of water – hardness is reduced from 120 ppm to < 0.5 ppm
- e. Removal of residual alkalinity by treatment in the degasser tower
- f. Correction of pH to 9.5-10.0 and further filtering through cartridge filter module
- g. Treatment with ‘high efficiency reverse osmosis’ system – recovery of nearly 87% of water
- h. The balance 13% water is taken to a vaporiser cum crystalliser to further recover water to an overall 99% of input. Salt comes out as the product and various options are being explored for the reuse of the salts.



The ZLD process is completely automated. This is presently the most advanced technique of ZLD technology and Chemplast Sanmar at Mettur is the first in the country to apply this unique process.

The objective of reaching “Zero Liquid Discharge” effluents has been achieved with a capital investment of Rs. 27 crore. Further the Zero Discharge Liquid status would cost the company around Rs. 4 crore every year contributed essentially by energy charges and other operational expenses.

Dedication of Membrane Cell & CDM Projects at Mettur

The Chairman visited Mettur on 11 March 2008 for the dedication of Chemplast Sanmar's two major projects –

the conversion in caustic soda production to the environment-friendly membrane cell process and the Clean Development

Mechanism project for the incineration of the product HFC-23 that will enable the company earn carbon credits.



Caustic soda facility



Refrigeration gases facility



HFC-23 Incinerator



Membrane cell process - Caustic soda facility

One to One - N Sankar visits TCI Sanmar

TCI Sanmar employees at Port Said meet the Chairman during his visit.



Cloaked in Snow - Erla, Germany





Award Winning Gardens of Karaikal

Karaikal Wins Farm Fest-2008 Award

Chemplast Sanmar, Karaikal gets the 3rd Prize in the Industrial Garden Category at the Farm Fest 2008 Awards, 8-10 February 2008.



K V Ramakrishnan from Maintenance received the award from A M H Nazeem, the leader of opposition, at the valedictory function held at the Show Ground on 10 February 2008. Dr N Vasanthakumar, Dy. Collector of Karaikal is also seen in the picture.



World Forest Day Observed at Karaikal



On 21 March 2008, Karaikal observed World Forest Day by planting around 200 saplings. All – from security staff to chief executive – came together to plant the saplings endorsing the commitment to a greener world.

All in a Consulate's Work

The Danish Consulate at the Sanmar headquarters had an unusual visitor. For Mohan, driver with the Hertz Car company, 2 Danish passports left behind by his passengers started a string of activities in his busy schedule. He knew it was a foreign passport, he knew it was important and a good Samaritan that he was, sought help from his next client, Ramaswamy Venkatachalam, a senior executive from a software firm in Bangalore. The two of them located the Danish Consulate at the Sanmar headquarters and took the trouble to

return the passports to the Vice Consul, S B Prabhakar Rao. The owners of the passports, 2 Danish nationals, were traced at Auroville. The Danish nationals, impressed with the sincerity and the efforts of the driver, insisted on meeting him. The foreigners thanked Mohan profusely and offered him a cash reward. With a lot of cajoling the driver accepted the reward and the Danes returned, with good memories of India, of Mohan and of the Danish Consulate at Sanmar.



National Safety Day Celebrated at Mettur

Chemplast Sanmar celebrated the National Safety Day on 4 March 2008 at its plants in Mettur. Mock drills and safety awareness programs and safety related contests were held and prizes distributed to employees.



Mock drills

The safety oath



*“Lack of concentration while at work is the cause for a majority of accidents in factories.”
- A Ganesan, Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, who was the chief guest at the function.*

Encouraging safe practices

Sangyan Anniversary

Sangyan, the library at Sanmar celebrated its 3rd anniversary on 22 February 2008 at the Sanmar headquarters. The anniversary celebrations were marked by a host of activities like jigsaw

puzzles, 'spot-the-title' contests, treasure hunt, quizzes etc., that were held from December 2007. Book fairs were held at other locations, and 'mobile' library service were provided. Sanmarites

participated in the programs and prizes were distributed on the day of the anniversary celebrations.



P C Sekhar Memorial Boys Under-13 Cricket Tournament

Sanmar sponsored the P C Sekhar Memorial Boys Under-13 Cricket Tournament that drew participation from 28 schools. P S B B Senior Secondary School, K.K. Nagar, emerged the winners and P S Senior Secondary School secured the runner-up trophy.



S Gopal of Chemplast Sanmar with the runners-up at the valedictory function held on 19 February 2008.

MMA Annual Convention

15-16 February 2008

The Madras Management Association (MMA) Annual Convention was held on 15-16 February 2008. S Gopal of Chemplast Sanmar and Chairman, MMA, addressed some challenges and

opportunities of the present times in his opening address. The Sanmar Group were the Principal sponsors of the 2-day event. The theme for this year was “Global challenges for Emergent India”.

The sessions addressed topics relevant to present times such as inclusive growth, innovation and entrepreneurship impact on human capital, cost competitiveness and leveraging intellectual property.



“We will have to learn how to work with a strengthening rupee and still grow, ensure cost of manufacturing and doing business with Indian companies remain competitive and understand the nuances of the global economy to face the future with confidence.”

S Gopal, *President, MMA*



Inauguration of the session - Jayshree Venkatraman, R Seshasayee, R Raguhittama Rao



Remembering S Ramaswamy

S Ramaswamy Business Writing Competition 2008

The 2nd S Ramaswamy Business Writing Competition 2008 was held on 19 January 2008. This is an annual competition instituted by The Sanmar Group and conducted by the Madras Management Association. The competition aims to nurture and encourage young professionals to write

S Mahalingam, CFO & ED, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, giving away the awards.



Anand Venkataraman



effective proposals in challenging business situations. The winners were presented with the MMA-Sanmar Effective Business Communication Award. This year's winners are Anand Venkataraman, Analyst ICRA Management Consulting Services Ltd, Smitha Venkataraman, Senior Manager, HR & Training, Ajuba Solutions India Pvt Ltd., and Geethy Panicker, Assistant Manager, The South Indian Bank Ltd.

The competition is held in memory of the Late S Ramaswamy, the first GM of Chemplast.



Smitha Venkataraman



Geethy Panicker

Roundtable on Healthcare

7 January 2008

Roundtable Session on Indo-US Life Sciences, Health Sciences, and Public Health Collaborations was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Apollo Hospitals, in association with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, in Chennai. The Chief Guest at the roundtable session, Michael O Leavitt said that there is a need for India and the US to come together to form a network of a global alliance to ensure the quality and integrity of imported food and consumer products, from the

healthcare perspective. Though countries like the US have a good regulatory system to deal with products imported from across the world, the systems would not be adequate to cope with the future challenges in terms of health risks. Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, Union Minister, Health & Family Welfare said that the central government is allocating 2% of GDP in the 11th Five-Year-Plan (2007-2012) for the healthcare sector, a huge increase over the 10th plan.

Other speakers at the session included Dr Prathap Reddy, Apollo Hospitals, David Hopper, US Consul in Chennai, U K Ananthapadmanabhan, Chairman, Healthcare Sub-Committee, CII Southern Region & President, Kovai Medical Centre and Hospital and N Kumar of The Sanmar Group and past president CII.



World Shipping Forum 2008

31 January 2008

The World Shipping Forum 2008 was organised by The Institute of Marine Engineers (India), Chennai Branch, on 31 January 2008. The chief guest at the forum was David Hopper, US Consulate, Chennai. The strategic forum address was delivered by S Hajira, Chairman and Managing Director, Shipping Corporation of India and Vijay Sankar of The Sanmar Group delivered the keynote address. C V Subba Rao of Sanmar Shipping who is also the chairman of The Institute of Marine Engineers, presented the welcome address. This forum is held once in four years.

David Hopper, US Consulate, Chennai, releasing the forum's publication.



Vijay Sankar delivering the keynote address.

Dignitaries at the forum.



Exhibitions

Plastec 2008

21-24 February 2008

Chemplast Sanmar's PVC and Trubore Piping Systems divisions participated in the Plastec 2008 exhibition held at Chennai Trade Centre.



The team

PVC division





Trubore piping systems

Procitius at Stockholm

19-20 February 2008

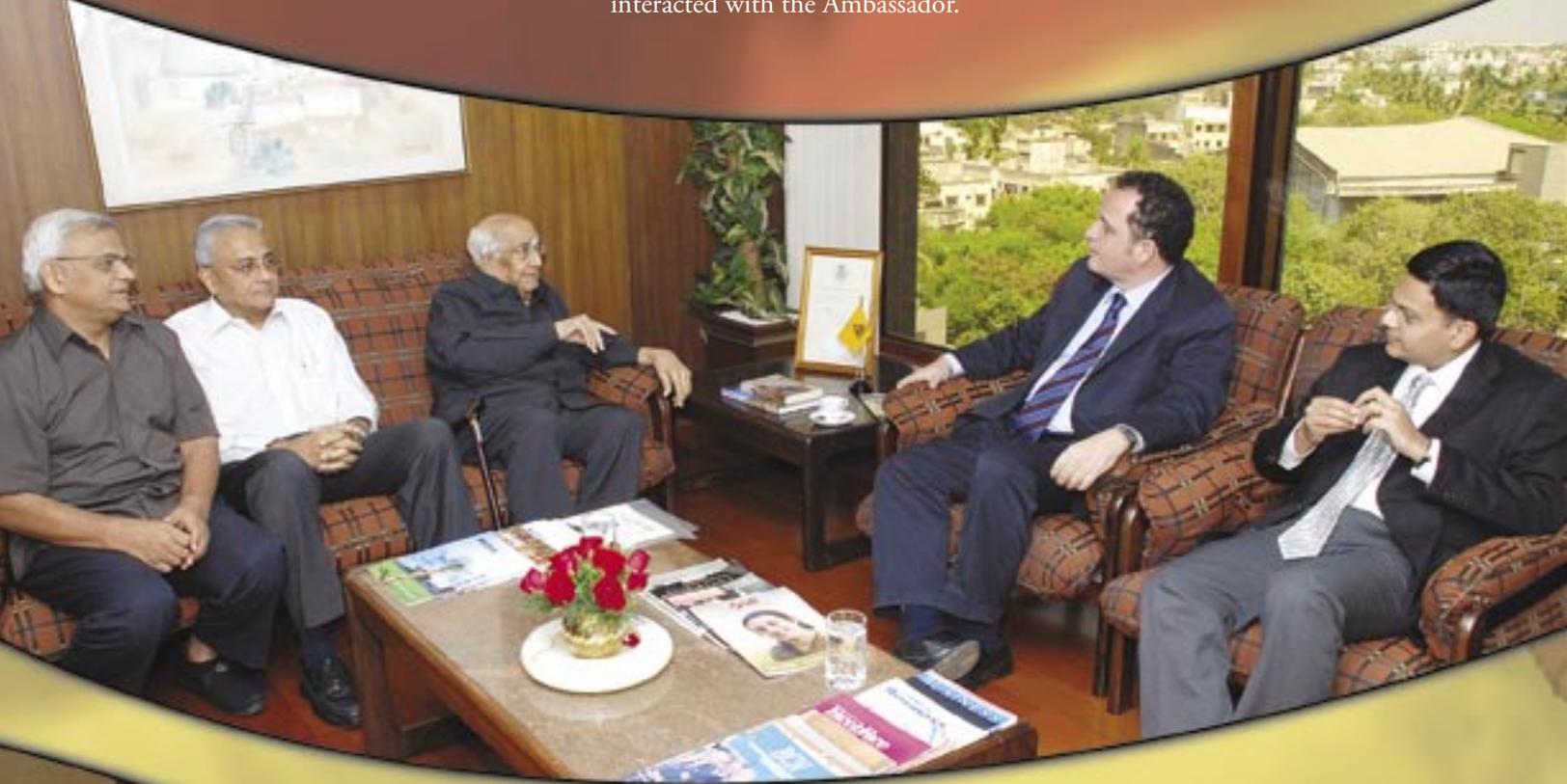
Procitius Research, the research arm of Sanmar Speciality Chemicals, attended its first European conference as an exhibitor sporting a new exhibition stand and corporate literature recently.

The Stockholmässen International Fairs & Congress Centre in Stockholm, Sweden, played host to the Medchem Europe/Screening Europe 2008 conference on 19-20 February 2008. In previous years this conference has been held in other excellent locations such as Barcelona and Prague, but this year 250 delegates and 50 exhibitors headed for the home of the Biovalley.



España in Chennai - HE the

His Excellency Ion de la Riva, Ambassador of Spain in India visited Chennai on 3 March 2008. Vijay Sankar, Hon. Consul for Spain in Chennai hosted a lunch in his honour and invited business delegates from Spanish-Indian companies in Tamil Nadu to meet with the Ambassador. The delegates from companies like Befesa, Parryware Roca, Maxam India, Nubiola, Graninter India, Hedisa India, Pioneer Asia Wind Turbines, TVS Logistics, etc., were present at the luncheon and interacted with the Ambassador.



Confluence of Greek, Danish and Spanish Consuls - (L to R): N Kumar, N Sankar, Shri K S Narayanan, H.E. Ion de la Riva, Ambassador of Spain in India, and Vijay Sankar.



Ambassador of Spain Visits Sanmar



*Vijay Sankar, Hon. Consul
for Spain in Chennai
presenting a memento to the
Ambassador of Spain.*

Une Pensée sans Frontières

Thinking without frontiers

Monsiuer Le Krish (*Capt S Krishnamurthi, Sanmar Shipping Limited*)

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace*

John Lennon is dead, long live John. But a good idea never dies, does it? It would seem, at first hearing that the immortal Beatle was crooning for peace in a strife torn era. I prefer to think he was looking beyond war and peace. He was, with his ballad, conjuring a world that is fundamentally stripped of fear and boundaries. It was not an easy concept to grasp. It still isn't. And almost impossible for the world to live as one! Ironically, this frightened people badly enough to shoot him, perhaps.

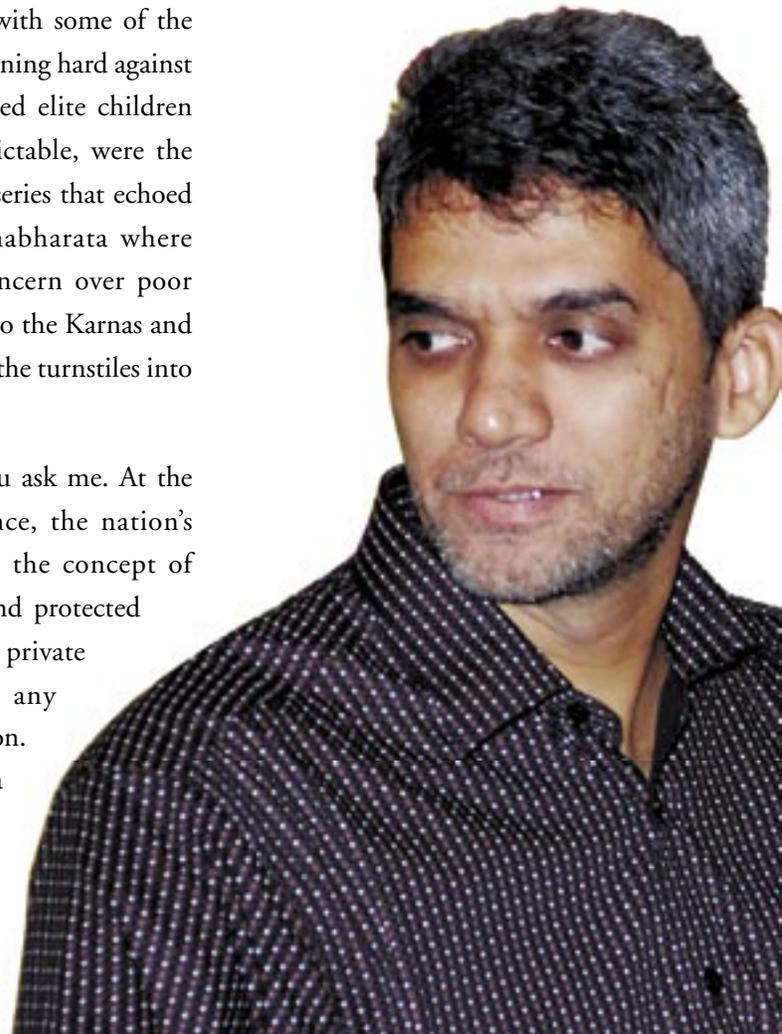
Last year, our residential colony kicked off Independence Day celebrations with a sports competition for children. It was a big, sponsored event. Banners and hoardings streamed down the avenue trees welcoming one and all. Festivities, food, and music were set against a carefully crafted rural backdrop.

As with most affluent pockets in this land of India, our neighbourhood is adjacent to a settlement that provided a steady stream of human resources from housemaids to drivers, autos to

dhobis. The kids from this tenement asked to participate. There was no way we were going to deny them this opportunity on 15 August 2007, the Indian Independence Day, of all days. Predictably, the bare feet made a clean sweep at the events, with some of the cherished trophies running hard against the literally well heeled elite children of ours. Just as predictable, were the rumblings in our nurseries that echoed those from the Mahabharata where Arjuna raised his concern over poor entry criteria leading to the Karnas and Ekalavyas sliding past the turnstiles into the playing arena.

All too familiar, if you ask me. At the dawn of independence, the nation's leadership promoted the concept of the state enterprise and protected it from the infra-dig private enterprise and from any glimmer of competition. Consequently, a whole generation of Indians paid a heavy price for this

misguided notion of state monopoly and protectionism. The road to hell, as wise men say, is paved with good intentions.



When enlightenment smiled down our Delhi Durbar, liberalisation and globalisation became the mantra of the nineties. Horrified by this development, the Bombay Club rose as one, against the onslaught of the big, evil, MNC. The extreme left and the extreme right converged to fight a common enemy – the Outsider.

When, despite the uprising, prosperity raised a cautious head over the recent Indian horizon, it was now the turn of the Western world to raise cudgels against body shopping, sweatshops in China and Bangladesh, the great Bangalore gold rush, security threats and finally against their only hope – the WTO. No one likes to lose their jobs (pronounced jaabs) to ‘aliens’ anymore than our kids liked to compete against ‘outsiders’. It’s more traumatic when you realise how close on your heels and just round the corner the competition really is. All the carefully built notions of superior breed and quality start to come apart at the seams.

So, as our little ones prepare for life’s big race, I worry if they will remember to keep honing their skillsets as a matter of daily routine. I worry if they will integrate with their environment and respond instinctively to its call. I worry if we are protecting them to an extent where their survival is endangered. I worry if they know how to harmonise work and life. I worry if our own irrational fears, anxieties and prejudices are being handed down the line.

I have surfed the favourable waves of global competition without tripping too much, and it’s been an exhilarating ride and will continue to be. Often the

missus and I muse over the great cities of the world that we visited. While historic and culturally homogenous habitats are fascinating, their place in the future seems a little less assured compared to the cities that pulsate with diversity. Dubai, Singapore, London spring to the mind. And then there are the mega-corporations that refuse to be tied down to any national character. It is not hard to see why these cities and corporates are huge talent sinks. I suspect the unbounded energy comes from populations bereft of baggage and thrown into a cultural cauldron. This environment breeds very strong,

positive and cherished social values and promotes excellence at the workplace. Where nothing is taken for granted; where you are pitted against the best; where there’s no concept of protection; where everyone is an outsider.

In the final analysis, civilisational success is characterised by a state of mind that scoffs at fear, respects no barriers and recognises no pre-set hierarchies.

Is it time to review national immigration policy? Or is it just time to migrate to that state of mind?



M L Vasanthakumari

(1928-1990)

Madras Lalithangi Vasanthakumari (popularly referred to as MLV) (July 3, 1928 - October 31, 1990) was perhaps the most popular of the three great lady Carnatic vocalists who have come to be known as a trinity in their own right after the original trio from Tanjavur district. If M S Subbulakshmi was revered by one and all as a reincarnation of Meera and D K Pattammal respected as an accomplished artist no less cerebral than any maestro of her time, MLV was loved for her lovely voice, effortless versatility and inimitable joie de vivre on the stage and off it.

A disciple of the charismatic G N Balasubramaniam or GNB, she had a mellifluous voice, rich and magnificently varied repertoire. One admirer said the initials MLV could be an acronym for her Melody, Laya and Vidwat, an accurate description of her musical appeal.

MLV was the youngest among the established musicians of her era, the youngest to be honoured as the Music Academy's Sangita Kalanidhi. As well as being a much sought-after playback singer for films, MLV contributed immensely to popularise the devarnamas of Purandaradasa. Her most famous disciples include the late Srividya, her daughter, Sudha Ragunathan, A Kanyakumari and Charumathi Ramachandran.

MLV was born to a musically inclined family. Her father, Kuthanur Ayya Swamy Iyer, was a noted musician while her mother, Lalithangi, belonged to a devadasi family steeped in the great classical arts of south India. When freedom fighter C R Das died in 1925, Lalithangi came out with a beautiful song by way of tribute to his patriotism.

MLV's school education was in Madras. She was keen on becoming a doctor. All that changed when she came under the tutelage of GNB. MLV said, "My parents had rendered yeomen service to Carnatic music. They were mainly instrumental in popularising the compositions of Purandaradasa in south India. They were not keen that I should enter the music field and gave me general education. But in the musical atmosphere of my house, I had ample opportunity of practising vocal music. Once G N Balasubramaniam heard me sing and he prevailed upon my parents to place me under his tutelage. It was he who was responsible for the status I occupy in the music world today".

GNB was an original stylist who shook up some of the age-old rules of the Carnatic music game. MLV learnt much of his lightning fast ways of rendering the vowels and consonants of her music, but following GNB's advice, she developed

her own style rather than be a carbon copy of her guru.

In 1940, 12-year-old MLV accompanied Lalithangi at a concert in Simla. This was her stage debut. Two years later, MLV gave her first solo recital at Bangalore. She also created a stir with her first 78-rpm disc brought out that year. There was no looking back from there, and by 1950 she had established herself as one of the leading vocalists of the time, with an adoring audience for her exciting brand of music. She had mastery over a number of aspects of classical music considered a male preserve until then. She married Vikatam R Krishnamurthy in 1951. They had a son, Sankarraman and daughter Srividya.

The improvisational part of Carnatic music as in raga elaboration, swara singing and niraval, the repeated exploration of a single phrase of composed music with subtle and often breathtaking variations, is known as manodharma. Like her guru, MLV was considered a genius, with her "instantaneous, brilliant manodharma." According to biographer Indira Menon, "MLV did adopt her guru's idea of a quick impressionistic sketch of the raga covering the two octaves at the start, but settled down to a reposeful elaboration, unfolding it gradually with her virtuosity in the form of briga - cascades appearing

only where necessary. She was careful not to carry to an excess what her versatile voice was capable of”.

Lalithangi, had a vast repertoire of the compositions of Purandaradasa, the father of Carnatic music, which she passed on to MLV. Just as M S Subbulakshmi popularised the Andhra composer saint Annamacharya’s songs MLV made the devarnamas of Purandaradasa a household name in the world of Carnatic music.

MLV was a wonderful human being,

noted for her charm, grace, warmth and humility. One tribute to her described her as affectionate, compassionate, considerate, generous, gregarious, magnanimous, outgoing and warm-hearted. Those who knew her personally knew that none of these words was an exaggeration. There were many instances of her spontaneous gestures of love and generosity. Even when she was in her hospital bed, she came to know of the difficult circumstances of one of her visitors and spontaneously removed a gold ornament and handed it over.

The daughter she adored, Srividya, was a talented singer and bharatanatyam dancer who had the great good fortune of learning music from her mother, but chose an acting career and achieved fame as one of the finest character artists in Tamil and Malayalam cinema. Tragedy struck MLV’s life when she lost a son in his youth and Srividya encountered turbulence in her personal life, succumbing to cancer in the end, though mercifully for MLV, years after she had herself died.

At an unhappy juncture of her life, MLV found peace and quiet and happiness unexpectedly, when J Krishnamurti’s Rishi Valley School at Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh, invited her to move there and teach students music. There she lived till the end of her life, enjoying the tranquil atmosphere and the opportunity to work with intelligent, inquisitive children prepared to absorb the great music she was sharing with them with rare love. She died on 31 October 1990, at the age of 62, after a losing battle with cancer.



Illustration by S Girish

Awards and honours

- Padma Bhushan
- Sangita Kalanidhi, at 49 the youngest woman to be so honoured by the Music Academy
- Honorary doctorate
- Front ranking artiste for more than 50 years

