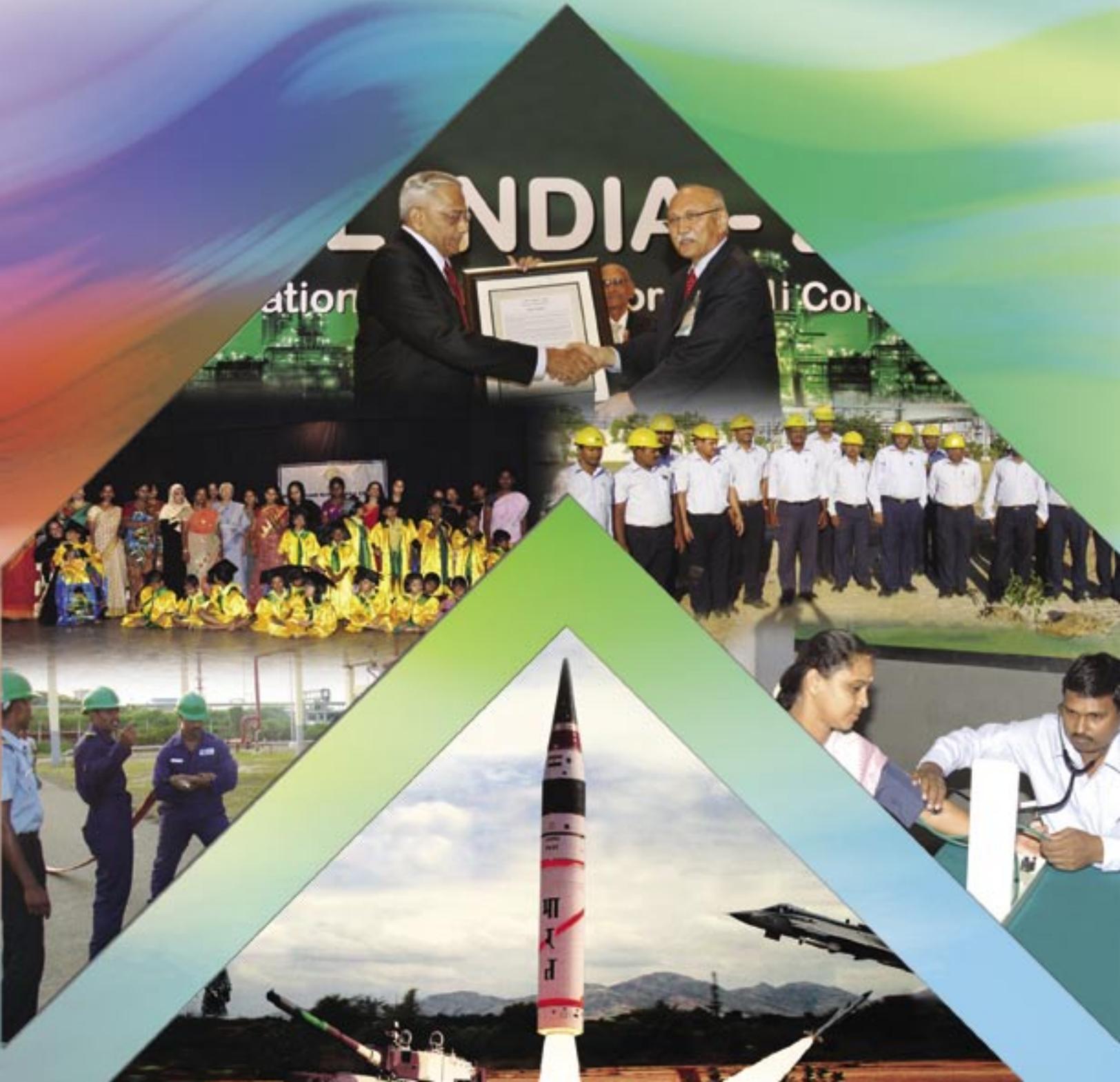


MATRIX

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A PUBLICATION OF THE SANMAR GROUP





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Sanmar Consolidations Ltd

Sanmar Engineering Technologies Ltd

- Products Divn.

Flowserve Sanmar Ltd

BS&B Safety Systems (India) Ltd

Sanmar Engineering Services Ltd

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Xomox Valves Divn.

Pacific Valves Divn.

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VINYL INDIA - 2012

N Sankar, the Chairman of The Sanmar Group, was conferred a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the 'Vinyl India 2012' international conference held at Hotel Grand Hyatt in Mumbai on 12 April 2012.

The award was in recognition of Sankar's immense contribution to the growth of the PVC industry in India and his other stellar achievements.

Vinyl India is an international conference hosted by the Chemicals and Petrochemicals Manufacturers Association India (CPMA) - the apex body of the Indian petrochemical industry recognised by Government, apex chambers of Commerce and Industry and other associations in India and overseas - in conjunction with ElitePlus++ Business Services. The conference had over 400



N Sankar receiving his 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from Kamal P Nanavaty, Vice President & Member Coordination, Chemicals and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association India (CPMA) at the 'Vinyl India 2012' international conference held at Hotel Grand Hyatt in Mumbai on 12 April 2012.



delegates and representatives of the entire Vinyl chain including PVC suppliers, PVC converters like pipe manufacturers, additive manufacturers, distributors were present. Delegate representatives from several other countries including the US, Europe, Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea and UAE attended.

S Gopal, Chemplast Sanmar, at 'Vinyl India 2012'.



Ramkumar Shankar, Chemplast Sanmar, was a panelist in the panel discussion on 'Future of PVC in India - Road ahead' at the 'Vinyl India 2012' conference.





Lifetime Achievement Award CITATION

Mr N Sankar, the Chairman of The Sanmar Group, a well-known industrialist is a man of many parts. His association with the PVC industry extends over 45 years.

With an abiding passion for excellence in execution, Sankar has piloted Sanmar from a single business operation

in the early '70s to a successful global Group of businesses in the sectors of Chemicals, Engineering and Shipping and manufacturing operations at several locations in India, Egypt, Mexico and the USA.

Mr Sankar's professional journey began when, after graduating as a chemical

engineer from the A C College of Technology, Chennai, he completed his post-graduate studies in Chemical Engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.

It is no exaggeration to describe Mr Sankar as a pioneer in the Indian PVC industry. When its PVC plant was commissioned in 1967, Chemplast chose a renewable resource – alcohol from molasses – to produce Ethylene / EDC, eschewing the use of conventional hydrocarbon based fossil to produce PVC feedstock.

Mr Sankar has always followed a clear strategy of being vertically integrated in the chemical business, and all his efforts have been in that direction. As a result, Chemplast is one of India's most extensively integrated chemical companies, manufacturing different grades of PVC resins, Caustic Soda/Chlorine, Chlorinated



for N Sankar

Solvents, Refrigerant Gas, and PVC Piping Systems across different locations. It also has its own distilleries to produce industrial alcohol and extensive salt pans to produce common salt for its caustic soda facilities.

It was Mr Sankar's foresight that resulted in the acquisition of the neighbouring Mettur Chemicals' Caustic Chlor Plant to consolidate chlorine supplies, and subsequently a second coastal Caustic Chlor Plant, coupled with an Ethylene import and EDC manufacturing facility to counter dwindling supplies of alcohol. Similarly his strong conviction that a Chloralkali facility should have its own power source, resulted in an investment in a Combined Cycle Power Plant in 1985 and then a Coal Based Power Plant, again investments made much ahead of their time.

Another distinct feature of Chemplast is that it is the only Indian manufacturer of different grades of PVC resin, which includes suspension, paste, copolymer and battery separator resins, used in varied applications. Chemplast was one of the pioneers in setting up PVC Pipes manufacturing including exporting pipes to the Middle East even as early as the '60s.

Sanmar is the second largest PVC manufacturer in India, and one of the larger players in the world, with TCI Sanmar Chemicals in Egypt augmenting the Group's PVC and Caustic capacities substantially in the recent past. Designed to meet Equator principles of social and environmental risk management, it offers a unique combination of scale, vertical integration and global presence.

With his keen sense of responsibility to the environment, Mr Sankar personally enunciated the concept of Zero Liquid

Discharge or ZLD. His directive to the operating management stipulates that Sanmar's coastal plants not draw a drop of ground water, instead meeting all their water requirements through desalination of seawater and that all Sanmar chemicals plants should in time be ZLD facilities.

Chemplast has been one of the early companies in India to have its Sustainability practices audited by leading independent Auditors to GRI standards. Sanmar has consistently received the A+ standard since 2009.

Mr Sankar has pioneered many of the Group's CSR activities including supply of drinking water to many villages around the group's factories on a daily basis, running schools, serving on the Boards of many charitable and heritage institutions and publications, as well as financial support to deserving medical institutions.

As Chairman of The Sanmar Group, Mr Sankar has been a path-breaker in the field of management. He spearheaded a move to separate Ownership and Management — among the earliest in India to do so. Despite being private, the Group formed a Corporate Board seven years ago, which has a number of distinguished external directors, and functions to the highest

corporate governance standards. The reputation of the Group vis-à-vis all its stakeholders are among its strongest points.

In recognition of his pioneering spirit and efforts in the promotion of a wide range of industries in India and abroad and his immense contribution to the growth of PVC industry, this day, the CPMA and Elite Plus have resolved to bestow upon

Mr N SANKAR

'Life Time Achievement Award'

On the 12th April 2012, Mumbai-India

CPMA Elite Plus++



Sanmar Engineering rupture disks for AGNI 5

BS&B India the proud supplier



BS&B Safety Systems India supplied rupture disks to Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) for the prestigious AGNI 5 missile which was successfully field-tested during April 2012. This followed BS&B India's key role in the Moon Mission programme. AGNI 5, as we all know, has been a missile programme keenly watched by the world.

These rupture disks were used in propellant feed lines to ensure supply of propellant to the altitude control thrusters. These disks are designed to operate at high working pressures while exposed to severe corrosive fluids.

The performance of the disk was flawless at the required pressure, providing full opening, guiding the lift-off of the missile providing the required flight path. As required by the design, the disks did burst open without any fragmentation and also ensured proper functioning of the control systems.

This performance reconfirms the capability of the company to design and manufacture rupture disks with a robust process controlled for repeatability of performance for such prestigious projects.

AGNI 5

NEW GENERATION
LONG RANGE
STRATEGIC BALLISTIC
MISSILE



Management with a smile

A light hearted look at the workplace

Workplace humour.

Is that an oxymoron?

Or is a sense of humour an essential tool-in-trade if you want to survive the stresses and strains of professional life?

From the abundance of jokes about the office, shop floor and boardroom doing the rounds, it would seem that work can not only be fun, even if the joke is often on you, but that it can sometimes be enlivened by a comedy of errors.

Some of the funniest cartoons are about the workplace, perhaps second only to politics and politicians. One of my all time favourites is a cartoon by RK Lakshman featuring two prosperous looking individuals sharing an impressive office, with the younger man asking the other one: "Uncle, what is the meaning of nepotism?"

Some excellent, even pioneering works in management literature have been enriched by their underlying humour. Thus, there was nothing light-hearted about Parkinson's Law by C Northcote Parkinson, which stated: "Work expands to meet the time available."

Parkinson's Law

Example

An elderly lady of leisure can spend an entire day in writing and dispatching a postcard to her niece. An hour will be spent in finding the postcard, another in hunting for spectacles, half-an-hour in a search for the address, an hour and a quarter in composition, and twenty minutes in deciding whether or not to take an umbrella when going to the post-box in the next street.

Or about his second law, "Expenditure rises to meet income." Both are serious studies about the causes and consequences of flawed thinking at the workplace and beyond, but Parkinson's light touch straightaway captured the reader's interest.

Parkinson's Law

Example

Politicians and taxpayers have assumed that a rising total in the number of civil servants must reflect a growing volume of work to be done. Cynics, in questioning this belief, have imagined that the multiplication of officials must have left some of them idle or all of them able to work for shorter hours. Faith and doubt seem equally misplaced. Actually, the number of the officials and the quantity of the work to be done are not related to each other at all.

Decades later, the Peter Principle first stated "If things can go wrong, they will." How true! We know from experience that things will go wrong even if they can't.

And can anyone equal that wonderful euphemism Laurence J Peter invented about people being "kicked upstairs" when they reach their level of incompetence in a hierarchy?

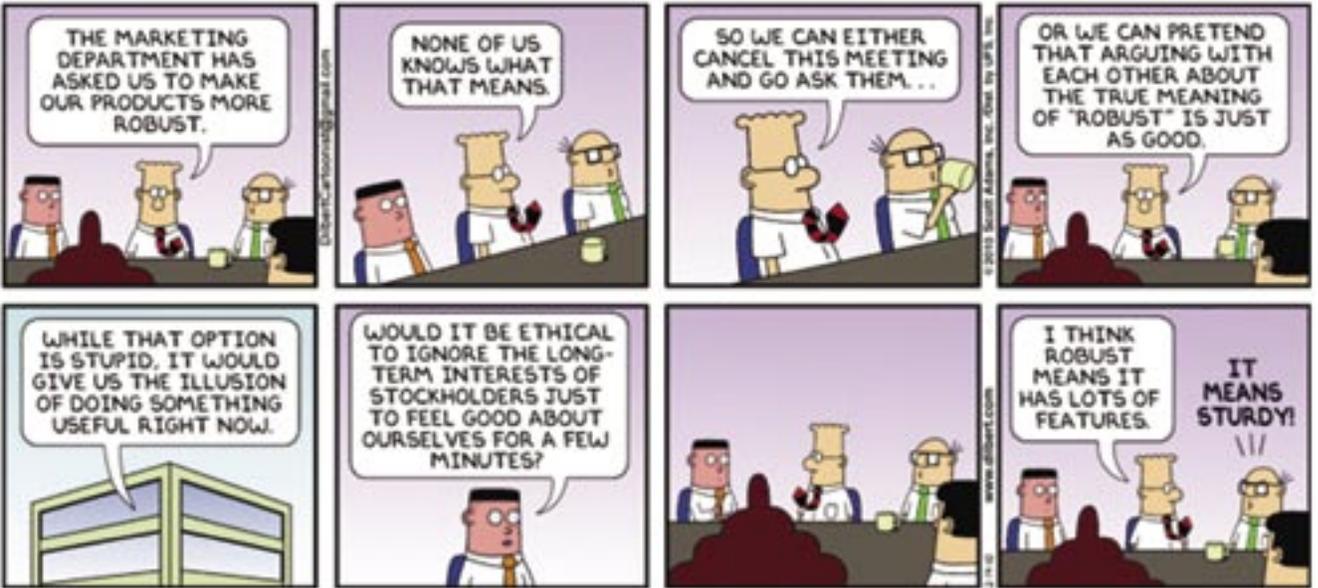
I'll recall below some fond memories of my long if undistinguished professional career.

The first one has to do with two extreme



"Every piece of paper you see is here for a reason: I haven't thrown it away."







The Dilbert cartoon strips have been reproduced from an online source. The other cartoons are courtesy The New Yorker.

Parkinson's Law
Example

An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals. Officials make work for each other.

Closer home, the Sanmar lunchroom can be a riot of good-natured leg-pulling and near character assassination. Some of the most famous perpetrators and victims of these gags are no longer in the service of the group. The brilliant former Ranji Trophy fast bowler B Kalyanasundaram gave us some memorable

moments of pleasure in these exchanges, and good old CG Sethuram often threatened to crack the glass windows with the sheer volume of his (sometimes tall) stories from his eventful years in his profession. The tradition continues, even if we miss some of these stalwarts.

V Ramnarayan

"Mr. Hambel isn't available — is there anyone else who might want to avoid you?"

examples of leave letters, one the very soul of wit thanks to its brevity, and another a tribute to the author's talent for descriptive prose bordering on poetry, written by colleagues some 40 years ago. I came across these literary masterpieces during my stint with State Bank of India, Hyderabad.

My colleague Ghazi Salahuddin's letter was a gem of precision. His application for leave to get married went:

"Dear Sir,

Please grant me three days' casual leave to enable me to enjoy conjugal bliss."

Yours faithfully

Ghazi Salahuddin"

Ghouse Khan, a tennis star of the 1970s, made an emotional appeal to be excused from work under trying circumstances. His letter said: "On Wednesday, the 25th I came down with a running nose, sore throat and high temperature. I took a Crocin and expected to be fit for work on the morrow. Unfortunately, my fever showed no signs of abating on Thursday, when I decided to consult my family physician..." Ghouse continued in similar vein till he came to the point of requesting for his absence to be condoned and leave granted for the period.



"He can't speak to you at the moment — he's bonding with his compensation package."

60th Anniversary of diplomatic ties

N Kumar speaks on Indo-Japan relations

A special meeting on ‘Chamber Day’ was organised by the Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between two countries.

Speaking on the occasion on ‘Indo-Japan Relationships: In Retrospect and

Prospects’, N Kumar highlighted the many historical similarities in the culture and tradition of the two countries. Though the relationship had been at low ebb due to political and economical differences a few decades ago, it picked up slowly in a newer direction, he added. “The two countries are now rapidly increasing their presence in the manufacturing sector. The total business will stand at US \$18 billion this year, passing another milestone in the relationship.”

Earlier, the Japanese Consul-General in Chennai Masanori Nakano, expressed happiness about these business ties and added that nearly 300 Japanese companies were present in Tamil Nadu.

(L to r): N Kumar, Justice MM Sundresh, Judge of Madras High Court and Masanori Nakono, Consul-General of Japan in Chennai.



N Kumar addressing the gathering.



Sankaracharya of Sringeri visits Chemplast, Cuddalore

Jagadguru Sankaracharya Bharati Tirtha Swamigal, the religious head of the Sharada Peetham, Sringeri, visited and blessed the Chemplast Sanmar Cuddalore plant on 13 June 2012.

Vijay Sankar and members of the senior management team accorded His Holiness a warm reception.



‘Engaging human resource

Extracts from S Gopal’s speech during the National Seminar at the University of Madras on 1 March 2012.

Sustainable development helps maintain the ecological footprint and allows nature to regenerate without hindering the process.

It is no longer limited to economic value creation but is about inclusive development.

Corporate sustainability has been defined as a business approach for creating long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments.

Hence sustainability in industry is

1. Vision and commitment shown by the management
2. Execution of these visions and improving continuously.

It is important to note that human resources play the most important role in achieving the above.

HR must ensure that a sustainable approach to managing its employees is part of the business strategy. A truly sustainable business is created when all employees are aware of how their roles contribute to the sustainability agenda. In this way HR transforms the business impacts ON employees into the sustainable impacts OF employees.

The Sanmar Group has taken Water Management as an initiative for sustainable development.

We have a corporate guideline, actually a diktat from our Group Chairman.

- Minimise use of water
- Do not use any ground water in new coastal based plants
- Do not discharge any water in any plant

This corporate guideline has to be actualised by engineers and managers working in operating plants and at the design stage in new plants.

What did our engineers come up with?

Not using water when you can do without it.

Chemplast Mettur had invested in a power plant a couple of years ago.



for sustainable development'

During the conceptual stage, our engineers had decided to go in for air-cooled condensers in order to save water consumption when compared with conventional cooling towers. The cost of air-cooled condensers was twice that of the cooling towers, but for the sole purpose of saving water ACC was installed. About 30 lakh litres of water are saved per day. And our efficiency actually improved, lowering cost. Sustainability does pay.

Recycle and reuse of water

Chemplast is the first large chemical company to achieve Zero Liquid Discharge. No treated effluent is let in to the environment – either into water bodies or on land; all effluent is completely recycled.

The investment for Zero Liquid Discharge was Rs. 27 crore and as a pioneering initiative, it posed some technical challenges in setting up. These have been overcome by our team of engineers. The Mettur plants have not discharged a single drop for more than 700 days.

24 X 7 X 365 days of ZLD was the objective of the organisation and the main impediments in achieving the same were,

- Changing characteristics of effluent due to
 - Changing product mix
 - Minor process upsets



S Gopal in conversation with Dr G Thiruvassagam, Vice Chancellor, University of Madras.

- Issues relating to the equipment and its maintenance and downtime of the ZLD plant.

Chemplast Sanmar constituted a team of the best available engineers with more than 15 years of experience in process plant operations to oversee the ZLD plant and to achieve the objective.

The team came up with many initiatives for further source segregation to handle product mix changes, minor process upsets and innovative methods of recycling.

This has resulted in not a drop of water being discharged since mid September 2009.

The Sanmar Group has a policy that all new facilities should be designed for ZLD from the conceptual stage. The new Cuddalore facility for

manufacture of PVC has been a zero discharge plant from the date of inception. Further, in our Cuddalore plant, in spite of the fact that the aquifer is hardly three metres below surface, we have adopted the “No Ground Water” principle and use desalination processes instead to meet our water consumption needs.

The challenges of sustainable and inclusive development need all of us to join and align our forces to do what we can in our respective areas of influence and operation.

Among Sanmar's green initiatives, its attempts to adopt alternative resources of power is an important one. The windmills at Palladam are a notable example. Here is a panoramic view of the windfarm.





Flowserve Sanmar and Chemplast win international safety awards again

Flowserve Sanmar and Chemplast Mettur Plant II have won the prestigious International British Safety Awards for the year 2012.

This award was for the safety management practices in place during the year 2011.

Flowserve Sanmar earned “Distinction” by scoring 60 out of 60 and Chemplast Sanmar “Merit” by scoring 57 out of 60.

In all, 570 companies participated in the award scheme from across the globe.



Fire safety week at Sanmar plants

The week beginning 14 April is observed as fire safety week in India.

Sanmar plants across locations observed the fire safety week during this period.



Fire safety training.



Fire water drill.



Environment day across Sanmar locations



Commemorated yearly on 5 June, Environment Day is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment.

The UNEP's (United Nations Environment Programme) theme for this year's Environment Day is "Green Economy: Does include you?" In its

simplest expression, a green economy is a low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy.

At Sanmar, saplings were planted with great enthusiasm on the occasion and employees took an environment pledge. Posters on environment awareness were prominently displayed.

Karaikal



Cuddalore



Viralimalai



Berigai

Mettur



Sustainability Initiatives

TCI Sanmar Chemicals: An investor in society

As a responsible organisation, Sanmar recognises the importance of its obligations beyond employees and stakeholders to embrace society at large.

The Group has made substantial investments in its people and the community to make the organisation an invigorating place of work amidst confident neighbours.

The Sanmar Group acquired Trust Chemical Industries in 2007, since known as TCI Sanmar Chemicals, at Port Said and has enhanced capacity of caustic soda and chlorine having started production in the newly established VCM and PVC paste.

Sanmar is the largest Indian investor in Egypt's chemical business, the largest caustic soda manufacturer in that country and among the world's top PVC producers.

In Port Said, the home of TCI Sanmar Chemicals, the neighbourhood community faces several challenges including that of

overpopulation. Port Fouad, the sister city to Port Said, is mostly populated by Suez Canal workers.

TCI Sanmar took up the responsibility of providing the basic necessities for the economically backward at the Quaboty area in Port Fouad.

The help from Sanmar is extended in the form of:

- monthly food supplies
- critical medical care
- basic education and
- preservation of the environment



Monthly food supplies

Supply of rice, oil, sugar, tea, lentil and bean, dry apricots, coconut, raisins, dates and meat per family in the economically weaker section of the population at the Quaboty area is being given free of cost.

To identify the poor families needing such help, a team of eight workers from the factory interested in community development and influential in the neighbourhood were selected from various disciplines.





This team has worked in close cooperation with the Imam of the Mosque, Mahmoud El Elady, who enjoys a good reputation with the Quaboty people.

So far nearly 3000 families have benefited from the food supplies.

Critical medical care

TCI Sanmar met the cost of eye surgery for a young girl during the year 2011. In another instance, an eye operation was performed on a child during March 2012.



Basic education

A cooperation protocol for construction of a school for basic education (primary and preparatory) inside the housing project at EI Quaboty area was signed between the Governor of Port Said and TCI Sanmar Chemicals on May 2011. The project to be spearheaded by the Government of Port Said is estimated to cost EGP 5 million upon an area of 50,000m with a capacity

of 30 class rooms, a library, playground and facilities for entertainment activities.

Preservation of the environment

In response to the Port Fouad city chairman's request, TCI Sanmar donated EGP 150000 to enhance the performance and preservation of the environment. An agreement was signed in February 2012 and a payment of EGP 50000 has been made towards the first phase of this project.

CSR projects at Port Said/Port Fouad: The road ahead

TCI Sanmar wishes to carry out social improvement initiatives including monthly food supplies, critical medical care, basic education and preservation of the environment on an ongoing basis.



Medical camp

Chemplast in coordination with Sri Gokulam Hospitals jointly organised a free Medical Camp at Mettur. The camp was conducted at the Vaidheeswara Vidya Mandir Matriculation School premises on 1 April 2012. Salem District Revenue Officer Prasanna and Chairman Mettur Municipality Mrs Lalitha were present on the occasion. Diagnostic and medical checks including ECG and Echo Cardiogram were done free of cost other than consultation and distribution of medicine. About 1500 persons benefitted from this camp.



activities at Mettur

Bus stop shelter

Chemplast sponsored a bus stop shelter for public use at Thangampuripattinam junction at Mettur. Suriya Prakash, Sub Collector, Mettur, inaugurated the bus stop shed.



Tuition centre



Chemplast Sanmar runs tuition centres around the villages of Mettur at Veeranur, Kozhipannai and Mottur. M Hemalatha, a student of Chemplast tuition centre at Kozhipannai, secured maximum marks in the Higher Secondary Examination (total of 916) and she was presented a memento by S Venkatesan.

'Moving Ahead' Day at Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children

'Moving Ahead' Day was conducted at the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children on 20 April 2012. PR Shampath, IAS, Principal Secretary, State Commissioner for the Differently Abled, was the Chief Guest accompanied by T Srinivasan, District Differently-Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO), Chennai.

This is an occasion for celebration for each child moving out of the cradle and the play area of Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children on to the outside world of school education.

A support system from the centre namely 'The Sanmargam' meaning 'Good Direction' is a project formalising the 'mainstreaming' of children with special needs after receiving intervention in the Upanayan Early Intervention Programme at the Centre. The project is aimed at hand

holding and guiding the mainstream school teaching staff for a period of two years.

So far 34 children have been successfully enrolled in the mainstream school over the past five years and this year 17 children will move into mainstream schools and 3 children to special schools from the next academic session starting in June, 2012.



Sri Sankara Schools

Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar



Global School Partnership Programme: Principal visits UK

As a part of Global School Partnership Programme, Principal Subala Ananthanarayanan and Head of Primary, Jayashri Shanker, Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, visited Ocklynge School, Eastbourne, Sussex. They spent a week observing classes and interacting with the teachers of the school.

Participation in Research and Science Initiative Camp

Anshul R and Sharada M of Standard XII attended the RSIC (Research and Science Initiative Camp) at the campus of IIT Madras from 5 May to 8 June 2012.

The programme included informative and engaging lectures by eminent professors on a spectrum of topics.



Sri Sankara Vidyashramam, Tiruvanmiyur

School toppers in XII higher secondary examinations 2012

R Rajalakshmi – School topper – Science stream 1181/1200; 100% in Maths and Computer Science

Supraja R – School topper – Commerce stream 1179/1200; 100% in Accountancy and Business Maths

G Reshma secured State First rank in Biochemistry 197/200

Ananya Kumar secured State Third rank in Biochemistry 191/200



R Rajalakshmi



Supraja R



G Reshma



Ananya Kumar

School toppers in X standard examinations 2012

The school secured 100% pass in X standard examinations with 100% in Maths (1), Science (15) and Social Science (3).

Mathana Gopal R
491/500



Sanmar's cricket camp for children at IIT

Sanmar conducted a cricket coaching camp at the IIT-Chemplast cricket ground for boys residing in the IIT Madras campus from 7 May -1 June 2012. The coaching personnel included former Test fast bowler Tinu Yohanan (Head Coach) with the assistance of fellow Sanmar cricketer Ajay Kudua, as well as Francis Rokins, A Streejan and Manibarathi. In all 33 boys between 9 and 16 years attended the camp.



Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director, IIT Madras, distributed certificates to the students trained at the Sanmar cricket camp.



On behalf of all the children who benefitted from the cricket coaching camp, their parents and the Institute, we would like to express our gratitude to SANMAR for so graciously conducting the Cricket Coaching Camp at the cricket ground in IIT Madras. I have received numerous emails from the parents expressing their gratitude for the high quality of the camp.



Two Sanmar teams in First Division cricket league

Alwarpet CC makes clean sweep of matches to earn promotion

Alwarpet Cricket Club won all its eleven matches in the 2nd Division of the TNCA cricket league in the 2011-2012 season, to earn a promotion as the top team of the division to the First Division. There it joins Jolly Rovers Cricket Club, the group's flagship team, which has won the senior league a record 16 times.

Alwarpet CC was well served by skipper Huzefa M Patel (525 runs) and Deepak Murali (24 wickets) during the season. The team management is quick to point out that every member of the team pulled his weight in this creditable success. Team work has always been the secret of Alwarpet CC's and Jolly Rovers CC's success.



The triumphant Alwarpet CC team promoted to the First Division.

Sanmar's Murali Vijay in blazing form in IPL V

At the recently concluded Indian Premier League (IPL), Chennai Super Kings stormed into the final with an emphatic 86-run victory over Delhi Daredevils riding on Murali Vijay's breathtaking 58 ball 113, which was the fastest century of this edition. Vijay helped his team to an imposing total 222 for five, the highest in IPL 5. This was Vijay's second century in IPL, the most by an Indian player. Vijay batted well again in the final scoring 42 though in a losing cause, in a thrilling finish.





Sivaji Ganesan (1928-2001)

His stage performance as the Maratha leader Chhatrapati Shivaji was so electrifying that Viluppuram Chinnaiahpillai Ganesan became Sivaji Ganesan overnight, a name by which millions of adoring filmgoers came to know him in time.

Sivaji Ganesan was arguably among the greatest actors modern Indian cinema has produced, in a distinguished career of over 300 films, in which he played a wide variety of roles. A product of Tamil theatre, Ganesan benefited hugely from the discipline and theatre of the Boys' Company tradition prevalent in Tamil Nadu in the 20th Century. Boys joined touring dramatic troupes and grew with them, graduating by stages to play lead roles, including 'stree parts' or women's roles, at a time when it was taboo for ladies of good families to perform in public.

As most of the plays were musicals, the actors were trained in singing as well, while their dialogue delivery had to be impeccable. Sivaji Ganesan, who followed this conventional route to eventual acting stardom, was a master of dialogue, capable of remembering reams and reams of prose and delivering them in a leonine voice that earned him the title "Simhakkuralone", one of several titles and honours to adorn his career.

Sivaji Ganesan was also known for his versatility and his willingness to take up challenges to his histrionic ability. In a career spanning close to five decades he was easily acknowledged as the finest actor in Tamil films, though he also occasionally appeared in Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi cinema.

Born on 1 October 1928 to Chinnaiya Manrayar and Rajamani in a Tamil middle-class family in Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, he came into the world the day his father was arrested taking part in the freedom struggle. He joined a theatre group when barely seven, without parental consent, and by ten, was travelling and acting regularly. He trained in music and dance as well.

Ganesan had a prodigious memory that helped him lengthy lines easily. His perfect dialogue delivery started earning him the lead role in the group. This made him hero of the troupe in the long run. By the time he made his film acting debut in the 1952 film *Parasakthi*, he was a famous stage actor. The former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, M Karunanidhi, also made his debut as a screenplay writer in this film. His fiery dialogues met their perfect match in Sivaji's voice and acting. A scathing commentary on the glaring social and economic disparities prevalent in Tamil society then, the movie was a runaway success, not only launching Ganesan as a frontline actor, but also providing a launchpad for the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu's

politics. The Dravida Kazhagam and later the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam used the powerful medium of cinema successfully as a propaganda tool.

In *Andha Naal* (1954), a crime thriller, made by another brilliant son of Tamil Nadu, the versatile genius S Balachander, better known as a veena (a classical string instrument) virtuoso, Ganesan played the role of anti-hero for the first time, a daring move by a young actor starting his career. The film, which had no songs, a rare distinction in Tamil films, won the president's silver medal the following year.

The same year he played the antagonist in *Koondukkili* to the protagonist played by M G Ramachandran, whose extraordinary mass following enabled him to rival and sometimes surpass Sivaji's popularity. In fact he was to become the darling of the masses, while Sivaji's altogether more cerebral, sophisticated acting style repeatedly won him critical acclaim. MGR later became chief minister of Tamil Nadu, while Sivaji's attempts to enter active politics failed.

Sivaji's bravura performance as *Veerapaandiya Kattabomman* in the eponymous film won him the Best Actor Award at the Afro-Asian Film Festival in March 1960 at Cairo.

Known to strike a balance between commercial cinema, mythological cinema and experimental cinema, he proved to be a thespian of the highest order. His most prolific period was during the 1960s and 1970s starring him in several outstanding roles as romantic hero, freedom fighter, epic character, the common man struggling for survival, conscientious police officer, secret agent, soldier, doctor, detective, thief, con-man, clown... literally every role under the sun.

While he was widely praised by his countless fans and the Tamil press, Sivaji Ganesan was criticised by some others for

his over-the-top, melodramatic acting. But in the 1980s, he proved what a masterly actor he could be when properly handled by a sensitive, intelligent director schooled in contemporary cinema. His role as a lonely, misunderstood old man drawn to a much younger woman and the emotional bonding between the two in adverse circumstances in a rural setting in *Muthal Mariyadai* (1985) won him best actor awards. His brilliant performance, now looking stylishly handsome in a trimmed down version of himself, in the critically acclaimed *Thevar Magan* won him a Special Mention Award at the 40th National Film Awards. He had a rollicking role in *Padayappa* (1999) his last film before his death, unsurprising as he always had a flair for comedy.

Suffering from a prolonged heart ailment, Sivaji Ganesan died on 21 July 2001 at the age of 72. His funeral was attended by several thousands of admirers.

Awards and honours

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| President's Award | |
| Best Actor..... | 12 times |
| Afro-Asian Film Festival | |
| Best Actor..... | 1960 |
| Republic Day Honours | |
| Padma Shri..... | 1966 |
| Padma Bhushan..... | 1984 |
| Annamalai University | |
| Honorary Doctorate..... | 1986 |
| Legion of Honour of France | |
| Chevalier title..... | 1995 |
| Govt. of India Award | |
| Dada Saheb Phalke..... | 1997 |
| Tamil Nadu Govt. Award | |
| Kalaimamani | 1997 |
| NTR National Award..... | 1998 |
| Statue of Sivaji Ganesan on the | |
| Marina in Chennai | 2006 |



