

# MATRIX

July 2013

A PUBLICATION OF THE SANMAR GROUP



## India by the Nile

An Indian Festival of Performing & Visual Arts

Egypt, 13 April - 13 May, 2013





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# TCI Sanmar sponsors grand Indian cultural festival in Egypt

TCI Sanmar Chemicals S.A.E. was the lead sponsor of the “India by the Nile” festival presented by The Embassy of India in Egypt. The festival, produced by Teamwork Productions, was a celebration of contemporary and classical music, dance, theatre, visual art, film, food and literature. The festival facilitated a collaborative exchange between literary figures, performers and visual artists from India and Egypt. Collaboration between them was the over-riding theme in some of the shows.

The Festival was a platform to showcase the wealth of India’s classical and contemporary cultural heritage and an attempt to provide the Egyptian audiences with the cultural diversity of the country.

The four-week long show began on 13 April 2013 with a literature symposium with Indian and Egyptian authors. This was followed by classical and contemporary music, theatre and dance, a food festival and a free master class in Bollywood dance.

The shows were presented at a number of venues in Cairo and Alexandria such as the Opera House, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Sawi Cultural Wheel and Hanager Arts Center.

The festival attracted over 7500 visitors from across Egypt, a tremendous amount of press articles, blogs, interviews and coverage on TV and radio channels.

*“India by the Nile”, is definitely the new star on Egypt’s festival firmament” – Al Ahram Weekly*

*Mrigya*

*Nrityagram*

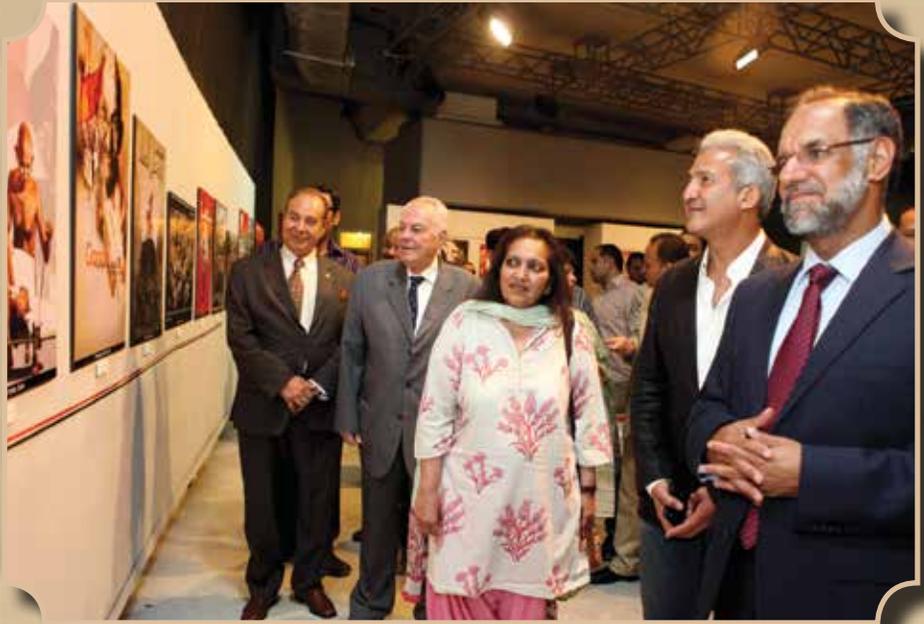


**Programmes:**

**Bollywood Fusion:** Indian choreographer Gilles Chuyen trained the soloists of the Cairo Opera Ballet Company for one week to perform to Bollywood music with Indian singers Mukesh Tomar and Parul Mishra. The show was a whirlwind of vibrant dancing and singing.

**Words on Water:** Speakers from India and Egypt engaged in dialogue and debate on topical issues of interest to both countries.

**Akshara – Calligraphy in Crafts:** The exhibition enabled Indian and



*An exhibition on Gandhi.*

Egyptian calligraphers to create collaborative pieces of art and exposed each to the craft traditions of the other country. Displaying over a hundred handicrafts featuring calligraphy, it was very

well received and proclaimed as an exhibition “not to be missed, and one of the most interesting displays held at the Centre in recent months”!



*Performance by Gilles Chuyen at the Inaugural Ceremony.*





*The Indian Food Week (May 7-13) and tea tastings at the Sonesta Hotel featured chefs Vikram Udaygiri and TS Nanaiah under 'Savour the Flavour' theme.*

*(L to r): PS Jayaraman, Chairman, TCI Sanmar Chemicals, Mani Suri, wife of Ambassador, Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India in Egypt, KR Kumar, CFO, TCI Sanmar Chemicals, Port Said, Egypt at the food festival.*

**Shubha Mudgal:** One of India's eminent vocalists, Shubha Mudgal gave a splendid concert of Hindustani classical music.

**Nrityagram Dance Ensemble:** Regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India, the ensemble from Karnataka performed

Sriyah to a spellbound, overflowing audience. *Al Abram* Weekly dubbed it as a 'powerful closing' to an extraordinary festival.

The Artistic Creativity Centre (Cairo) hosted the Indian Film Panorama, which showcased a varied selection of Bollywood movies.

**Bollywood Workshop:** The dance workshop communicated the energy and fun of Indian cinema. It was attended by an audience of different ages and interest levels.

**Did you Sense the Spirit of Gandhi @ Tahrir Square:** The poster exhibition delved into the relationship between Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and the largely peaceful revolution at Tahrir. The opening was attended by Gandhi's great granddaughter Kirti Menon.

*Shubha Mudgal*



**Mrigya:** A rich blend of Classical, Blues, Funk, Folk, Latin, Rock and Jazz lends Mrigya's music a unique texture bordering between Indian Classical and World Music. Their concerts were a great hit.

**Indian Food Fiesta:** Two chefs from India whipped up delectable Mughlai dishes as part of the week long food festival at Sonesta Hotel.

**Savour the Flavour:** An evening of Indian tea tasting was presented by the Tea Board of India.

### **Festival Highlights**

The first Indian festival of the arts in Egypt.

Month long festival of Dance,

Music, Film, Bollywood, Literature, Exhibition & Food.

An annual festival of Indian Visual & Performing Arts in Egypt.

Distribution of printed festival flyers through performing venues, partner organisations, government & educational institutions.

Social media was the prime publicity driver.

The press had been supportive with coverage both through the electronic and print media in Cairo and Alexandria. Social media was an effective tool in creating awareness and publicising all the events through Facebook and Google plus.

*"The focus of the 'India by the Nile' festival is on forging meaningful and sustainable collaborations between India and Egypt in the field of arts and crafts".*

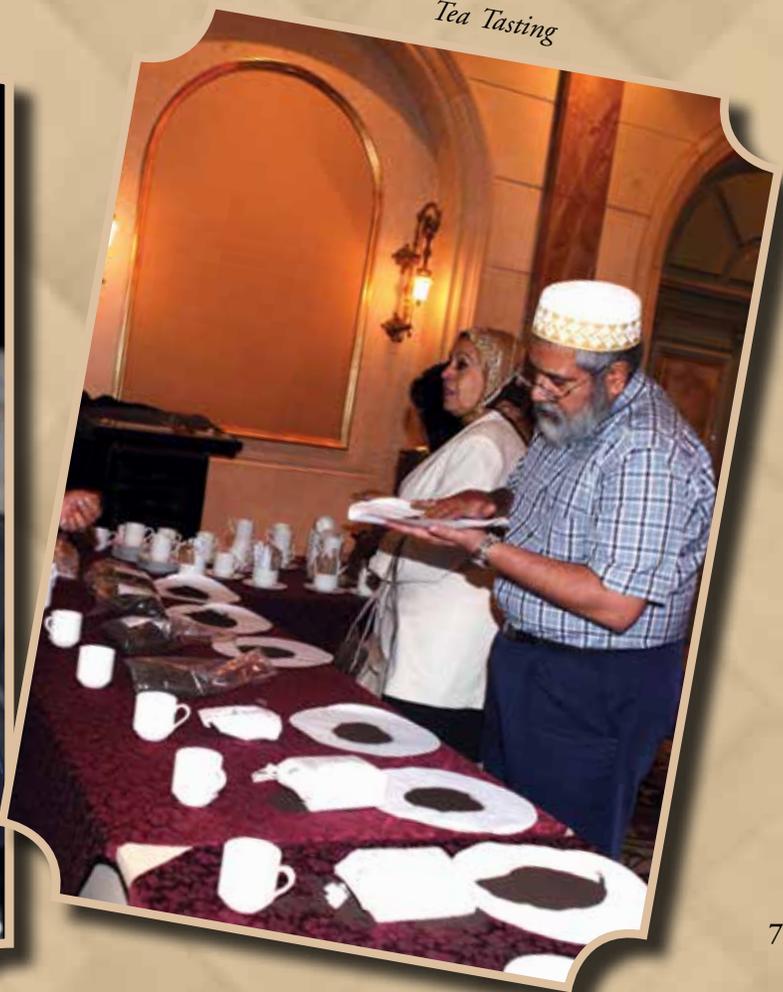
**Navdeep Suri,**  
*Ambassador of India in Egypt.*

*"We in Sanmar, feel proud to have associated ourselves with the 'India by the Nile' festival. I am glad to note that 'India by the Nile' will be a major annual festival and will play a key role in Egypt's cultural calendar".*

**PS Jayaraman,**  
*Chairman, TCI Sanmar Chemicals, Port Said, Egypt.*

*Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman, The Sanmar Group was felicitated at the inaugural reception organised on 12 April 2013 at India House to formally launch the festival.*

*(L to r) Sanjoy Roy - Managing Director, Team Work Production, Ila Gupta, Director, International Festivals, Team Work Production, Mani Suri, wife of Ambassador Navdeep Suri & Vijay Sankar.*



*Tea Tasting*

भारत का राजदूत  
काहिरा



Ambassador of India  
Cairo

20 June 2013

No. Amb/Cairo/06-2013

### 'India by the Nile'

The Embassy of India, Cairo held a month long cultural festival 'India by the Nile' during April-May 2013. The event, the first of its kind in Egypt, covered a variety of visual and performing arts, with a host of different partners across multiple venues in Cairo and Alexandria. Despite apprehensions that the timing of the festival may not be ideal, we were confident that the extraordinary warmth and affection of the Egyptian people towards India would override concerns about the domestic political transition. As expected, the festival was extremely well received with large attendance at performances, presence of top Egyptian dignitaries and excellent print and television coverage. The festival opened with a gala Bollywood Fusion show at the Cairo Opera House, included a Calligraphy exhibition curated by Jaya Jaitley, classical music concerts by Shubha Mudgal, a film panorama, and fusion music concerts by the band Mrigya. In addition, the food festival, literary encounters between Egyptian and Indian authors, and the grand finale of Odissi dance by a troupe from Nrityagram rounded off the festival perfectly, setting the stage for the second part in 2014.

From the very beginning, the steadfast support of TCI Sanmar as the Presenting Sponsor proved critical. TCI Sanmar Egypt consistently backed up the efforts of the Embassy and festival producers Mjs Teamwork Productions, and what emerged is an excellent example of public-private partnership, a clear illustration of what is possible when a corporation committed to the public good and national interest joins hands with the an active diplomatic mission in projecting India abroad.

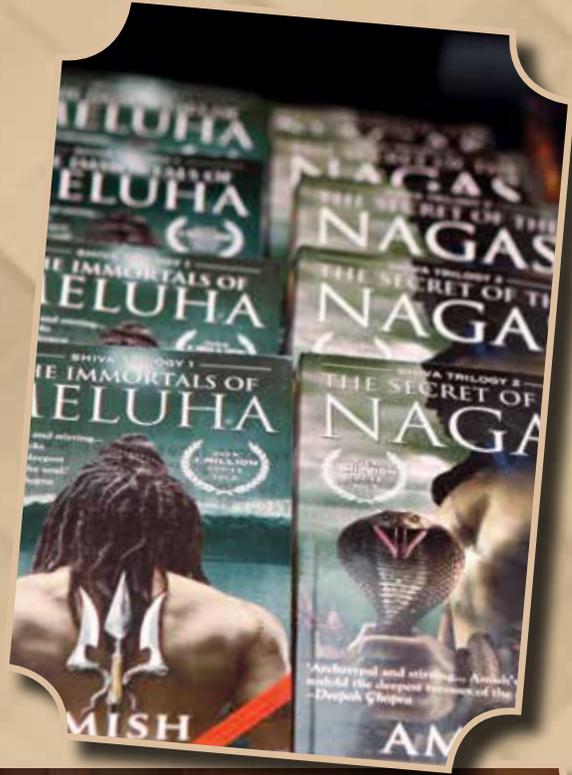
There is no doubt in my mind that the collaborations that the festival has engendered through its course are its real success. The Bollywood Fusion Show, for example, featured choreographers and musicians from India working with a team of Egyptian dancers from the Cairo Opera Ballet group and from our own Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture. Similarly, Ms. Jaya Jaitley shared her experiences with Dr. Heba Handoussa and the Egyptian Network for Integral Development, and the other's countries through translation. Collaborations, partnerships and conversations that created unconventional avenues of communication were the order of the day. What these extraordinary relationships created in the space of just a few days is only a small indication of the future of Indo-Egyptian cultural cooperation.

As I look back, I am certain that India by the Nile festival 2013 is only the first edition of this cooperation, one that has been enriched by the continued support of a company such as TCI Sanmar. I, and the Embassy of India, Cairo look forward to closer cooperation in the years to come.

(Navdeep Suri)  
Ambassador

The month long programme was a resounding success both in terms of audience participation and the media attention it received.

Coming in the wake of President Morsy's visit to India and at a time of transition for Egypt, "India by the Nile" was warmly welcomed by both the Egyptian Government and local cultural organisations. It was the largest foreign festival in recent times.



# Have wings, will travel

## Migratory birds

Migratory birds are some of nature's most magnificent creatures, playing significant ecological, economic, and cultural roles internationally. Migration is predicated primarily upon food resources. Since most insects become unavailable during harsh winters, insect-eating birds find abundant food resources in the tropics. Many raptor species also follow this migrating food chain. Many of the songbirds, waterfowl, birds of prey, waterbirds and shorebirds of the western hemisphere migrate each fall to the tropics.

## Migratory birds coming to India

The Indian subcontinent plays host to a number of migratory birds in both summer and winter. Over a hundred species fly to India, either in search of feeding grounds or to escape the severe winter of their native habitat. The numerous wildlife sanctuaries in the country serve as their temporary habitat. Bird lovers from all over the country visit these sanctuaries to get a glimpse of some of the rarest species of birds in the world.



## BNHS-Sanmar Centre a haven for migratory birds

Chemplast Sanmar, which has its salt works at Vedaranyam, has partnered the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in setting up a study centre at Kodiyakkarai. The BNHS-Sanmar centre is a boon for bird watchers who gather to watch migratory birds from across the globe swarming the swamps of Vedaranyam between October and March every year.

### In winter

*Siberian Cranes, Greater, Flamingo, Ruff, Black winged Stilt, Common Teal, Common, Greenshank, Northern Pintail, Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail, Northern Shoveler, Rosy Pelican, Gadwall, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Eurasian, Wigeon, Black tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Starling, Bluethroat, Long billed Pipit.*

### In summer

*Asian Koel, Black crowned Night Heron, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Comb Duck, Blue-cheeked Bee Eater, Blue-tailed Bee-Eater, Cuckoos.*





*Pelicans from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (top), and flamingoes from Bangladesh and Iraq (bottom) were sighted in thousands this year, at Kodyakkarai offering a rare visual treat indeed!*

### World Migratory Bird Day

Initiated in 2006, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats. On the second weekend each May, people

around the world organise bird festivals, education programmes and birdwatching excursions.

Migratory birds connect almost every environment of the world along their migration paths. This global event hopes to bring together organisations, governments and

dedicated people to protect migratory birds for future generations. WMBD works as a network to increase public knowledge about migratory birds and their importance and also connects groups of people to share, celebrate with and learn from each other.



# Sri Sankara Schools: Academic

The Sri Sankara Schools have been an example of The Sanmar Group's quiet but significant work in education for over three decades. The two schools have produced outstanding students both in academic excellence and co-curricular and extra curricular activities year after year. The Sankara Schools can take pride in moulding young and talented students into responsible citizens of India. The accent at the Schools is invariably on holistic learning, moral and spiritual value, discipline and character.



# excellence and holistic learning



Out of the 573 students appearing in Tamil Nadu's Class XII Biochemistry exams, all three toppers hail from Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur. The course was introduced nine years ago and the school incorporated it into their curriculum eight years ago.

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| G Vishali       | 197/200 |
| Vishal Srinivas | 196/200 |
| R Varsha        | 195/200 |



## Sri Sankara Schools...

*Sri Sankara Schools – Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar, and Sri Sankara Vidyashramam, Tiruvanmiyur – symbolise the ideals of education expressed in our scriptures and literature. Building discipline and character, encouraging the appreciation of our cultural heritage, cultivation of genuine devotion to God, and respect to the guru, parents and elders are quintessential to the school. Sanskrit, the repository of Indian culture, is given a special status in these schools.*

*The Schools at Adyar and Tiruvanmiyur launched by His Holiness the Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in 1970 and 1989, were established by the Indian Education Trust. Former President of India Late R Venkataraman was a patron of the schools from 1977. Late PR Pattabiraman, the first General Secretary, was responsible for finalising the purchase of the land and building, erstwhile Vasantha Press in Adyar from The Theosophical Society. He was instrumental in guiding the affairs of the school during its formative years.*

*KS Narayanan, the late Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group, became the Chairman of the Board of Indian Education Trust in 1981. The late VS Dhandapani was its Managing Trustee for nearly 23 years. N Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group, is the present Chairman and N Kumar, Vice Chairman, The Sanmar Group, the Managing Trustee of the Trust which continues to manage the schools.*

*From humble beginnings, the schools have come a long way since inception growing both in stature and status.*

### Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar

Located amidst sylvan and serene surroundings, the Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School is a co-educational institution with a strength of 2075 students and is affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi. The school has classes from kindergarten to Std. XII.

With its interactive classrooms and mathematics laboratory with technological support from NIIT, the school won the International

School Award from the British Council in 2006 and again in 2010. The school achieved the ISO 9001:2008 accreditation in January 2008.

The school conducts several programmes in collaboration with Rotary International, the British Council, the Indian School Debating Society, INTACH and The Energy and Resources Institute. Apart from these, the NCC girls' wing, the Young Indian Net, the Model

United Nations programmes and the Mock-parliament are special features of the school which contribute to the overall personality development of the students.

Consistently producing excellent results, the school is one of the first schools in the city to offer Biotechnology as a subject at the plus two level.



*Principal of Sri Sankara Secondary School Subala Ananthanarayanan (right) and Vice Principal S Meenakshi with Duncan Brett and Thomas Stead who teach French and Spanish in Hardenhuish School in the UK during their visit to the School.*

*On 28 May 2013, students of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar, participated in a 50 minute concert in the Bala Bhakthi Thiruvizha, which was held in Narada Gana Sabha. The school was one among the top three selected to perform on Vijay TV in May this year. The school hosts Thyagaraja Aradhana every year in the months of January / February.*



Seated (l to r): VS Dhandapani, Janaki Venkataraman, Tamil Nadu Governor PC Alexander and President of India R Venkataraman, while KS Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus, Chemplast Sanmar, addresses the gathering, during the inauguration of Sri Sankara School's new block (1988).

### Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur

The school which started on a low key profile with 13 teachers and 315 students, now has a student strength of 2205 with 85 teachers. With 85 well ventilated classrooms, the school has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1989. The School has classes from LKG to Std XII. The School follows the Matriculation pattern of Tamil Nadu.

The School has excellent infrastructural facilities including Science laboratories, the English Language Lab, and a well equipped computer centre an integral part of the school curriculum, as life-oriented education.

The School has a number of clubs for the students at the Primary, Middle, High School and Higher Secondary levels. A plethora of activities like guest lectures, quiz

competitions, field trips etc., are organised exposing the students to a wide variety of experiences. Cambridge Young Learners Test conducted by the British Council and partnership with schools in the UK, like The John Warner School are some notable activities.

The School has received several awards and accolades for its Interact Club and Parampara Heritage Club. Inter-house cultural and talent shows are organised to provide a platform for talented students, be it singing, dancing or playing musical instruments.



Principal of Sri Sankara Vidyashramam, Kalpalatha Mohan (3rd from left) and Vice Principal Sai Geetha with the John Warner School team in Hertfordshire, UK.

# Two Sanmar

## S Gopal and

It was felicitation time at Sanmar when two veterans of the Group retired during 2013.

S Gopal, Managing Director of Chemplast, laid down office on 31 March 2013. From being a Senior VP Projects in 1991 to becoming the Managing Director of Chemplast in 2007, which position he retained till the date of his retirement in March 2013, Gopal's was an eventful two-decade stint at the Chemical and Engineering businesses of the Group. A specialist in water management, Gopal made key contributions to ensuring that all Chemplast plants boast the 'zero liquid discharge' facility.

An Electronics Engineer from IIT Madras and an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad, Gopal is also the regional chairman of the South Indian Chemical Council and past president of Madras Management Association.

A BTech in Chemistry and an MBA from IIT Kanpur, JK Menon joined The Sanmar Group way back in 1990 as GM Solvents and was later transferred to PVC in 1995. After a hiatus, he rejoined Sanmar in TCI Sanmar in 2007. JKM took over as Director of Trubore Piping Systems in 2011 from which position he retired in January 2013.

Pioneers of green field projects, both Gopal and JKM have steered the businesses through crucial times. Both S Gopal and JK Menon received 'Lifetime Awards' during their tenure with the Group.



# veterans retire

## JK Menon

Extracts from N Sankar's speech during the Lifetime Award ceremony at The Sanmar Group Annual Day function:

### On S Gopal:

"S Gopal, Managing Director, Chemplast is a long-term Sanmarite. He had an initial stint with Sanmar in 1991-92, when he worked with the Group evaluating different projects.

Managing Chemplast's chemical businesses is a true rollercoaster ride. There is never a dull moment. It's either prices collapsing or rocketing upwards, prices of raw materials fluctuating daily, it's a business where prices are determined by sentiments and calls on whether the housing market in the US is good, whether the Chinese weather is good or bad, whether the Rupee will appreciate or depreciate, whether the Government will stand or fall etc., etc. To cope with all these variables and run business successfully calls for enormous analytical input, and great fortitude. Gopal possesses both of these in significant measures."

### On JK Menon:

"We were lucky to have a person of JK's capability at TCI Sanmar, Port Said, Egypt. Both in terms of commercial management of TCI Sanmar's affairs and its projects, and in terms of building bridges with the local community and with the authorities in Egypt, JK performed exemplarily.

We have employed and re-employed people in Sanmar on a few occasions, but I do not think there was anyone else who was appointed four times. It speaks much for the person's capability that we were willing to recall him thrice. And it speaks for his character and commitment to Sanmar that he would accept each time willingly, and as I said with a smile."

20th November 2012



# “Manufacturing still matters a great deal for India’s economic prosperity and competitiveness” - N Kumar

## 12th IQ Anniversary - CII Institute of Quality

The 12th IQ Anniversary of the CII Institute of Quality was celebrated on 9 May 2013 at Bangalore. Addressing the gathering N Kumar, Chairman, CII IQ stated, “Enhancing and growing an effective talent base remains core to competitiveness among the traditional manufacturing leaders – and increasingly among emerging market challengers as well. Manufacturing still matters a great deal for economic prosperity.”

Inaugurating the First National Business Excellence Competition sponsored by the National Stock Exchange, Kumar said, “The experience and knowledge of this unique and diverse group of organisations form the platform upon which we build CII’s activities and services to members. CII IQ’s products and services have been tailored to support the systematic implementation of the EFQM

Excellence Model in any organisation, regardless of size, sector or maturity. The CII EXIM Bank Award helps industry to compare one organisation against other world-class leaders based on rigorous and holistic assessment by a panel of external experts and professionals providing comprehensive feedback on all aspects of business and strategy.”

Talented workers are the top indicators of a country’s competitiveness –

CII IQ 12th Anniversary celebrations: (L to r): Soumitra Bhattacharya, Chairman, CII Karnataka State Council & Joint Managing Director, Bosch Ltd; L Krishnan, Immediate Past Chairman, CII Karnataka State Council & Vice President, IMTMA, Managing Director, Taegu Tec India P Ltd; Alex Botha, Chief Executive, British Safety Council, UK; V Shankar, Managing Director & CEO, Rallis India Ltd; N Kumar, Chairman, CII Institute of Quality & Vice Chairman, The Sanmar Group; Bhupinder S Bhalla, IAS, Hon'ble Administrator, UTs of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli; Aroon Raman, Research & Innovation Entrepreneur; Greeta Varughese, Executive Director, CII Institute of Quality.



followed by the country's trade, financial and tax systems, as well as the cost of labour and materials.

The CII Institute of Quality strives to address people and organisations on the needs of continuous improvement through Business Excellence, TPM, Lean, Six Sigma, Safety, Quality Management System, Metrology, Laboratory, Risk Management, and Education Excellence.

N Kumar, said that there was a need to go beyond manufacturing industry. In fact, while manufacturing remains the core of CII IQ's activities, the Institute has already established itself as the champion of Quality

in Education, the service sector and the Government. IQ will work with leading organisations for leveraging quality in areas like retail, manufacturing, financial services and infrastructure. Safety in industry will be one of the new services that IQ will extend to members – mainly audits. It will also create CII National Safety Awards along with BSC.

*Bhupinder S Bhalla, IAS, Hon'ble Administrator, UTs of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Greeta Varughese, Executive Director, CII Institute of Quality exchanging MoU on improving Education in the UTs of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli in the presence of N Kumar, Chairman, CII Institute of Quality & Vice Chairman, The Sanmar Group.*



## Chemplast Karaikal conducts medical camp for rural folk

A free health camp for general and eye check was conducted by Chemplast Karaikal jointly with Vinayaka Medical Mission College and Hospital on 22 June 2013.

The camps were conducted at the community centres of Mudali Medu and Vadakku Vanjore villages of Karaikal to facilitate easy access to the rural populace.

Conducted under the guidance of J Ashok Kumar IAS, District Collector, the camps were supervised by M Kandaswamy, Medical Superintendent, Government General Hospital,

Karaikal and Chemplast's Dr Sathiyarayanan.



# Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children

## 51 children from MNC join mainstream schools over the past 6 years

11 children from the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children (MNC) will be moving into mainstream schools in the coming academic year. To mark this, MNC conducted 'Moving Ahead', an event to mark the successful completion of the early intervention programme on 19 April 2013. Director of the Centre of Training and Resources in Early Childhood Education, Chennai, Prema Daniel was the chief guest for the event.

Of the 11, two are from Govt El Centre, two from SRTC Autism Centre and seven from MNC. In addition, two children will be moving to Little Flower School for the Visually Challenged.

These children had developmental delays of different types and degrees, and through early intervention they have now been integrated in mainstream schools. The institute has successfully enrolled 51 children in mainstream schools over the past

six years. The children are guided and directed by therapists and special educators, with the aid of music, yoga and play therapy.

The children proudly went up on stage, clad in graduation hats and overcoats, to receive gifts from the chief guest. Their parents were, understandably, at a loss for words as they shared the experience of the improvement witnessed in their wards.



# Lalgudi Jayaraman

1930-2013

Lalgudi G Jayaraman breathed his last on Monday, 22 April 2013. He was one of three senior musicians revered by aficionados as part of a triumvirate that ruled the world of Carnatic music for over 50 years in the 20th century. TN Krishnan is now the lone survivor of that iconic trio. MS Gopalakrishnan, scion of the Parur school of violin playing, was the first to go, just a couple of months earlier.

Jayaraman put the small town of Lalgudi in Tanjavur— once the granary of Tamil Nadu and its cultural capital— on the world map, because he and the place of his birth 82 years ago are synonymous. Son and disciple of martinet guru VR Gopala Iyer, Jayaraman was an instant star in the 1940s, when he began to accompany the great vocalists of the day — GN Balasubramaniam, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, the Alathur Brothers and Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, among them. He was only 12 when he made his concert debut.

Honing his art by accompanying these stalwarts with strict adherence to the pakkavadya dharma or accompanist's code of never overshadowing the main artist but still providing an aesthetic value with the embellishments the violin could add to the voice, Lalgudi — like his contemporaries MSG and Krishnan — added several new dimensions to his undoubted talent to become the consummate artiste he was in his mature years.

He found in his duets with his sister Srimathi Brahmanandam plenty of scope to give free rein to his imagination and creativity, and develop what came to be known as the Lalgudi bani. It included showing great respect for the lyrics of the compositions he played, leading to the oft-repeated cliché that Lalgudi's violin sang.

Indeed the impact of his music gained from the power of the lyric, but it also grew in lustre, thanks to his total expression of the raga's swaropa or image. He became a much sought after trendsetter when he combined with flautist N Ramani and veena vidwan R Venkatraman to launch a whole series of violin-venu-veena concerts in the 1970s.

Lalgudi, Krishnan and MSG were not the first violin 'trinity' of Carnatic music. That honour went to representatives of an earlier generation of fiddlers: Mysore Chowdiah, Papa Venkataramiah and Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai. Strangely, most of these practitioners of this European instrument were from very orthodox south Indian backgrounds, mostly upper caste.

How on earth did the western violin infiltrate their lives and how did they make it their own, starting with how they held it and tuned it? We have to go back to Baluswami Dikshitar (1786-1858), a brother of the great composer Muttuswami Dikshitar, who was known for his preoccupation with the mystical power of music and

his peregrinations that took him to temples all over India to sing the praises of the presiding deities. It was Baluswami, said to have learnt the art from a European violinist, who introduced the instrument to Indian concert music.

By the end of the 19th century, the violin was part of the standard fare in concerts at the Mysore and Travancore courts. Today, it is a major instrument in Carnatic music, both solo and in accompaniment, usually to vocalists. Unfortunately, solo instrumental concerts, at the peak of their popularity from the 1950s through to the 1970s, are no longer favoured by audiences.

The gayaki ang or vocal style characterised the violin playing of all three artists, but in the case of MSG, there was a touch of the Gwalior gharana — for his father Parur Sundaram Iyer, a pioneer of the violin in Hindustani music, taught at Vishnu Digambar Paluskar's Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, while MSG himself accompanied DV Paluskar and Omkarnath Thakur.

While TN Krishnan's is a relatively austere, meditative approach, Jayaraman's playing acquired an altogether more delicate touch with the years, bringing out the nuances of a raga with almost feminine grace and sophistication. This enabled him to reach out to a vast circle of listeners beyond the closed circle of connoisseurs. No wonder he was in his youth a matinee idol drawing

listeners, as much by his vulnerable good looks as the magic of his music; he remained a crowd-puller all his life.

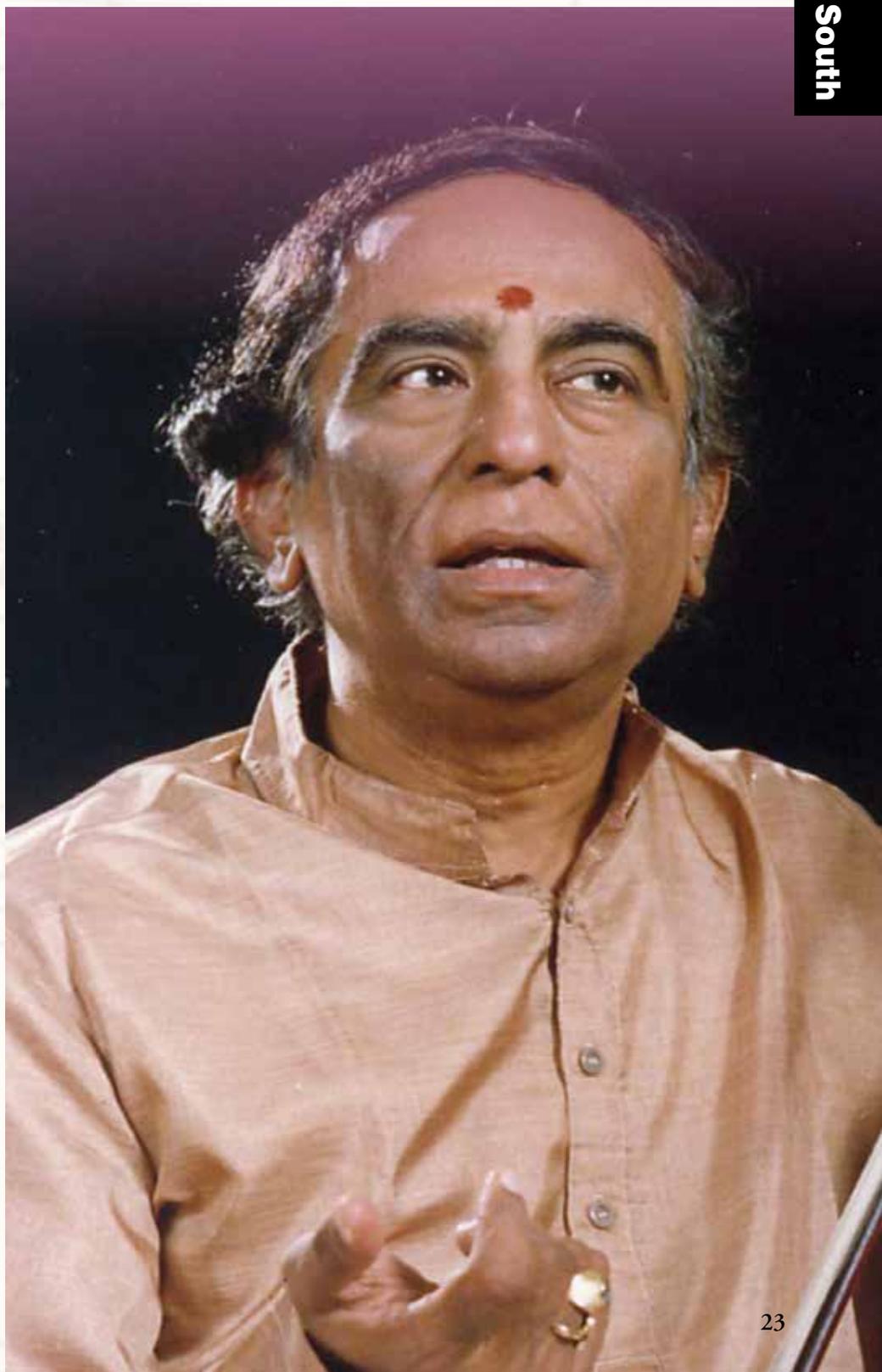
In time Lalgudi became a reputed composer, affixing his unmistakable stamp on varnams (often vocal exercises as well as concert openers) and tillanas (the south Indian equivalent of taranas). His compositions for dance dramas — and on the rare occasion cinema — repeatedly proved that he was an expert at innovation within the boundaries of tradition. He was fond of Hindustani music and collaborated happily in north-south jugalbandis with celebrity musicians. A master teacher, he imbued his students — including son GJR Krishnan and daughter Vijayalakshmi — with a keen sense of aesthetic pleasure, something the sweetness of their music invariably demonstrates. Some of them like Bombay Jayashri have gone on to be successful vocalists. A strict disciplinarian, he was also a caring guru, who took a deep interest in the growth and development of his pupils.

Lalgudi took Carnatic music beyond India, and was one of the first star performers abroad from among south Indian instrumentalists. The eminent western violinist Yehudi Menuhin was a fan of both Lalgudi and MSG, while Krishnan too had his share of admirers in the west. All three performed extensively abroad.

Most Carnatic musicians are cricket enthusiasts and Lalgudi was surely no exception, but he was perhaps the one Carnatic violinist of his era whose music cricketers enjoyed.

Rare examples of his exotic followers were Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi and England captain Tony Lewis (an accomplished violinist himself) who reportedly attended his concert at the Music Academy during the January 1973 Test match at Madras. He was a man of considerable reading and had independent views on complex issues.

Lalgudi was a proud torchbearer of his family tradition and an upholder of the dignity of his art and his instrument, taking many a principled stand all his life. In terms of popularity, he was primus inter pares relative to his celebrated contemporaries Krishnan and MSG.





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