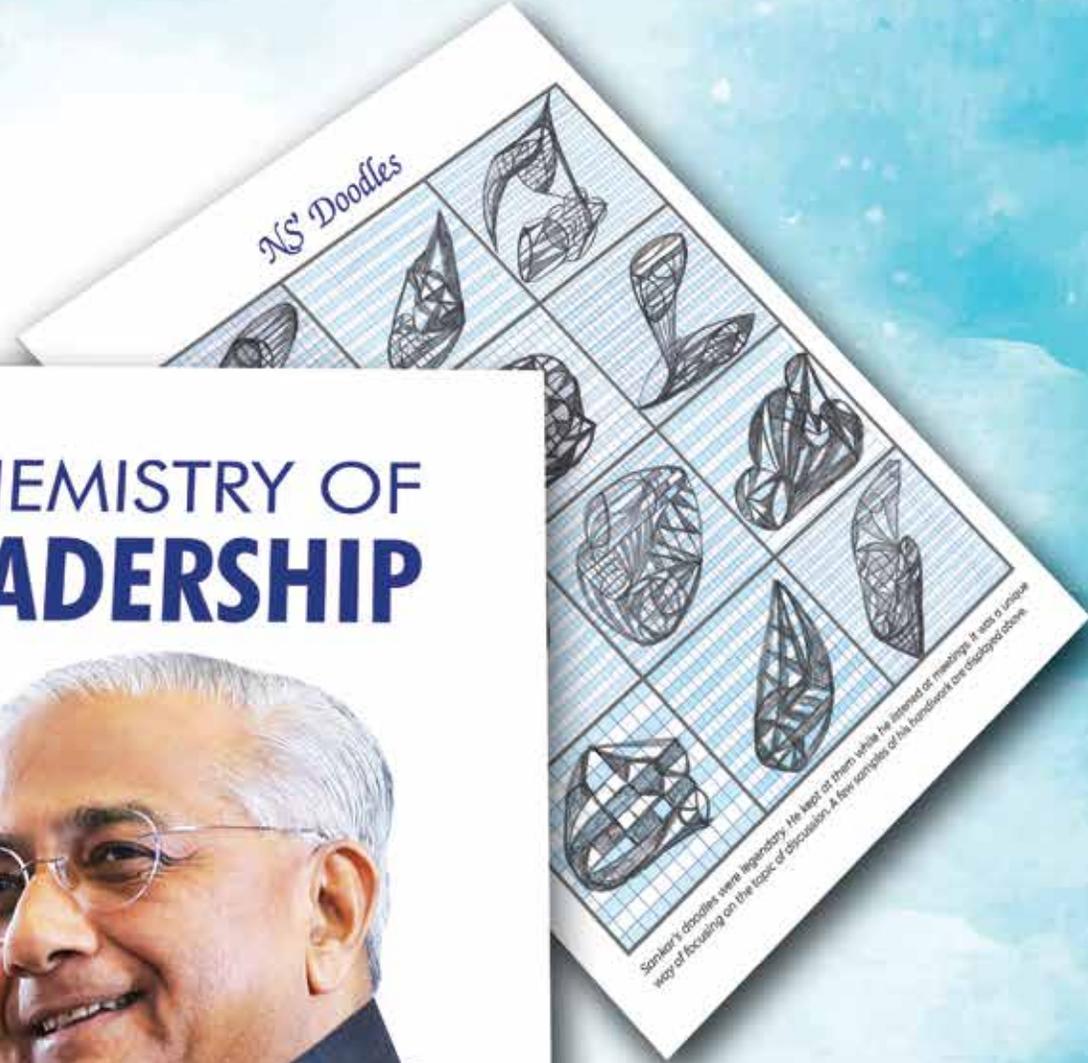


## CHEMISTRY OF LEADERSHIP



**N Sankar biography released**



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*Matrix can be viewed at [www.sanmargroup.com](http://www.sanmargroup.com)*

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*For Private Circulation Only.*

# 'Chemistry of Leadership'

## Biography of N Sankar released

A biography of N Sankar was released on February 8, 2024, honouring his legacy.

Authored by historian Sriram V, the book was released by NS' lifelong friend MA Alagappan, and the first copy was received by AC Muthiah, another dear friend of NS.

In remembrance of NS' love for tennis, former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker and tennis icon and global ambassador Vijay Amritraj graced the occasion.

The evening began on a pleasant note with Varun Sankar playing western classical music his grandfather was fond of, on the piano.

**Vijay Sankar** formally welcomed the gathering on behalf of Mrs Chandra Sankar, sister Madhurika, grandchildren Manas and Varun, his uncle Kumar and his family and colleagues from Sanmar.

"The journey to this event began in November 2022 with the dedicated efforts of Sriram V, who meticulously penned down the narrative of someone we all hold dear. Normally in such projects, debates arise on various aspects but in this case, the easiest decision was that of the author it was a unanimous choice given the relationship that Sriram had with my father and their respect for each other. His personal touch flows through every page of this book.

Today we are privileged to have two distinguished individuals

joining us to release this biography - Dr AC Muthiah and Mr MA Alagappan. My uncle was one of my father's closest and oldest friend from when my father was 12 to 13 years old. The release of Dr Muthiah's biography in February 2022 was Mr Sankar's last public event where he spoke and their presence here today despite their various commitments adds an extra layer of significance to this occasion.

We are delighted to have two legends of the game gracing us with their presence

*Varun Sankar on the piano.*



(L to R): Sriram V, Vijay Sankar, AC Muthiah, MA Alagappan and N Kumar.

- Boris Becker and Vijay Amritraj and their participation not only honours the memory of my late father but also brings a touch of greatness to this event.

Author of the biography, **Sriram V** said, "I had the privilege of having worked with him very closely in terms of *Madras Musings* and several other writing assignments from 2005 onwards.

I had the opportunity of observing how closely he monitored his businesses and there was once a time when he told me all this talk about delegation is nothing but a dereliction of duty. So, I asked him does that mean, 'You have to micromanage,' he replied, 'I meant that you had to assign tasks to various people and then monitor whether they fulfil those tasks that have been given to them.'

He and I always had this disagreement on what kind of a book it should be. He hated hardcover books. He disliked books where the dust jacket would come off when you picked it up and he

was a big man for soft cover. He always believed that there had to be a lot of visuals in any book.

Like all those books I imagined when I was writing it that there would be a phone call at the end of it to say, 'Sriram on page numbers 37, 57, and 63 I have noticed that there are three errors and you'll have to correct them in the reprint or some such thing.'

Only this time there is going to be no phone call sadly from Mr Sankar but I'm sure wherever he is, he must be looking down to tell me, 'You put in too much of me in this book,' because this was yet another battle that we had in every book. He would give me material and then say don't put my name on every page. So, in revenge, I've got a book where he is in every page and if it had an index that would be the only name that would appear on the index."

**N Kumar** delivered the Vote of Thanks and said, 'Vijay Amritraj is an icon all over the world especially in his hometown in Madras. I want to

thank him for being here with us but also for having facilitated another world champion Boris Becker to be present. The presence of these Champions Boris and Vijay on the day of this book release, I think, is very special because of Sankar's love for tennis.

Speaking on the occasion, Vijay Amritraj said, 'It's a delight and an honour to be here to celebrate our dear friend. Sankar, more than anything else, was an inspiration to all of us - for all that he had done for tennis and junior tennis in the state. He was a wonderful businessman, a sportsman, an administrator, a philanthropist, a humanist, and as Vijay pointed out, a big fan of our guest of honour, my dear friend Boris Becker.



(From left): M V Subbiah, L Ganesh, A Vellayan, Venu Srinivasan, Mallika Srinivasan, S N Subrahmanyam, A Krishnamoorthy.

## Excerpts from the conversation between Boris Becker and Vijay Amritraj:

*VA: Boris, welcome to Chennai. It's been a while since you've been here.*

BB: India has always been a very special place to me and indeed I've been in Chennai before. I hate to say the year, it makes me look older than I feel. 1998 - I played at the tournament here.

*VA: Let's go back to the early part of your career. You grew up in a town called Leimen, a small town in Germany and just out of curiosity what made you get into tennis? Germany is a big Soccer country, so why tennis?*

BB: That's right. Leimen is a small town of about 10,000

people about 40 minutes south of Frankfurt. There is a reason I got involved in tennis. Because my father was an architect and he built the local tennis club he didn't know what to do with his young boy on the weekends. My sister is four years older. So, instead of having someone babysit me at home, they figured taking me to the tennis club. They gave me the first tennis racket at 3 years old. It was a Dunlop Max racket but because it was such a big racket and I was such a small boy they had to cut it in half. My first coach was my sister.

*VA: At 15 years you were already very good and the two biggest agents in the world came to your hometown in Leimen to sign you up. What happened?*

BB: Thankfully my father was a very proud man, and more importantly,

not a poor man. My father said with all respect, 'Boris is not for sale, and thank you very much for coming. So that was the end of it ...'

As a 17-year-old, when I went through the tournament, the morning of the final, I was nervous. At 17, you're not fully aware what you were doing. I won the first set, I lost the second, I won the third, I'm up at the break, the fourth set. I'm sitting down at a changeover and I put my towel over my head and there was this weird noise in the crowd. They were humming and they realised that this was a potentially historic moment. Never anybody has done what I was just about to do and it got to me for the first time. I have chicken skin now when I think about it. I got up and I had a ball on my left





(From left): R Ramesh, M M Murugappan, Premkumar Karra, M Venugopal Reddy, Srivatsan Subramaniam, RS Rajashekarana, R Ravichandran, Dr B Biswakumar, and Mukund Subramanian.

hand trying to toss it up and the ball wouldn't leave my hand.

*VA: I know the feeling it happened to me a lot.*

BB: Just the ball wouldn't go out. Of course, I start with a double fault Love 15 then I had a couple of good serves 40-15. Championship point, and then the crowd was just going absolutely crazy I was really unwell, uncomfortable, nervous. Again, my ball wouldn't leave my hand at the toss. Another double fault and then I looked up. I said, please God I don't know what you want me to do after, but I need this point. Give me a first serve, and it went in and the rest is history.

*VA: Your rivalry with Stefan Edberg - arguably the two best serving volleys in the game that we had seen through the 80s and 90s. Both of you served so well, what would you say differentiated you and Stefan?*

BB: I played Stefan Edberg in the Wimbledon juniors in 1983. Two years prior to my first Wimbledon, he was the only player ever who won all four Junior Grand Slams in the same year. 1983. Was unbeatable, he turned Pro a little bit before me. When I played him in my third Wimbledon Final in 1988, I lost. In competitive sport you play better if you don't like the other guy. Stefan was the nicest guy - he was elegant, and he was polite, and he had manners. So, in the heat of the match I couldn't get angry with him. I had to get angry with myself the whole time and that was tough...

The last thing I wanted to do was become a coach because I had enough of tennis, but I like the other side of it. I liked the television... I liked to talk about tennis and so I started working for the BBC. I started becoming a tennis expert analyst. I did my first Wimbledon Finals in 2003... Germans

are not known for that sense of humour. I like to think I have a little bit of that and in my commentary, I bring it over. Keep it entertaining.

In 2012 October, I was settled in my life. The agent of Novak Djokovic, an Italian, called Edoardo Artaldi calls me. I was in Johannesburg. To cut the long story short, 'Novak wants you to be his coach.' My first answer was, 'Why, Novak is number two in the world. Yes, he did lose to three-four last grand slam finals but number two isn't that bad. I mean he doesn't need.' No, no. That's the problem. He is starting to have a mental problem. He can't take the pressure. Nadal is his Nemesis...



*I had a nickname in tennis. They called me 'Boom Boom.' Boom Boom Becker because of the power and the serve and everything. Vijay Amritraj called me boom boom for the first time.*

So, the following weekend I sat with Novak Djokovic from Friday to Sunday and we spoke tennis 24/7 and my first words were, 'Novak, I have so much respect for you and you're unbelievable and you're so much better than I ever was but allow me to speak the truth. I have to tell you when you make a mistake and not in elegant intellectual words.'

*Boris was his coach between 2013-16 and helped Novak win 6 grand slams including 4 in a row.*

I have great respect for Novak, Roger, and Rafael. I mean what guys are these, unbelievable ambassadors and I don't think we'll ever have a time not in our lifetime where you have three ambassadors of the game of tennis like we've had with those three guys.



*A view of the audience.*

*VA: You said that you were not going to commentate on any women's matches.*

BB: I'm a big fan of Steffi Graf and Serena Williams. Grand Slam wouldn't be the same if there's just a man playing. Women deserve their place. Tennis is one of the few sports we have equal rights. We have prize money for the same. They have the same Centre Court arrangements. Everything is the same and there's a former world number one Billie Jean King who put women's tennis on the map. So of course, it was meant as a joke. Maybe next year I'm going to start commentating as well.

*VA: At 17 years old to be able to close out a match like that to win Wimbledon, what was going through your mind?*

BB: You can call it the innocence of youth. You don't know what you're doing, what you're about to do. You are just in the moment. You play with your instinct. I think another advantage was that it was pre-social media, there was no internet. There were no cell phones. So I couldn't read about my hype. I think that was a big advantage.

*It was an evening of bonhomie for 700+ guests at the Leela Palace with friends from the industry, tennis supporters, well-wishers, and employees of The Sanmar Group.*



*To be in conversation with a friend of mine who I had the opportunity to play with many many years ago is very special for me because it makes not just my life easier but once again go down memory lane to talk about those very special years about the 80s and 90s when Becker was at his prime.'*

# New Research and Development Block at Custom Manufactured Chemicals Divn., Berigai

Custom Manufactured Chemicals Division (CMCD) of Chemplast Sanmar Ltd., unveiled its state-of-the-art New Research and Development

laboratory on January 17, 2024. Vijay Sankar, Chairman of The Sanmar Group, inaugurated the facility.

The new Research and Development lab is a scientific exploration, collaboration, and discovery hub. Equipped with the latest technological advancements and staffed by scientists and engineers, this facility is poised to redefine the boundaries of chemical research and development.

CMCD's R&D hub comprises two laboratories with ten fumehoods each for initial gram-scale synthesis and optimisation lab trials. Here, interdisciplinary team of scientists, engineers, and technicians collaborate seamlessly to drive innovation across various domains.



*Vijay Sankar inaugurating the Research and Development Laboratory at CMCD, Berigai.*



*State-of-the-art R&D facilities at Berigai.*



The Cyanation Lab at the new R&D Centre is a specialised facility dedicated to synthesising, optimising, and scaling up cyanation reactions. With its advanced infrastructure and stringent safety protocols, this facility empowers scientists to explore the vast potential of cyanation chemistry while ensuring the highest safety and environmental stewardship standards. The Lab has a dedicated scrubber facility and hazardous waste collection pit.

The fluorination/chlorination Lab at CMCD is a specialised facility dedicated to synthesising, optimising, and scaling up fluorination and chlorination reactions. With its diverse capabilities, including high-pressure fluorination and photochemical chlorination, this Lab is a dynamic platform for exploring various chemical transformations in the chlorination/fluorination space. The Lab provides an ideal platform for CMCD to penetrate fluorinated agro intermediates aggressively in the future.

The Kilo Lab represents a pivotal stage from laboratory-scale research to large-scale production. Designed to bridge the gap between small-scale experimentation and industrial manufacturing, this specialised facility empowers scientists and engineers to evaluate chemical processes' scalability, efficiency, and safety under controlled conditions.

The Kilo Lab has a range of jacketed reactors, including 3L, 5L, and 10L



*Vijay Sankar inaugurating the canteen.*

capacities. These reactors are designed to accommodate a variety of chemical reactions and processes and offer precise temperature control within a range from  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $180^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

The Process Safety Lab embodies CMCD's unwavering commitment to ensuring the well-being of its workforce and the surrounding environment. This dedicated facility is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and simulation tools to assess and mitigate potential hazards associated with chemical processes. The Lab fosters a culture of safety excellence across the organisation through comprehensive risk assessment, process optimisation, and safety training initiatives. It is equipped with Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC), Thermal Screening Units (TSu), and Simple Reaction Calorimetry (RC1).



*R Kalidas cutting the ribbon to mark the opening of the canteen.*

# Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls bags the CII Water Award for Excellence in Water Management



Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Limited (CCVL) was adjudged the winner of the CII Water Award for Excellence 2023. The award was received by Ravi Kumar Ahuja on behalf of CCVL at the 9th Water Innovation Summit 2023 of CII in New Delhi on December 13, 2023.

CII has been recognising companies who have done well in improving water use efficiency and have an integrated approach to wastewater management systems which include recycling, recovery, and reuse of industrial effluents.



# Award for Sanmar Matrix Metals at the 5th Rail Analysis Summit

Sanmar Matrix Metals won an award for 'Excellence in Castings or Forgings in Railway Applications' at the 5th Rail Analysis Innovation & Excellence Summit on January 30, 2024.

Sanmar Matrix Metals is a pioneer in the global Rail Road and Transit segment, having supplied several prestigious metro projects across the world like Sydney Metro, PRASA Rail, BART, LNVG, and Victoria among others. The company is also a leading supplier of stainless-steel cast components for the oil/gas, construction, mining, transportation, and military sectors.



Rail Analysis Summit is a platform that brings together India's largest railway decision-makers, companies, and associates, the summit recognises performance, new ideas, and achievements of the industry.

# Chemplast Sanmar commences production of Paste PVC Resin at Cuddalore

Chemplast Sanmar Ltd (CSL) has commenced commercial production of its new speciality paste PVC resin facility in Cuddalore at an investment of ₹ 360 crore.

“The 41,000 tonnes per annum paste PVC project will further cement our position as the leading paste PVC producer in India taking up our capacity to about 1,10,000 tonnes per annum,” said Managing Director Ramkumar Shankar.

According to him, the total demand for paste PVC in the country is estimated at 1,60,000 tonnes per annum. CSL's Mettur plant produces 66,000 TPA for end user industries such as footwear, auto and furniture upholstery, artificial leather products and mats, the leading manufacturer of speciality PVC resin said in an investor presentation.

Asserting that India was heavily dependent on import of paste PVC from Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, China and Malaysia to some extent, he said that if one included Europe as a block, it would account for a significant portion of imports.

In FY23, India imported 86,000 tonnes against 62,000 tonnes in the first nine months of FY24. Post expansion, CSL will have 83% of domestic production capacity and 66% market share with the downstream capacities configured to CSL's resin quality, he added.

*Courtesy: The Hindu, February 28, 2024*



# The Sanmar Group Annual Day 2024

## Perspectives in Geopolitics, Economics, and Organisational Sustainability

The Sanmar Group Annual Day on February 28, 2024 at the Taj Coromandel, commenced with a series of talks delivered by three distinguished speakers, each offering unique insights into diverse realms.

The day began with political strategist **Rajat Sethi** speaking on the '*Run-up to 2024 Elections – The evolving political economy equation?*'

Rajat's presentation made it abundantly clear that the Indian economy's time has come, there is a recovery in rural areas, agricultural credit is growing, private investment is starting to recover and there is robustness in GST collections.

'I believe that this is a perfect Goldilocks situation for us. We are not too hot and not too cold as an economy. We are at an inflation number of 4 to 4½ percent, stable and stable growth of 7 to 7½ percent. This is far better than you know. Too much heating of the economy and reaching an 8½ growth number but then having double-digit inflation. That just doesn't serve the purpose. So, I think this is what even the MPC monetary policy committee also resolved and came to this conclusion that we are at that sweet spot of balancing growth and inflation to the perfect levels.'

'I had been tracking the overall mood of the nation for India Today Group.



*Rajat Sethi*

So, I had their data intelligence unit as well. What we have seen is that consistently for the past decade or so, the BJP and the NDA have never fallen below the majority mark, barring one incidence which was just prior to the Balakot which was after demonetisation and all there was largely negativity building up during that time, but then just roundabout in the election, it again swung up and we have consistently seen the popularity and the numbers for the BJP have never fallen that mark. This is the reason why the BJP is so confident that they would be swinging back to power, especially when the opposition seems in disarray. Also, BJP is confident that it has largely delivered on all its old promises and also on the developmental metrics,' according to Rajat.

*India for almost 700 years has been a wounded civilisation with a lot of scars. The confidence of Indians and the colonisation of our minds has been so intense that we have lost our confidence in our own abilities. There have been a movement, a concerted effort for the past decade or so to revive our confidence in our own self, and to start looking up to the world with the level of pride and prestige, which we always deserved.*

**-Rajat Sethi**



Dr TS Tirumurti

*The way we have started projecting India in the last several years has been a very robust type of projection of not just the image of India as a country, but also as a civilisation, and that is the image that we are coming to terms with and that's also, something that the world is coming to terms with.*

- Dr TS Tirumurti

**Dr TS Tirumurti** gave an overview of some of the *events that are happening around us and how geopolitics is being shaped right*, something that only a diplomat at his level can possibly see on a front-ringside basis and explore if there are solutions.

'In the world of today, India's leadership in foreign policy is necessary and, in some ways, it is actually inevitable. Just to give you some examples of some of the markers of the foreign policy where we can provide and we have provided leadership:

Charting out an independent foreign policy, Building bridges with warring sides, Pursuing a multilateral reform agenda not just in the UN but in the World Bank, and the IMF etc., Contributing to the Global Commons, Combating global challenges robustly Representing and catering to the interests of the global South, Bringing our civilisational ethos into our political thought - the theme of our G20 presidency was *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

### **GV Prasad** spoke on '*Building Blocks of a Lasting Organisation - Learnings from Dr Reddy's Journey*'

Congratulating Sanmar for the spectacular success of the Group has achieved in multiple fields, Prasad felt that he was not new to Sanmar and that he knew the culture of the Group as he has some alumni who have joined him from Sanmar.

On the journey of Dr Reddy's, he went on to explain, 'When a company grows from a small scale to a larger scale you can see everything, make decisions and have a positive impact. After a while, when you cross that scale, you use systems, processes and various other things to ensure things are done properly, and even if you go beyond that it has to be culture, which will help you execute at scale.

We moved ourselves as promoters from being operators to really strategic architects in terms of our roles and then we also empowered people, brought in processes, built a lot of transparency.

In this process, we had to change the way we governed the organisation. We had to upgrade the whole board process. The culture of the board, the composition of the board, and also the roles that the promoters played.



GV Prasad

He highlighted five essential aspects of a lasting organisation – Innovations, People, Governance, Culture, and Sustainability.

The diverse perspectives shared by these eminent speakers enriched the Annual Day event, offering attendees different perspectives and stimulating discussions on political, corporate, and geopolitical affairs.

*We committed to gender parity in the organisation by 2035. Today we have 19% women in the entire company globally. In India, we are much less but it's a challenge for us to take them.*

- GV Prasad

## Internal sessions (Taj Connemara, February 29, 2024, afternoon)



*Vijay Sankar.*

**Vijay Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group** presented a business overview for the year that was and the way going forward. 'The Group is back into the investment phase. We have invested almost ₹2400 crores in the last 2 – 2 ½ years mainly in the areas of speciality PVC, speciality chemicals, and shipping business. All our investments have been focused on these three areas.

Our Custom Manufactured Chemicals business where we have invested close to ₹800 crores has the potential to increase multiple times. In Chemplast, we have successfully commissioned the commercial production of paste PVC, the first time we have made paste PVC outside Mettur. The execution of these projects on time and at cost was achieved through leadership but more importantly through teamwork and an empowered team making timely decisions. We are happy with the tremendous cohesion visible in the teams'.

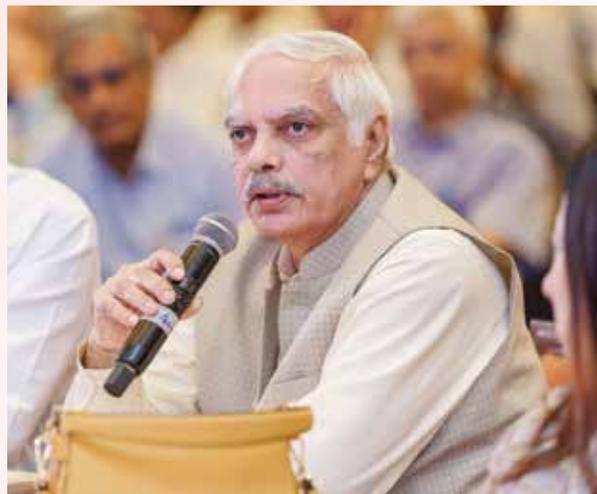


*N Kumar, Chairman,  
The Sanmar Group  
Corporate Board at the  
Annual Day.*



Sharad Verma, Managing Director and Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group had an enlightening presentation and discussion on the HR topic of 'Talent: Upskilling and Operating model shifts'.

*Directors of The Sanmar Group Corporate Board (from L to R): Navdeep Suri, Pradip Kapadia, Ravi Rajagopal and Priya Mohan at the forenoon session of the Group Annual Day.*





*Dr Amarnath Ananthanarayanan welcoming the gathering.*



*Lifetime Achievement award: RB Satish Kumar.*



*Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, Director, The Sanmar Group Corporate Board with Vijay Sankar.*



*Long service awardees: (L to R): R Padmanabhan, N Krishnamoorthy, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, M Raman and V Srinivas.*



*Long service awardees: (L to R): N Sabaa Thanneermalai, N Seshadri, V Joseph Chelladurai, R Sathyanarayanan, V Srinivasan, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, K Karnan, A Dinakaran, LR Madhava Krishnan, R Srinivasan, R Jeyaseelan, P L Alagappan, K Anandh.*



*Employees of the year: (L to R): Ramadevi Ravi, S Ganesh Kumar, Dr Krishna Kumar Rangachari, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, T Sankar, G Sankara Subramanian, GVV Ramesh Babu and M Sathiyamoorthy.*



*G Sankar, K Ramesh, L Kamalesh, V Ramesh, Krishna Kumar Rangachari, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, G Sankara Subramanian, P Manivannan, S Padmanabhan, S M Syed Imraan, A Daniel Jeyaseelan, M Aravinth, Chetan Prabhu.*



*(L to R): Lt. Col Kartik Datt, A Sarathy, KV Neelakantan, Amarnath Ananthanarayanan, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, R Ganesh, K Vijayakumar, S Sathish, N Rajinikanth and S Sathiya Karthi.*



*(L to R): Narayan Sethuramon, N Kumar, Vijay Sankar, Sriram V, B Mathialagan, Ramadevi Ravi and M Milton Asirvadham.*



(L to R): Ramkumar Shankar, *Chemplast Sanmar and Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Ltd.*, S Ganesh Kumar, *TCI Sanmar Chemicals*, Krishna Kumar Rangachari, *Custom Manufactured Chemicals Divn.*, and *Cabot Sanmar*.



(L to R): Narayan Sethuramon, *Sanmar Engineering and Matrix Metals Global*, B Visweswaran, *Sanmar Engineering and* CV Subba Rao, *Sanmar Shipping*.

The business managers of various Sanmar businesses - Chemicals, Custom Manufactured Chemicals,

Engineering, Foundries, and Shipping - presented their outlook on the year that went by and what lay ahead and highlighted key focus areas.

## The Sanmar Group Annual Safety Awards 2023

Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur Plant IV, received the Sanmar Safety Management Practices Award for exemplary dedication and adherence to stringent safety protocols. Apart

from the Safety Performance Award in the process and non-process categories, 3, 4 & 5 Star awards were presented for achieving Zero Loss Time Injury. The Special Award for the highest safe-man hours without Loss Time Injury went to Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam and Custom Manufactured Chemicals Divn., Berigai.



# Two more clean product carriers join Sanmar's Shipping fleet - Sanmar Sonatina and Sanmar Sneha

Sanmar Shipping's expanding Sanmar fleet now has two more additions by way of Sanmar Sonatina and Sanmar Sneha. Like the Sanmar fleet of tankers, both are clean product carriers.

**Sanmar Sonatina** is a long-range 1 (LR1) Clean Petroleum Product

tanker and with her induction, Sanmar has a niche spot in this segment size with five ships. The vessel is a 74,997 DWT clean product tanker capable of carrying three different grades of clean petroleum products simultaneously and has been sailing for the last 16 years.

**Sanmar Sneha** is a 49,000 DWT mid-range (MR) clean product tanker capable of carrying four different grades of clean petroleum products simultaneously. The vessel is a double-hulled oil tanker and has a length overall of 200 m and a breadth of 32 m. She is powered by an 8561 KW MAN B&W 6S50MC Main engine and is compliant with NOx Tier 1 emissions standards.

With the addition of these two ships, Sanmar's fleet size has increased to 13 ships.



# Global Investors Meet 2024

## Vijay Sankar at the panel discussion

### ‘Young Leaders Driving Transformation in Business’

Vijay Sankar, Chairman - The Sanmar Group spoke at a panel discussion on ‘Young Leaders Driving Transformation in Business’ at the Global Investor Meet 2024 organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu, on January 7, 2024.

Vijay Sankar remarked that the government has been supportive of the manufacturing sector and has provided the best environment for industrial skilling. He also stated that Sanmar, on its part, in an attempt to bridge the employment gap, recruits 200 + trainee engineers every year (diploma holders and engineering graduates) from colleges across Tamil Nadu.

On the subject of Joint Ventures, he talked about the changing expectations of both Indian and foreign partners,



(L to R): Lakshmi Venu, Rahul Mammen, Shankar Vanavarayar, Vijay Sankar and Anjali Singh.

given the technical excellence available in India. According to him, trust and transparency continue to be the foundation of successful partnerships of Sanmar spanning several decades.

Leaders from other prominent industrial groups in Tamil Nadu joined Vijay Sankar in the panel discussion.

## GenNext banks on R&D to innovate and grow

Yogesh.Kabirdoss@timesgroup.com

Tamil Nadu's family businesses are transforming. The younger generation is focusing on innovation and research and development (R&D) to build on their elders efforts and expand their footprint globally.

At a session on ‘Young Leaders Driving Transformation in Business’, at the Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet 2024, the GenNext of business families shared their future plans in the state.

Tyre manufacturer MRF is setting a R&D facility at Trichy, with a testing track. MRF MD Rahul Mammen Mappillai says companies need to evolve



Lakshmi Venu



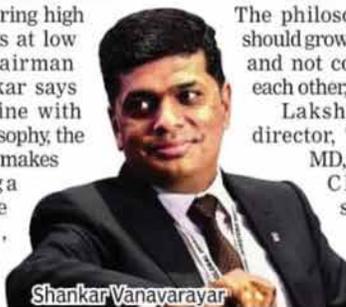
Rahul Mammen Mappillai

at a rapid pace as automobile manufacturers launch new vehicles frequently. “Room for failure is almost nil. To be successful in the future, we cannot be matching benchmarks, but will have to set benchmarks. We have to create products that are truly unique for Indian operating conditions,” he says.

Sanmar Group's focus is on R&D and manufacturing high quality products at low cost. Its chairman

Vijay Sankar says that, in line with this philosophy, the company makes PVC using a renewable source, ethanol.

Anjali



Shankar Vanavarayar

Singh, executive chairperson, Anand Group, says the company grew on the strength of its partnerships for the past 60 years. “We have a number of joint ventures globally, which provide the best in technology. International players are looking for partnerships for technological transformation with Indian companies.

The philosophy is we should grow with each other and not compete with each other,” she says.

Lakshmi Venu, director, TAFE and MD, Sundaram Clayton

says,



Vijay Sankar



Anjali Singh

multi-generational businesses are known for stability and longevity. “For us in

TAFE and Sundaram Clayton, the robust policy environment and plentiful skilled manpower in Tamil Nadu helped us to build our foundation in manufacturing.”

The \$1.5 billion Sanmar Group headquartered in Chennai has all its units only in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, besides manufacturing facilities in Mexico and Egypt. MRF with operations in six states has 50% of its capital deployed in Tamil Nadu, with all R&D facilities located in Chennai and Trichy. “We believe in the state. Looking at the future CAPEX, 70% is in Tamil Nadu. So, we are here to stay and bullish on Tamil Nadu,” says Rahul Mammen Mappillai.

Courtesy: The Times of India, January 8, 2024.

# Jolly Rovers cricketer Sai Sudharsan making giant strides

It has been Sanmar's constant endeavour to find young talent, nurture them in the first-division league and help them reach greater heights.

One such talent is Sai Sudharsan, who has represented Alwarpet and Jolly Rovers Cricket Clubs owned by The Sanmar Group and has climbed greater heights both in the IPL and in the Indian team.

In the 2023 IPL season, Sai excelled for Gujarat Titans, who ended the campaign as runners-up. He played 8 games and scored 362 runs at an average of 51.71 and a strike rate of 142. His highest score of 96 came in the finals of IPL 2023 against Chennai Super Kings.



Sai went on to represent Surrey in the English county championship this season where he made 116 runs in 2 matches with a highest score of 73.

He was a part of the India A team which played against the England Lions. He played two games and had scores of 97 and 117.

In December 2023, his consistent performances were recognised by the Indian selectors which earned him the India cap in one-day international format. He had a good outing and scored 2 half-centuries in the 3 ODIs in South Africa.



*It is an honour for me to represent such a prestigious club like Sanmar. And the facilities at Chemplast is one of the best. I personally feel that facility has helped me to get better as a cricketer. I'm truly grateful to Bharath Reddy sir and Vijay Sankar sir who had the trust and faith in me.*

# Sanmar-Vidya Mandir Sportstar Invitational U-14 cricket tournament

The Sanmar-Vidya Mandir Sportstar Invitational U-14 cricket tournament 2024 featured 24 league matches, each played for 20 overs, and two semi-final matches, each played for 30 overs.

In the finals played at the Gandhi Nagar grounds on January 25, 2024, St. Bede's Anglo Indian Higher Secondary School was declared the winner and Nellai Nadar Matriculation Higher Secondary School was declared the runners-up.

Jolly Rovers cricketer and first-class Ranji trophy player R Jesuraj was the chief guest and distributed the trophies to the winners in the presence



of Vidya Mandir School Principal Shoba Raman and Vice Principal SH Kanchanamala.

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## Sanmar Engineering at the India Energy Week 2024

Sanmar Engineering Technologies participated in the India Energy Week held in Goa from February 6 to 9, 2024.

At the inauguration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised unprecedented investment in the

sector, highlighting its global significance. “India Energy Week is not just India’s event but a reflection of India with the world and India for the world,” he said.

The Sanmar stall served as a dynamic showcase, projecting Sanmar’s engineering capabilities and technological prowess. Visitors explored and engaged with the diverse facets of Sanmar’s engineering expertise and its wide range of flow control solutions.



*Mummadi Venugopal, Senior Vice President (Procurement), Reliance Industries Limited at the Sanmar stall.*



*Senior Management team from Engineers India Limited, New Delhi at the stall.*

# Snippets

## 17th Annual India Chemical Industry Outlook Conference

The 17th Annual India Chemical Industry Outlook Conference & Exhibition was held at Mumbai on 29 February and 1 March 2024. Day two of the Conference had a panel discussion on the topic 'Deep dive into Functional Excellence,' chaired by Ramkumar Shankar, Managing Director, Chemplast Sanmar. The panelists looked at ways to differentiate the chemical industry, in challenging times, through creative use of GenAI, strategic restructuring of supply chains and targeted reductions in product development cycles.



## National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls



Narayan Sethuramon, Managing Director, Sanmar Engineering Technologies was a key speaker at the inaugural session of the National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls (NCSTC) held on January 30, 2024 in New Delhi.

Organised by the Ministry of External Affairs - Directorate of Foreign Trade, the conference discussed international best practices and the strategic trade control regime in India.

Narayan delivered the industry perspective on the subject in his capacity as Co-Chairman, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), National Committee on EXIM. He applauded the initiatives taken by DGFT for insightful revisions to the SCOMET policy to make it more industry-friendly without diluting the pre-eminent focus on national security concerns.

## Women's Day Workshop



Sanmar organised a workshop on March 6, 2024 on Women's role in Change Management as a Learning & Development initiative for Women's Day. Master trainer Dr Anjana Vinod conducted the workshop to sensitise women about unconscious bias in professional environments. The activities and training sessions covered crucial aspects such as team building, collaborative creativity and tools that aide in understanding personal patterns and overcoming the set-backs.

Narayan Sethuramon, Managing Director (HR & Corporate Affairs) delivered the leadership address and emphasised the integral role of women in the success of an organisation, underscoring the commitment to equity as one of Sanmar's core tenets.

## State-of-the-art Mammogram facility at N Sankar Department of Imaging, VHS

N Sankar, the late Chairman of The Sanmar Group, envisioned a full-fledged Imaging Department at the VHS. After contributing towards a CT scanner in 2020-21 and an MRI in 2021-22, Sanmar has presently donated towards a Mammogram unit, thereby making the VHS Imaging Department comprehensive. With this, Sanmar's donation to the VHS imaging department is almost ₹9 crores.

The state-of-the-art Mammogram facility was inaugurated by N Kumar on January 25, 2024. Speaking on the occasion N Kumar said, 'Let me not talk about the machine itself to the experts here, as I will be carrying coal to Newcastle. I hope that this machine will help in reducing the cost to needy patients who are one of the primary concerns of Mr N Sankar. Sanmar has a long association with VHS which started way back in '70s with my mother.'



*N Kumar inaugurating the Mammogram facility in the presence of Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar and VHS Honorary Secretary Dr S Suresh.*

Significantly, N Sankar Department of Imaging is part of the Madhuram & KS Narayanan Block, named after the parents of Sankar and Kumar.

The machine is a Selenia Dimensions 3D, the first FDA, CE approved Digital Mammography from Hologic, which revolutionised mammography, by dramatically shifting the paradigms of breast imaging and early breast cancer detection through two-dimensional imaging capabilities.



*Dr Bhagyam Raghavan, Senior Consultant Radiologist, explaining the facility.*



# Sanmar donates towards establishment of a Premium Elite Cardiac and Vascular Cath Lab at the VHS

The Sanmar Group CSR Trust supported The Voluntary Health Services (VHS) with ₹5 Crores towards setting up of a Premium Elite - Cardiac and Vascular Cath Lab at the VHS Cardiology Centre. The multi-speciality hospital at Taramani, Chennai, provides affordable quality healthcare to the community.

The Sanmar Group in the last few years has supported the VHS in setting up of the N Sankar Department of Imaging at the Madhuram



*N Kumar presenting the cheque to Dr S Suresh, Honorary Secretary, VHS, in the presence of Vijay Sankar, at the Sanmar headquarters on March 18, 2024.*

and KS Narayanan Block, with donation towards a CT and MRI Scanner and a Mammogram.

## Sports Day at Ekadaksha Learning Center

Ekadaksha Learning Center for special children conducted its first Sports Day on January 25, 2024 at the Whistle

Urban Hub, Chennai. The event was supported by the KSN Sports Foundation, that promotes sports as its very mission. It was particularly a memorable day to witness the joy of inclusive sports with adaptive sports kits among children with special needs.



*Mohammed Riaz, former captain of the Indian hockey team and Hiten Joshi, Trustee, Ekadaksha and CEO, Tamil Nadu Tennis Association, seen with the special children and teachers.*

# Support to the Government Veterinary Hospital, Gonur

Acknowledging the importance of livestock as a source of livelihood among the rural communities in Mettur, Chemplast Sanmar supported the Government Veterinary Hospital in Gonur with an Ultrasound scanning machine, cold storage facility and a chiller box for vaccines.

The Group also conducted a veterinary camp in Thippampatti, Gonur Village Panchayat in partnership with the Government, bringing the services to the doorstep of cattle owners.



## Mega Medical Camp at Mettur

To ensure preventive and secondary health care services to the rural community of Mettur, Chemplast Sanmar organised a free medical camp in collaboration with Sri Gokulam Hospital, Salem on Feb 8, 2024. The camp was conducted in the

Vaidheeshwara Higher Secondary School, Mettur with Sri Gokulam Hospital providing a team of 7 Specialists, 28 technicians, and support staff nurses to attend to the patients.

More than 500 people benefitted from the camp that offered Cardiac screening – both ECG, ECHO, and other basic health checkups.

*S Gajendiran, Chemplast Sanmar, inaugurating the Medical Camp.*



# Construction of ICDS centre at Thippampatti in partnership with Tamil Nadu State Government

Chemplast Sanmar in partnership with the State Government of Tamil Nadu under *Namakku Namme* Scheme, constructed and equipped the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centre at Thippampatti Gonur Village Panchayat. The ICDS targets children up to the age of 6, to improve their health, nutrition and education.

The new centre has provided a clean, safe and hygienic environment for the children, that will contribute to improving their health and nutrition status and focusing on their physical and psychological development.



On February 3, 2024, on behalf of the management, Dr KP Krishnan, Director, The Sanmar Group Corporate Board, and Ramkumar Shankar, Managing Director, Chemplast Sanmar, inaugurated the ICDS facility.



## Cyclone Michaung relief



The Sanmar Group supported The Society for the Rights of All Women with Disabilities with relief kits during Cyclone Michaung in Chennai. The relief kit included dry rations/ essentials for daily cooking, immunity boosting supplements, mosquito net, matt, hygiene and sanitary items. Acknowledging that people with disabilities are always more vulnerable during natural disasters, Narayan Sethuramon, Managing Director, HR and Corporate Services, The Sanmar Group gave away the relief kits to the disabled.

# Safe drinking water at Government High School, Pudusampalli, Mettur

Clean drinking water for children is a priority to their good health.

Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, installed a 500 LPH capacity UV water purifier system with ORSi technology and 1000 litres of SS storage tank to provide a safe drinking water facility to Pudusampalli Government School which has over 600 students.



# CSR initiative at Acerlan Matrix Metals, Mexico

The management and employees of Sanmar's steel castings plant in Mexico - Acerlan Matrix Metals, organised an event to distribute blankets to the underprivileged and elderly residents

of the Aculco municipality. The event was graced by the presence of members of the Municipal Council, who expressed their appreciation for the gesture. What made the occasion even more heart-warming was the interaction with past employees of the company, some of whom retired as early as the 1990s.



*K Praveen, Acerlan Matrix Metals, handing over the blankets.*

## Iconic buildings of Tamil Nadu

# Gangaikonda Cholapuram: A Testament to Chola Grandeur

In the heart of Tamil Nadu, amidst the rich tapestry of India's historical landscape, lies Gangaikonda Cholapuram. This ancient city stands as a testament to the grandeur of the Chola dynasty, renowned for its architectural marvels, cultural richness, and enduring legacy. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Gangaikonda Cholapuram beckons visitors from around the globe to immerse themselves in its storied past and architectural splendour.

### **Historical Significance:**

The Incomparable Living Chola temples were built by rulers of the Chola realm, which extended over all of South India and the adjoining islands. The site incorporates three incredible 11th and 12th-century temples: the Brihadeeswarar temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadeeswarar temple

at Gangaikonda Cholapuram and the Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram. Gangaikonda Cholapuram was established in the 11th century CE by Rajendra Chola I, the son of the illustrious Chola emperor, Rajaraja Chola I. The city served as the capital of the Chola dynasty for a significant period, symbolising the zenith of Chola's power and influence. Its strategic location facilitated trade and commerce, contributing to the prosperity of the Chola empire.

The name "Gangaikonda Cholapuram" translates to "The Town of the Chola who Conquered the Ganges," commemorating Rajendra Chola I's victorious military campaign to the Ganges region. This conquest solidified the Chola empire's status as one of the most formidable powers in South Asia during its time.

### **Architectural Splendour:**

At the heart of Gangaikonda Cholapuram lies the magnificent Brihadeeswarar Temple, an architectural masterpiece dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple is reminiscent of its counterpart in Thanjavur, constructed by Rajaraja Chola I. However, Brihadeeswarar Temple in Gangaikonda Cholapuram is a distinct marvel, with its soaring vimana (tower), intricately carved sculptures, and ornate pillars.



The temple complex is replete with shrines, *mandapas* (halls), and *gopurams* (gateway towers), each adorned with exquisite carvings depicting mythological tales, celestial beings, and scenes from everyday life. The grandeur of Brihadeeswarar Temple is a testament to the Chola dynasty's architectural prowess and devotion to the divine.

### **Cultural Heritage:**

Gangaikonda Cholapuram thrived as a centre of political and economic power and as a hub of culture and learning. The city attracted scholars, artisans, and merchants from far and wide, fostering an environment of intellectual exchange and artistic innovation. Its temples served as centres of religious worship, where rituals, festivals, and cultural performances enriched the spiritual and social fabric of the community.

The Chola rulers were patrons of art and literature, and their patronage led to the flourishing of Tamil poetry, sculpture, and music. Gangaikonda Cholapuram, with its opulent temples and vibrant cultural milieu stands as a testament to this rich heritage, preserving the legacy of the Chola dynasty for future generations to cherish and admire.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Site:**

In recognition of its historical significance, architectural brilliance, and cultural heritage, Gangaikonda Cholapuram was inscribed as a

UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004. The designation underscores the site's universal value and the need for its preservation and protection.

As a World Heritage Site, Gangaikonda Cholapuram attracts scholars, historians, archaeologists, and tourists eager to explore its ancient ruins and unravel the mysteries of its past. The site serves as a living museum, offering insights into the art, architecture, and socio-political dynamics of the Chola period, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

### **Preserving the Legacy:**

While Gangaikonda Cholapuram shines as a beacon of the Chola dynasty's grandeur, it also faces challenges in terms of conservation and management. Environmental factors, urbanisation, and tourism pose threats to the site's integrity, necessitating concerted efforts by authorities, scholars, and local communities to ensure its sustainable preservation.

Through collaborative initiatives involving research, conservation, and community engagement, stakeholders strive to safeguard Gangaikonda Cholapuram's legacy for future generations. By promoting awareness, implementing conservation measures, and fostering responsible tourism practices, they aim to uphold the site's Outstanding Universal Value and ensure its enduring relevance in the global cultural landscape.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram is a testament to the Chola dynasty's enduring legacy, architectural brilliance, and cultural richness. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it serves as a beacon of India's ancient civilisation, inviting visitors to embark on a journey through time and immerse themselves in its storied past. By preserving and celebrating its heritage, Gangaikonda Cholapuram continues to inspire awe and admiration, connecting people across generations and continents to the remarkable achievements of the Chola civilisation.



