

# THE HINDU

## Sanmar Group turns 35

*M. Dinesh Varma / 01 July 2011*

**CHENNAI:** “These are designed to fail”, said the shop floor manager about the ring-shaped metal plates at The Sanmar Group's joint venture factory, the BS&B Safety Systems, in Karapakkam near Chennai. Each time the rupture discs fail, it marks the success of the factory staff in putting together a high-end engineering device that serves as a protective barrier against extreme pressure settings in process industries much like how the circuit-breaker acts as safeguard against a voltage spike.

The rupture disc has been a critical input for Chandrayaan 1, the Bhavini fast breeder nuclear reactor at Kalpakkam and the integrated fire suppression system in battle tanks, the manager explained to a group of media persons taken on a tour of Sanmar's facilities in Chennai and Tiruchi.

In fact, the portfolio of precision-engineered products such as the FlowServe mechanical seals coming off its Chennai plants or the Xomox-Sanmar pacific valve, or the Sanmar-Tyco safety relief valves rolling out of the Sanmar Group's foundry-factory units in Viralimalai in Tiruchi, best illustrate two key attributes of the company itself, a focus on niche products and an artful management of multiple global joint ventures.

As it turns 35 on Friday, the Sanmar Group looks to consolidate its joint venture business philosophy, strengthen its unique global delivery model. “Coming through over three decades of successful management of multiple joint ventures, our business philosophy is now highly evolved and founded as much on trust and transparency as clear demarcation of market spaces with partners,” said Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman, The Sanmar Group.

From a start-up founded on an investment of Rs.15 lakh, the group has grown into a \$1 billion global conglomerate with an asset base in excess of \$1.5 billion and a presence in some 25 businesses. Sanmar's operations now spread across seven legal entities, five joint ventures and 12 business units across five locations – Karapakkam and Viralimalai in Chennai, Iowa and Houston in the U.S. and Mexico.

The company is also exploring a couple of new joint ventures that are likely to be firmed up by next year. Apart from providing its partners a low cost source for customised high-end products, the group has established as its USP an integrated value chain linking an in-house steel foundry, manufacturing plants, machining and sales and support services, says M. N. Radhakrishnan, Chairman of Sanmar Engineering.