

The KS Narayanan Centenary Oration

30 January 2019

Guest of Honour:

The Rt Hon David Cameron

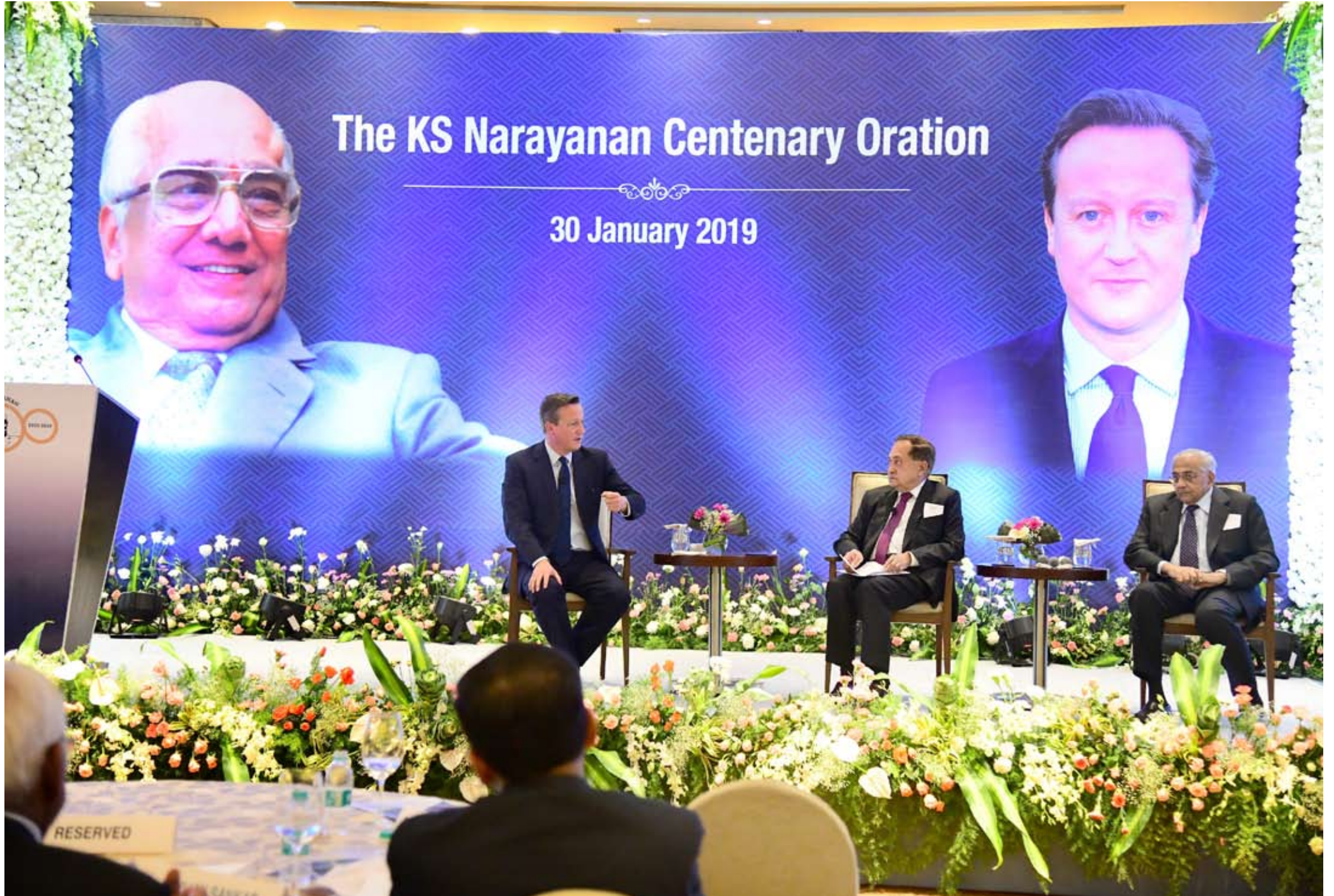
Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2010-2016)

The KS Narayanan

30 Janu







January 2019



KS Narayanan – an entrepreneur par excellence

G BALACHANDAR

Chennai, January 29

The year 2019 is significant for the Chennai-headquartered billion dollar plus Sanmar Group, as the calendar year marks the 100th birth anniversary of its founder KS Narayanan (KSN), who epitomised a culture of business that imbibed boldness, partnership, ethics and transparency.

KSN sowed the seeds for the success and rise of the Sanmar Group, now a diversified industrial conglomerate with presence across chemicals, engineering technologies and shipping with overseas operations in countries like Egypt.

Born in 1919 at Kallidaikurichi, a small town on the banks of river Tamiraparani in southern Tamil Nadu, to SNN Sankaralinga Iyer and Pichuammal, KSN rose to become one of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in industries such as cement and PVC in the country.

After his marriage at the age of 16 in 1935, KSN joined Indo-Commercial Bank, promoted by

his father, and in the subsequent years, gained knowledge and hands-on experience across industries ranging from printing, rubber, and industrial chemicals to PVC resins.

“One problem that consistently plagues small-scale industries is that the coffers dry up at a critical stage in their growth. In my own career, I came across a dozen cases of excellent ventures running aground at the precise juncture at which an injection of precious capital would have made resounding success of them,” KSN

wrote in his book *Friendships and Flashbacks – My Life and Times.*”

Overseas exposure

As a start-up entrepreneur, KSN faced similar challenges in his early ventures. But he pulled it off dramatically and made successful businesses out of them.

He was an entrepreneur by nature. KSN’s entrepreneurial journey began when he took over a struggling printing ink factory near Chennai in 1930s and turned it around.

The venture, which bagged orders from Tamil magazine *Kalki* and newspapers such as *The Hindu* and *The In-*

dian Express provided him numerous learnings.

As he moved from printing ink to the rubber business, KSN also turned the capital-starved South India Rubber Works in Coimbatore around after his family took over the business.

He also came up with innovative solutions in the tyre retreading business.

His exemplary skills were acknowledged when a tyre on a military plane burst beyond repair, leaving it stranded in Coimbatore. There was no spare tyre and KSN was asked to help though he didn’t have any technology to handle aviation tyre. The old tyre was brought to KSN’s factory and based on the old tyre, he made a solid rubber tyre instead of a hollow pressurised tyre to carry the plane safely to a place where a more suitable tyre could be found.

He repeated the success story in his next venture – industrial chemicals – too.

KSN joined the management of India Cements, which his father started in 1946, after his stints in a few countries where he acquired expertise

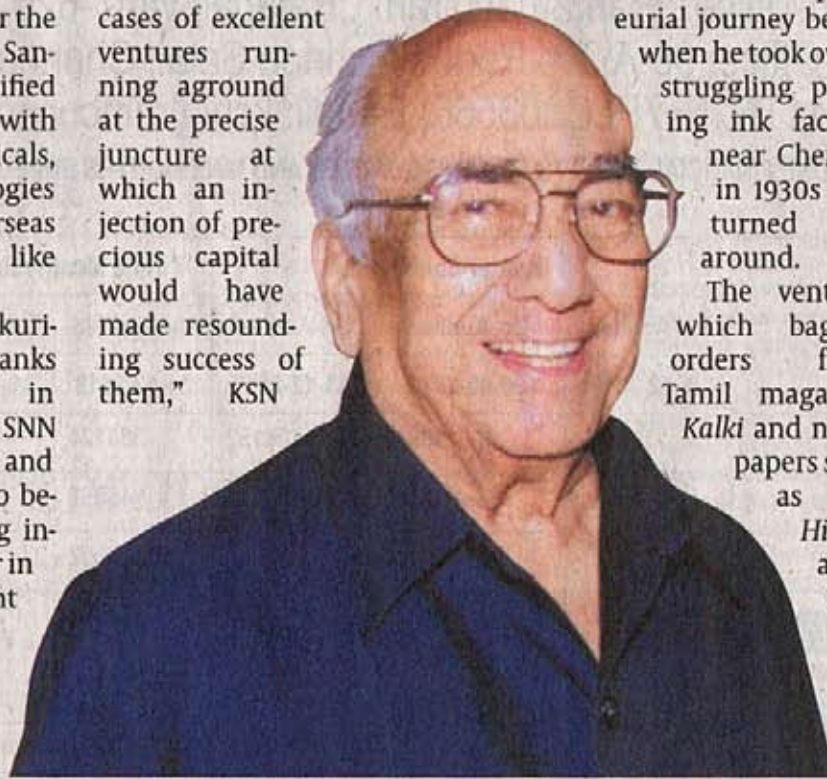
in cement manufacturing and new technologies. He was associated with the company for more than three decades.

KSN, along with TS Narayanaswami, who the former called his closest friend and discerning advisor, expanded the group’s activities starting from the 1960s. Chemicals and Plastics India Ltd (Chemplast) pioneered the production of PVC from molasses, a by-product of sugar mills.

KSN handed over the reins of administration to his sons Sankar and Kumar during the 1980s, even as he continued to guide them till his last breath.

KSN’s leadership of the Sanmar Group was based on the highest standards of ethics, transparency and integrity.

“One notices that these days people don’t mind cutting corners to make their lives easier, even if it does not result in any direct financial gain to them. If a person has not adhered to any of our policies, we deem it a violation. Our ethics philosophy has been in practice for over five decades,” says N Sankar, Chairman, Sanmar Group.



K. S. Narayanan: man with mettle

The entrepreneur would have turned 100 on January 30

K.T. JAGANNATHAN

It is difficult to give up power. It requires enormous courage to give it up, especially when the going is good. It comes ever so naturally only to a few. Late K.S. Narayanan was an exception. Upon touching 60, he quit as managing director.

"In a company where every employee is expected to retire at 60, it does not seem fair for an MD to hang on any longer than that," he said in his book "Friendships and flashbacks – my life and times."

To step back and cede active control to the new order – even if it meant passing on the baton to one's offspring – revealed the aligned mindset of a confident entrepreneur in Narayanan. His thought process, perhaps, became the guiding fulcrum subsequently for his sons to build the Sanmar business around.

Negotiating skills

His negotiating skills with bankers were legendary. The manner in which he navigated The India Cements and Chemplast

out of trouble was well-known. Little known, however, was his rescue act for The Music Academy, which is considered the Mecca of Carnatic music. When the academy ran into financial trouble in the late '60s, there was this suggestion to turn the Academy into a cinema hall at least for a part of the year! At the prodding of Late T.T. Krishnamachari, Narayanan successfully negotiated with the Indian Bank an easy repayment scheme for the institution. That saw him nominated as a patron of the academy.

In the post-IPL (Indian Premier League) era, cricket has become a religion for every countryman and corporates vie with one another to get a piece of the cricketing action. In former times, however, only a few like Narayanan suo motu nurtured cricketers and cricket. There was no quid pro quo. The Chemplast-sponsored Jolly

Rovers even today remains an iconic name in the cricketing map of the city of Chennai.

It requires a law to enforce CSR (corporate social responsibility)

these days. But Narayanan and his ilk, too, served. And, they did it quietly without much ado. "I was no flower cultivated in the hot house of management school," he narrated in his book. For him, it was learning by experience. And, he laid much emphasis on family values. That, perhaps, goaded him to embark upon an ad hoc style of helping students by serving *vaara saapaddu* (weekly food).

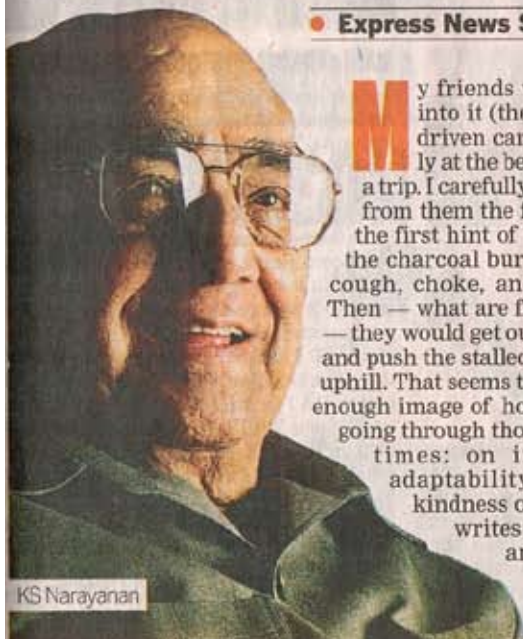
Subsequently, this was extended to fee sponsorship. Since then, the Narayanan clan and the Sanmar Group have gone on to consistently contribute to social causes, including for of education and health.

As he elucidated in his book, his managerial skills were acquired in the 'school of experience.' To put it in the words of a Sanmar insider, "He (Narayanan) was a management guru with dozens of management textbook rolled into one." The HR (human relationship) skills assiduously built and practised by him, perhaps, were primarily the reason for the Sanmar Group to successfully carry forward many a joint venture in a marriage of happy co-existence. Even as the Sanmar fraternity celebrates the birth centenary of Narayanan on January 30, the way the group suo motu undertook to pay up every depositor of Overseas Sanmar many summers ago when the industry was going through trying times, showed the ethical standards set by him.



Remembering KS Narayanan through his own words

• Express News Service



KS Narayanan

My friends would pile into it (the charcoal-driven car) cheerfully at the beginning of a trip. I carefully concealed from them the fact that at the first hint of a gradient the charcoal burner would cough, choke, and give up. Then — what are friends for? — they would get out, cursing, and push the stalled rattletrap uphill. That seems to be a good enough image of how we kept going through those difficult times: on ingenuity, adaptability, and the kindness of friends," writes KS Narayanan in his autobiography.

While much has been written about Narayanan's business acumen, in the 283-page autobiography 'Friendships and Flashbacks', friends, family and sometimes enemies, take centre stage. The rest — fame, success and power fell into place like clockwork actors in a child's Christmas play. January 30 will mark his birth centenary.

With the ability to not harbour resentment towards people who may have even cost him a fortune, perhaps acquired with age, Narayanan speaks about people who had harmed him with the same fondness reserved for friends. Speaking about an Englishman that he remembers by the name 'Peterson', whom he had appointed the general manager of Nanco Printing Inks, he writes, "He really sealed the fate of Nanco

Inks but I could never bring myself to blame or reproach him." Peterson, who helped Nanco Printing Inks pioneer magnesium carbonate-based ink, had failed to revise the price of the ink, resulting in the company's profits crashing. The sense of defeat, aided by alcoholism, had driven Peterson to the verge of insanity.

From his first stint at the Indo Commercial bank, Narayanan chronicles, for posterity's sake, his journey through various enterprises he took up along the way, recalling incidents that once a while, lifted the experience to beyond merely the ordinary. He recalls a certain Srinivasan, who mistook condoms, that a young duo was working on using the 'dipping method' at Nanco rubber, for balloons; the next day, workers opened the

doors to see condoms, some filled with air, and others with water.

He, however, reserved, the most special place in the book, for his wife Madhuram. "All I know is that if having reached some conclusions on the subject, I had been asked to choose all over again, I would have chosen Madhuram," he wrote.

In other pages, he remembers the doctor Dr Achar, who saved his youngest son Kumar's life. And his own closeness to his roots. "Any device that malfunctioned — from my grandson's toy to the air conditioner would receive my own ministrations," he wrote. This was accompanied by the photo of the man, clad in white, who stood out even in a black and white photograph, inspecting the wings of a ceiling fan.



Any device that malfunctioned — from my grandson's toy to the air conditioner would receive my own ministrations

—writes KS Narayanan in his book 'Friendships and Flashbacks'

Stories from work

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K S NARAYANAN

A fighter & visionary collaborator

S Viswanathan

The years following Independence threw up several enterprising, multifaceted entrepreneurs who charted new paths, helped build the economy and had a zest for life.

K S Narayanan, whose birth centenary falls on January 30, was one such colourful personality. He lived a full life, since entering business in his late teens, and remained active till he breathed his last at 93. India Cements and the Sanmar group bear testimony to his invaluable contribution as a major industrial icon of TN.

Tirunelveli was home to several business leaders, including S N N Sankaralinga Iyer, who contributed to the state's industrialization from the 1940s. Iyer, who founded the Indo-Commercial Bank, developed a bond with his talented employee T S Narayanaswami and involved him in its development. Iyer's son Narayanan also cut his teeth at the bank. The three were so entrepreneurial they conceived a large cement plant at Thalaiyuthu. And India Cements was born.

In his early years, Narayanan, aided

PATRON OF SPORTS

Work was not all of Narayanan's life. He also set up the Madhuram Narayanan Charitable Trust & Foundation, The Sanmar Welfare Trust and KSN Sports Foundation. Passionate about cricket, tennis and playing cards, he acquired Jolly Rovers Cricket Club. "I am a very clubbable man. I had my share of clubs: the MCC, the Gymkhana, the Cosmopolitan and the Madras Club. These have given me greatest gratification," Narayanan had said.

by his father, excelled in acquiring smaller businesses and turning them around. Narayanan and Narayanaswami became a formidable team. The former taking charge of internal administration, while the latter's charm was invaluable in managing the rigours of the licence-permit-quota raj.

With R Venkataraman as TN industry minister, there was a constant search for new opportunities for industrial development and the dynamic duo rode the wave with PVC, in collaboration with BF Goodrich, USA. The availability of chlorine at Mettur Chemicals was a big advantage. After two years of painstaking efforts and tackling tough bureaucratic barriers at the Centre, Chemplast was set up. To manage the sophisticated business, Narayanan's son N Sankar and Narayanaswami's son N Srinivasan did postgraduation in chemical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.

Teething troubles at Chemplast, devaluation of the rupee in 1966 and competition in cement and PVC, made the going tough. The group also suffered with the sudden demise of Narayanaswami in 1968. Those were the days when new entrepreneurs heavily depended on institutional finance. Following internal dissent, Srinivasan was moved out; the losses incurred led to financial institutions taking control of the management of India Cements in the early 1980s. It was when a major company like

ITC was ready to buy it that R Venkataraman intervened. A settlement was reached through handing the cement business to Srinivasan and the other family retaining control of Chemplast.

Despite the head start TN had with Mettur Chemicals, the thick concentration of leather chemical units, Chemplast and the large refineries and petrochemical units in Manali, the state's share in chemical production is less than 6% of the entire country. The expertise of the Sanmar group in PVC could be leveraged by thinking of a naphtha cracker unit that can support a large number of downstream units. It is time for such a big move. It would be a tribute to the enterprise of Narayanan.

(The author is the editor of Industrial Economist)

1919-2012

Remembering 'Nana' on his centenary

R. MOHAN I DC
CHENNAI, JAN 29

The former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, will be delivering the KS Narayanan oration on January 30. The day marks the centenary of the suave, soft-spoken pioneering industrialist of Tamil Nadu.

'Nana', who passed away on September 28, 2012 left an indelible impression on those he interacted with. From the fertile lands of the Tamiraparani in and around his ancestral village of Kallidaikuruchi in Tirunelveli district, 'Nana' rose to build an industrial empire through many decades of the vicissitudes of business in an ethical and upright manner that makes him an industrial legend of the state.

His autobiographical 'Friendships and Flashbacks' captures in a humorous and yet revealing manner while casting light on many incidents that were to dot his life and times. It is a remarkable story of abundance of business sense in people who lived within a twenty mile radius of Kallidaikuruchi and who were responsible for the establishment of many of the top industrial empires of

the state, beginning with TVS, Amalgamations, India Cements, Easun and Chemplast.

Nana's story follows a pattern of ingenuity shown by many of them from the area during the war when privations of the people in extreme war shortages also led to opportunity. For instance, Nana's genius in handling rubber to retread old tires was to make him an early fortune in World War II while also shaping him into the shrewd industrialist he was to become. Of course, he had had a bit of a silver spoon of a start in the 'banking' business established by his father, SNN Sankaralinga Iyer.

The passage of time may have changed business ties over decades, but Nana always paid generous tributes to his friend and mentor - "Abboy" TS Narayanaswami, the father of N. Srinivasan and N. Ramachandran, who was one of the principal motive forces in starting up the cement industry in the state along with Nana's father. ("Soon to become my long-term business associate, my most discerning adviser and by a sort of natural progression,



Late K.S. Narayanan

my closest friend", Nana wrote in his book.

How the two as young men ventured into the industry and built the foundation for the cement major India Cements was a grand story of the conquest of trials and tribulations of business people in the country in the days of the quota and licence raj. Nana's own success story in formal industry started with an ink factory that he turned around and then went on to conquer rubber with the typical ingenious ways of Indian entrepreneurs whose crisis management skills constitute a byword for innovation and thinking on one's feet.

His venturing into manufacturing PVC resin



David Cameron

was the turning point in his life as well as that of the biggest industry he built in the Sanmar Group. The aligning of latest technology in manufacturing was his biggest forte. To his credit, Nana would not work a day beyond the age of 60 when he handed over the reins to his sons N. Sankar and N. Kumar and hit the 'paplu' table with a vengeance as a pastime. His humorous stories of escapades and how he was forced to drink Scotch to mask the taste of caviar and numerous other escapades abroad marks him as a genial man of good humour.

Nana displayed a sporting spirit in everything he did in business as well as in

sport itself, of which he became one of the first industrial patrons in sponsoring Jolly Rovers in Chennai's senior division cricket league. If succeeding generations took cricket sponsorship to a professional level, it is to be taken as their tribute to Nana, the pioneering industrialist who simply loved sport.

Seen as an institution builder, he took keen interest in industry affairs as well as doing one stint as the Sherriff of Madras. It is six years since he passed away, but he went leaving an indelible mark on the life of Madras and Chennai as an entrepreneur with a golden heart and a genuine concern for his employees.

I remember him as an avuncular figure who genially signed a letter in his Dhun Building office in 1967 stating India Cements would sponsor my candidature for a seat in AC College of Technology. Seeing his grace in dealing with a gawky school student, it was not hard to imagine how easily he would have made friends forever in his life. They don't make industrialists like 'Nana' anymore.

Strongman politics is on the rise, says Cameron

Democracies must ensure rule of law: former British PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Strongman, authoritarian politics is globally on the rise and democratic countries should re-emphasise their basic values, protect institutions and freedoms and ensure rule of law, said David Cameron, the former Conservative Prime Minister of the U.K., on Wednesday.

"Yes, it's [authoritarian politics] on the rise. We should look for the source of our strength. Britain is now facing the real challenge because of Brexit. But even in the middle of this, I will invest in Britain because I know my investment will be safe because you have the rule of law. If someone steals my investment, I can take the government to the court of law. So rule of law is actually the heart of the strength of British society," he said, while delivering the K.S. Narayanan Centenary Oration here.

Mr. Cameron was introduced by N. Sankar, chairman of the Sanmar Group. The speech was followed by a conversation between Mr. Cameron and N. Ram, Chairman of The Hindu Publishing Group.

Asked if India is also facing a rise of authoritarian politics, the former British Prime Minister said it's an opportunity for India to reassert its democratic credentials.

"India's strength is that it's the biggest democracy in the world. Our democracies are based on free press, free expression, independent courts, strong institutions,



David Cameron, former U.K. Prime Minister, in conversation with N. Ram, Chairman of The Hindu Publishing Group, in Chennai on Wednesday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rule of law. The question is where do you want to be. You want to be up here? You want to fight corruption? You want transparency? Honesty? Or you want to be down here, with [Russian President Vladimir] Putins and [Philippines President Rodrigo] Duterte. And I think India has this golden opportunity to say strongly that yes, we are the largest democracy in the world. That's what makes us stand out."

Four challenges

Mr. Cameron said the world faces four key challenges – the crisis in globalisation, the rise of great nations, extremist terrorism and climate change – and called for urgent action to tackle all these. He said he is a big supporter of globalisation and free trade which has changed the world over the past several decades, taking millions out of poverty.

He added that he supports the rise of new powers like India. "Countries have to work together side by

side. I want India to have its position in multilateral organisations. I want India to take its permanent seat in the UN Security Council."

Mr. Cameron said both India and the U.K. suffered from terror and "we work together in tackling it." "We must recognise the ideology of terror. Terrorists are against every religion. They target Christians, Jews, Muslims... everyone who doesn't agree with their view will be targeted. And we need moderate Islam on our side in this fight."

Mr. Cameron said Brexit could be good and bad for India. "The bad thing is that Britain in the European Union has been a voice for trade with India and better relations with India. The good news is that Britain after Brexit will have to make friends, partnerships, and I think India is a natural partner. We need investments. Indian companies have made investments in U.K. Indian companies make the best steel for us. We will have to work harder."

'UK-India ties are about shared future'

Former British PM David Cameron says Brexit opens doors for deeper partnership

OUR BUREAU

Chennai, January 30

India can benefit from Brexit, if it happens, in the form of enhanced trade partnership with Britain, former British Prime Minister David Cameron said here on Wednesday.

He was in conversation with N Ram, Chairman, The Hindu Publishing Group, after giving the KS Narayanan Centenary oration.

Cameron said Britain, as it leaves the European Union (EU), will need partners. And India being a big partner and being outside the EU will help Britain move faster and strike a trade deal.

"Our partnership is all about shared future," Cameron said. But he said

that Britain's exit from the EU will weaken India's bargaining position, as his country was a big supporter of India inside the trade bloc.

Terming Brexit a mistake, Cameron said: "Both the UK and EU have a joint interest in a negotiated partnership."

A 'no-deal' Brexit will be a disaster, and too difficult for Britain, after being a member for many years.

He was hopeful that a deal will be struck.

Strong world leadership

"It is only sensible to recognise that we can be a strong friend, neighbour and partner of the European Union in the future, but not a member," Cameron added.



A 'no-deal' Brexit will be too hard for Britain, said Cameron REUTERS

In an earlier session, while speaking on 'the new geopolitics', he listed four main challenges the world faced today.

They included threat to globalisation, rise of great nations, Islamic terrorism, and climate change.

Cameron said all these challenges can be dealt with only by a strong muscular leadership.

"KS Narayanan exemplified such a leadership in his personal and professional life," Cameron noted.

On globalisation, he em-

phasised the need for course correction, in order to benefit every single person in the world.

Globalisation has lifted over a billion people out of poverty since 1990.

It cannot be simply junked.

"No one has a bigger role in globalisation than the businesses themselves, and if they don't correct course, it will be a 'social failure'," Cameron said.

When new nations rise, other nations should embrace — but not frustrate — them, and India is one such nation.

It has to play full role in both the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation.

In fact, India should take its place as a full member of the United Nations Security Council, he said.

Must make globalization work: Cameron

Ex-PM of Britain Calls For Course Correction

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Former British Prime Minister David Cameron stressed on the need to do a course-correction to make globalization work in the future, as there was a backlash against free market and a concern that globalization is not working.

Speaking on 'The New Geopolitics' at K S Narayanan Centenary Oration organized to commemorate the late industrialist's birth centenary in the city on Wednesday, Cameron said Britain and India had flourished because they nourished businesses. "India had grown and around 140 million people have been lifted out of poverty since 1990," he said. "But, critics



DISCUSSING GLOBAL WOES: Former British PM David Cameron at K S Narayanan Centenary Oration on Wednesday

do have a point. Too many have been left behind."

Cameron began the talk saying, "It's always great to be in India. It was one of my missions in politics to take our countries' relationship to the next level... Why did I make that such a priority? Because our partnership is not just founded upon a shared history. It is about a

shared future." He said countries should invest more in education and skills for jobs. "As we correct the course of globalization, businesses have a greater role to play. They must step up and do more for the economy," he added.

In a free ranging talk that touched upon issues like geopolitics, Brexit, fake news,

cricket and also the need for greater stress on genomics and genetics, Cameron laid out the challenges in geopolitics faced by leadership and plural democracy face in which India and Britain could play a role. The main challenges include globalization, corruption, terrorism and climate change, he said.

He commended India for taking forward the country's resolve in battle against climate change and said Britain and India as biggest democracies should work together, while USA has pulled out from the Paris Accord. "It is wrong for leaders like Donald Trump to say there is a choice. The threat is real. I have seen the Arctic melting." He mentioned that Britain deployed biggest offshore windmills and the economy grew, while carbon emissions dipped. Referring to Islamist terror, Cameron said there was a need to confront the cause and the ideology. "Britain and India are

on the frontline of the fight. These extremists do not represent Islam, which is a peaceful religion. There is a need for stronger laws, military, and intelligence, but that makes only half of the picture. India does that all day. We should see why young Muslims are getting lured into terrorism. We should win the battle for heart and mind." He also said India should take its seat as full and permanent member of the UN Security Council. "Many leaders say they follow democracy but go back on it. Democracy is not about getting votes alone. Openness and scrutiny are crucial," he said.

K S Narayanan is one of the country's early day entrepreneurs and was involved in promotion of varied enterprises such as Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd., and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

Terrorists cannot be segregated as good and bad, says Cameron

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

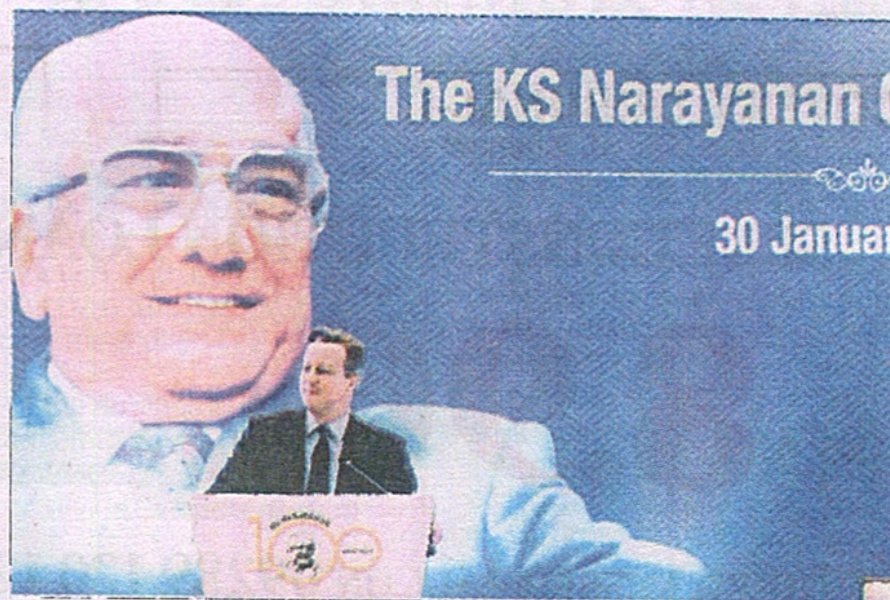
FORMER British Prime Minister David Cameron on Wednesday expressed concern over rising terrorism across the globe.

Delivering the keynote speech at the K S Narayanan Centenary oration event, he said "The root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself." He stressed that in order to deal with the problem completely, it is necessary to wipe out the root cause. "We need first to understand what makes the ideology of extremism so attractive to people in order to prevent it," he added.

He further said "Terrorists cannot be segregated into "good" and "bad" camps and all countries have to ensure they are brought to justice".

Cameron also expressed his concerns about globalisation and climate change.

"There is the backlash against free markets and concern that globalisation is not working. There is the uncertainty about how to handle the rise of great powers. There is the speculation about whether open, liberal



Former British PM David Cameron delivers his keynote speech | EXPRESS

democracy is still the right model for success. There are the questions – like how do we fight terrorism in the age of the internet? How do we safeguard our environment when it's clear the climate is already changing".

He also said prosperity of countries like India and UK depends upon markets to operate and enterprises to flourish.

"Britain became a successful economy through its desire to trade, invest, sell and innovate. While India by setting its enterprise free was able to lift 150 million people

out of poverty in just two decades. India is one of the largest economies and is said to be one of the fastest growing economy"

He stressed that for its further development focus should be more on development of infrastructure and skills development.

Later, Cameron had a lively discussion with senior journalist N Ram and expressed his views on a wide range of subjects from cricket to the rise in populism to the situation in the Middle East to the special relationship between India and the UK.

Indo-UK ties not founded upon shared history, but shared future: David Cameron

CHENNAI: UK former Prime Minister David Cameron delivered the keynote address at The KS Narayanan Centenary Oration on 'The New Geopolitics' here on Wednesday.

Cameron was in Chennai to take part in the event honouring the Sanmar Group's founding leader, the late KS Narayanan. "It's always great to be in India. It was one of my missions in politics to take our countries' relationship to the next level. Our partnership is not just founded upon a shared history, it is about a shared future," he sought to point out.

Despite concerns about the globalised economic model, Cameron sees himself as a "big supporter" of free market economy. Cameron remarked that there is a backlash against free markets and the concern that globalisation isn't working. "There is the uncertainty about how to handle the rise of great powers. There



UK Fmr PM David Cameron

is the speculation about whether open, liberal democracy is still the right model for success. There are the questions - like how do we fight terrorism in the age of the internet? How do we safeguard our environment when it's clear the climate is already changing," he observed. He advocated the need to correct the course so that nations that have

been left behind in this economic race derive benefits. For that to happen, he cited the examples of allocating a greater share of the national income on education and skills training that had transformed the status of countries progressing on this model. The former PM of UK also lauded the flagship programme 'Skill India' launched by the Modi government.

"As we correct course of globalisation, at the heart is the business itself," he said, highlighting the role of businesses that must go beyond their roles of generating job opportunities so that the economy got a fairer share of progress.

He also pointed to the rise of great nations. The White House may believe it to be a zero sum game, but Cameron held that WTO, IMF and the UN like institutions were perceived to be letting nations down. This had led to countries turning away from

such organisations and going it alone. Instead, the way to make change is not to isolate or shun but embrace change, he opined.

He went on to say strongmen leaders like Russia's Putin were not in favour of a robust democracy.

Hailing the nuanced leadership style of Narayanan, the former UK premier said, "He was not an impulsive man." Like him, leaders must take time and space to make decisions and not resort to knee-jerk reactions especially in an era when tweeting live from a meeting underway had become the norm.

He cited the example of former British PM Winston Churchill and his cabinet, during the World War, debating inside 10 Downing Street, for four to five days as to whether to fight all or surrender. He said big decisions had to be made for big challenges and only then could extremism be defeated or climate change be controlled.

■ Ex-British PM raises concerns in new geopolitics

Cameron calls for India's place in UN security council

R. MOHAN | DC
CHENNAI, JAN 30

The former British Prime Minister David Cameron renewed the call for India to become a member of the United Nations Security Council. In the course of the KS Narayanan centenary oration for which he made an eight-hour air dash to Chennai on Wednesday, the Tory leader said India was an example of the rise of great nations and that the world must learn to live with it. He was for the world to recognise this and work with the country so the world itself can benefit.

A strong votary of the Paris accord, Mr. Cameron said, "We cannot grow our industries and save the environment at the same time. If the sea levels rise only by a few centimetres, large parts of Chennai will be under water," he warned.

Paying rich tribute to the Chennai industrialist KS Narayanan who built institutions with ethics, transparency and good business practices, the former British PM David Cameron spoke on "The new geopolitics" as his topic of the oration. He spelt out four areas the world had to pay attention to in order to be a better



David Cameron speaks in the city.

?:—DC

place.

The avid votary of globalisation may have agreed to the democratic practice of holding the referendum on whether to leave the EU and so inadvertently caused a sort of end of globalisation with the UK now looking at Brexit in any which way possible. But that has not made him change his stand even a bit. He does believe though that course corrections are needed to take along the people who have been left behind. "Education, skills and good wages will make that happen," he said optimistically.

The rise of great nations is the other area the world needed to accept. "World trade is not a zero sum game," he said while obviously hinting at Donald

Trump's stand on the subject of tariffs and trade barriers. "The world must work with India," Cameron said even as he took a swipe at the rise of strong leaders in which he named Vladimir Putin of Russia as a threat to democracy while pretending to believe in democracy.

Mr Cameron spoke out against terrorism, particularly of the Islamist brand of extremism, while pointing out that India and the UK had suffered much at the hands of terror. "We must tackle the ideologies that drive this, stress that there can be no place for hate in the mosques nor radicalism in the universities. Heaping praise on India's democratic secularism, he said the country was at

the forefront of the fight against terror that cannot be allowed to flourish.

The fourth area Mr Cameron spoke about was climate change and how proud he was as British PM to be among the 196 signatories to the Paris accord. "We cannot grow our industries and save the environment at the same time. If the sea levels rise only by a few centimetres, large parts of Chennai will be under water," he warned.

"The choices we make are more important," Mr Cameron asserted as he pleaded for greater globalisation, acceptance of the rise of great nations like India and China, defeat of terror with sustained efforts at solid intelligence and muscular approach as much as showing how the most cherished democratic values are the best way forward and, finally, to arrest climate change with pro-active methods.

Mr Cameron may have been the unwitting architect of Brexit, although he was pro-EU and remains so, but he does believe that there is a sensible way for Britain to leave the EU as "friends and neighbours as we cannot change geography." He believes Brexit can be good and bad for India.

Brexit tragic Cameron views May's troubles from a distance

R. Mohan

**Namma
Chennai diary**

The suave former British Prime Minister skirted the slippery slopes with finesse on his oration stop in Chennai even as his successor was probably chewing her nails and eating spoonfuls of peanut butter straight from the jar. What unites them is the spectre of Brexit, which neither may have wanted. While Brexit sank one, it appears weighty enough a problem to sink the other too.

The clock is ticking down on the March 29 deadline. David Cameron could mull that at a distance at least in the day he spent in India and in the few hours in Chennai where his fluency as a speaker floored the audience at the KS Narayanan Centenary event. On the other hand, his successor, the vicar's daughter, was spending an exasperating time in Westminster trying to convince her MPs that an altered soft Brexit was still possible in negotiations with the European Union.

The ironies were proving inescapably noticeable as Cameron opened his heart out in Chennai. The referendum tragic may have been trying to unravel why he was such a conscientious democrat that he agreed to hold the darned thing when the outcome was uncertain. To be fair to him, it did seem the 'Remainers' were set to outvote the 'Leavers' when the referendum was ordered. Maybe, it was a touch of overconfidence or, more likely, the inability to read the young minds of UK, that may have led to the disastrous Brexit vote.

There is a story doing the rounds that Cameron did not think that the referendum would take place because he was expecting not to have a majority in the 2015 election. He believed he would be back in power in coalition with the Liberal Democrats who would not allow the referendum. This was narrated by Donald Tusk, the European Council president, who revealed that Cameron had told him he was relaxed about promis-



Former British Prime Minister David Cameron receives a memento from N.Sankar, son of K.S.Narayanan whose centenary was celebrated in Chennai.

ing the referendum, which he had done only to please the Eurosceptics in his party. Of course, this was denied on behalf of Cameron. Bu who knows?

The basic irony was that the unabashed votary of globalisation in Cameron should have been the trigger that is leading now to the beginning of the end of globalisation, which a Brexit, hard or soft, represents as the UK strives to exit the EU. Cameron reasoned it out very well as he spoke of how it was just a common market to begin with and how the problems began with some countries being in the Euro common currency zone while others stayed away from it and how Britain felt cheated of its 1,000 years of parliamentary history in having to work with a European parliament.

The bottom line may be drawn around whether the EU could force Britain to pay the @39 billion divorce settlement, an original offer that may not even come back into the negotiations if a no-deal Brexit is on the cards. There is a lesson in this somewhere for all nations that speak of unity and harmony solving everything whereas innate differences could still tear the friendliest of allies apart, as it did the 46-year marriage between the

UK and the EU. Cameron's experience of coalition politics may have been warmer than his successor's allies from Northern Ireland who are watching developments with a hawk's eye as the Irish backstop is at stake.

To Cameron's credit, he had stood down the moment he knew he was defeated in the 'Yes' vote as the 'Leave' brigade outvoted the staunch 'Remain' army. How many thick-skinned Indian politicians would have considered such a defeat so morally crushing as to quit their post, that too as Prime Minister. His conciliatory stand that it is still possible for Britain to Brexit Europe as friends and neighbours - "we can't change geography" Cameron lamented - sounded reasonable, but only because he was saying it several thousand miles away from London and Brussels.

If the thought cropped up on how there could be a British PM's speech without humour - although followers of British politics might pop the name of the career politician Theresa May could point to her as an example - up came Cameron with a Modi quote. Speaking on India-UK links, Modi had said "India and UK have James Bond, Brooke Bond

and Rupee Bond." These were the delicious moments in going to hear a British (former) PM's speech despite the kind of security measures that may have led to a media boycott in the UK. As an aside I have been to meet the Indian Prime Minister, who is one of the most protected men in the universe, with far less cumbersome security in Chennai.

The self-deprecating humour came through best in his descriptions of his cricketing exploits, especially the hilarious one of pleading with the spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan to bowl him an absolute lollipop, which the Kandy man did and Cameron hit it for four. The next ball spun so much that amazingly the middle stump stood while the off and leg were knocked over by a standard fizzy off break from the quirky spinner. And then there was this tale of his being bowled by a woman cricketer in a charity game and the Fleet Street (though they have long moved from there) press finding endless mirth in ribbing Cameron on it.

(R. Mohan is the Resident Editor of the Chennai and Tamil Nadu editions of Deccan Chronicle)