

## Tsunami: a tragedy beyond words



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*Cover photograph courtesy: Aid India*



# The tsunami tragedy

Sanmar reaches out

*P S Jayaraman, Managing Director, Chemplast Sanmar*

*The recent tsunami disaster has affected the lives of thousands of people in the coastal regions of south India. The communities neighbouring the facilities of Chemplast Sanmar in Karaikal and Vedaranyam were no exception. We all know how help has come pouring forth from all parts of the world. The Sanmar Group, on both the personal and official levels, has also made an earnest effort to lend a helping hand to the suffering families and the government in bringing succour to those families. P S Jayaraman, Managing Director, Chemplast Sanmar, recounts his first hand experience of the impact of the tragedy as well as the measures the Sanmar Group has initiated to provide relief to the tsunami victims.*

The tsunami tidal waves struck the coastal areas on 26 December 2004, causing huge damage to human lives and properties. While the company's plant at Karaikal was not affected, the pre-project commissioning activities of the contractors setting up the Marine Terminal Facility on the coast at Karaikal have been affected. The salt fields at Vedaranyam suffered some damage.

The group has involved itself directly in providing extensive relief measures to the tsunami victims besides making substantial cash donations.

The Sanmar Group has made an aggregate cash contribution of Rs. 50 lakh to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund, Prime Minister's National Relief Fund and Pondicherry

*P S Jayaraman handing over Sanmar's contribution to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to Chief Minister J Jayalithaa. The total Sanmar Group spending on tsunami is likely to reach Rs. 10 million soon. Looking on is S B Prabhakar Rao.*



Chief Minister's Relief Fund. This included a voluntary contribution of Rs.8 lakh received from the employees of the Group.

In addition, the factory administration at Karaikal and Vedaranyam involved themselves fully with the relief operations, assisting the local authorities. Working in close coordination with the official machinery, both at Vedaranyam and Karaikal, the company arranged clothes, food, water packets and milk powder for nearly 4000 people living in the nearby affected areas. JCBs, tractors and ambulances were provided to the local government authorities to carry out the relief work and transport relief materials. The Group distributed rations and clothing materials to the families of the villagers and the fishing hamlet of Vadakku Vanjore situated near our Karaikal project site.

A medical team was rushed from the Chemplast Mettur plant, with paramedical staff and ambulance. First aid was provided to the people of the affected villages at Karaikal and Vedaranyam. The team also carried out immunisation of staff and volunteers involved in the relief work.

Further plans for distribution of fishing nets, reconstruction of damaged houses and common facilities in the affected villages at Karaikal and Vedaranyam are being worked out in close coordination with the local authorities.

The Group is also working with the district administration and panchayat officials in Cuddalore to ascertain the exact needs of some of the affected villagers in the district. Appropriate relief measures will be undertaken shortly.

The Group expects to incur a total expenditure of around Rs.100 lakh (10 million) including cash already donated, towards these relief measures at Karaikal, Vedaranyam and Cuddalore.



*M Thomas Maria Chandran, R Padmanabhan and S Venkatesan of Chemplast Karaikal, and V Ramesh, Executive Director, Chemplast Sanmar, giving away materials to tsunami victims, and interacting with them.*





# 'The board plays a key role':

*Preety Kumar, Member, The Sanmar Group Corporate Board*



*Preety Kumar*

*One of the members of the Sanmar Group Corporate Board, who recently visited our Mettur and Viralimalai facilities, is Preety Kumar, Managing Partner, Amrop International India, the well known global executive search firm. An authority in her field, Kumar shared some of her views on the principles and practices of her chosen area of work and her impressions of the Sanmar Group with Matrix. Here are some excerpts:*

*Can you throw some light on the global ethical standards prevalent in the area of executive searches? Are you satisfied with the adherence to ethics by Indian executive search firms as well as their clients?*

Global executive search companies operate at the highest level of management and are typically involved in inducting CEOs, functional leaders and Board related professionals. Hence, the typical needs of the industry are those of confidentiality and discretion of very high levels.

Good search firms build their reputation not only on the basis of their performance and delivery capabilities, but also on their adherence to a strict standard of ethics. These ethical standards typically demand that the firm does not divulge

confidential information of clients and candidates and that it manages that process sensitively. Other issues are around staying off-limits with clients and not accessing their senior people, etc.

Most international executive search firms adhere to these ethical standards as part of their philosophy. However, the arena is wide and different players may not always understand or follow these standards. Globally, the Association of Executive Search Companies (AESC), headquartered in the US, drives a range of ethical standards in this profession.

*You have said in the course of an article for Businessworld, "We must, as a nation, focus on building our capacity to innovate by nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit. This capacity to innovate will lead to productivity enhancement at the national level, driving our economic and corporate framework to behave differently and, hence, demand a different kind of output." Can you give examples of some of the steps we must take (as government, as employers, as parents) to foster such a spirit?*

Talent is the raw material for the spirit of performance and hence entrepreneurship. A nation, society, family or individual that is geared to recognize, build and nurture talent is going to be more successful than others. To do so, each of these different players performs a different role.

*V Ranganathan, Chief Executive, welcoming Preety Kumar and P N Kapadia, both members of the Sanmar Group Corporate Board to Chemplast, Mettur.*



As a society, we place more value on success and status than on talent. Hence the safe paths to success have traditionally scuttled talent. To me, entrepreneurship means being different, not following the beaten path, doing what you want to versus what is only right by the standards of society. In the past it was a safe, predictable bet to be a doctor, IAS officer, Engineer, or MBA and all of us were expected to tread that path, at least the intelligent ones. How many budding and talented musicians, potters, choreographers have been stopped in their tracks as these have not been traditionally seen as success oriented-professions!

The other issue is respecting and valuing work. I am not sure that we as a society respect work enough. In our own hierarchical ways, we demean some work as 'lower level'. This then lowers respect for 'that kind of work'. How then can we be a nurturing society? Success has no correlation with 'work dignity'. This phenomenon then has an automatic impact on how these jobs are paid and hence how they attract people. Unless we teach ourselves to provide 'work dignity' there is no way we can truly have talented people going into different kinds of professions and finding diverse entrepreneurial opportunities.

### **Talent spotting**

Our education system needs to squarely deal with the area of talent scouting. Even in the more well managed, good quality institutions, I find an overemphasis on studies, marks. Talent spotting, showing students different paths to achievement, is not something I see institutionalized.

As parents, we must encourage our children to be different, allow them to pursue something that is not weather-beaten and recognize their achievements, even though it may not be the most remunerative or recognized profession from the standpoint of society.



*N Sankar with V Narayanan of the Sanmar Group Corporate Board.*

### **Synergies with Sanmar**

*As a top flight executive search professional, what synergies with the group do you find in your role as a member of the Sanmar Corporate Board?*

In executive search now for 16 years, I have been associated with a very diverse set of clients and seen them build their businesses. Further, I have intimately understood the impact of good quality leadership on a business, its strategy and its success. With Sanmar's diverse business portfolio and its journey for growth and success, I very much identify with this phase and can hopefully contribute in looking at the leadership issues. Further, having been on the Amrop Hever Global Board, I enjoy

Board work and feel that the right Board can play an extremely important role in the successful running of a business and can be a very effective body.

*What are your impressions of the group after your recent visits to its various locations?*

I have been very impressed with what I have heard about the businesses and what I saw on the ground in terms of operations connect, quality of execution and the overall sense of commitment by the management team. Clearly Sanmar's success lies in its ability to have a strong execution framework and I was certainly able to see that in action.

*V Ranganathan, M N Radhakrishnan and Adit Jain during the Sanmar Group Corporate Board's visit to Mettur.*



# Sanmar team wins MMA Young Managers contest

It was an outstanding victory for the youthful Sanmar team consisting of Aarathi Chellammal, Heena Nandani and Piyush Bhandari at this year's Young Managers Competition for managers below 35, held on 18 January 2005, on the theme of 'Beyond Creating Value'.

The youngsters laid out their written presentation in the form of a tabloid with news and articles. They also made their oral presentation a TV talk show.

The team will represent Chennai in the National Level Young Managers' competition to be conducted by the All India Management Association (AIMA) in August 2005.

Two other Sanmar teams, V Shankar Ganesh (Asco), RM Alagappan (Asco) and Shyam S Kumar (Flowserve), and M Rangarajan (Xomox), N Gnanasekhar (Tyco) and B Ramkumar (Xomox), also acquitted themselves creditably.

*The Sanmar team of Aarathi Chellammal, Heena Nandani and Piyush Bhandari (3rd, 5th and 7th from left) with (l to r) C Venkat, B Ramalinga Raju, Chairman, Satyam Computer Services, P K Mohapatra, President, MMA and D P Padmanabhan, Vice President, MMA.*



# Sanmar quiz team in fine form



A H Kesari Prasad



Ramkumar Shankar

The Sanmar Group has, over the years, made a mark in Chennai's corporate quizzing circuit. The formidable reputation that the Sanmar team of Ramkumar Shankar and A H Kesari Prasad has earned in the last couple of years was recently reinforced in a couple of prestigious quiz contests.

Sanmar has dominated the southern regional edition conducted under the aegis of the Madras Management Association (MMA)—of the annual National Management Quiz (NMQ) of the All India Management Association. Regional winners in 2003 and first runners-up in 2004, the Sanmar team won the regional round again in 2005. This year's win was especially sweet because it came just weeks after a Sanmar team won the Young Managers contest conducted by the MMA.

The Sanmar team also finished second in a nailbiting finish in the Chennai round of the Brand Equity Quiz of The Economic Times, arguably India's biggest corporate quiz, which is eagerly anticipated and hotly contested. Ramkumar Shankar and Kesari Prasad went down fighting to the ultimate winners, Citibank, the contest being decided only on the penultimate question of the quiz.

## Citibank cashes it in at Chennai nail biter

Our Chennai Bureau  
20 MARCH

**I**T HAD all the trappings of a pot-boiler from down South — featuring father against son, and reunions of long-lost friends, in a quizzing season where a nail-biting finish has become almost a cliché. The Chennai round of the ING Vysya Brand Equity Quiz '05 will be remembered by all who participated as one of the most toughly contested quizzes ever.

The outcome of the same remained uncertain to the very end. The winning team from Citibank featuring Rajiv Rai, vice-president — internet marketing and Anil Kothuri, marketing director, will represent Chennai at the national finals of the quiz to be held in Mumbai on April 10.

The enthusiasm for the quiz was apparent early — the audience turnout was huge, completely filling the seats in the Music Academy hall at Chennai and extending into the balcony as well. 32 of the city's finest teams representing the software industry, banks and advertising agencies made it to the eliminations, of which only six finalists were selected.

Citibank showed an early aptitude for the traits that would earn it a place in the final, ranking the highest in the eliminations with 69 points. Other teams in the semi-finals were Chemplast Sanmar, Covansys, HCL Technologies, Nestle and Sify. Adding a more emotional dimension to the proceedings was the fact that **AH Kesari Prasad, vice-president — marketing at Chemplast Sanmar was squaring off against his son, Sandeep Prasad, on Team Nestle.**

The first few rounds were exciting enough with a three-way contest between Citibank, Nestle (which even managed to take the lead) and Chemplast Sanmar polarising the audience and putting the teams under tremendous pressure. Team Nestle, in particular, practically wrestled each other in the first few rounds in their eagerness to get answers across, provoking much amused comments from quizmaster Derek O'Brien.

With HCL and Covansys dropping off early, there was definite disappointment when Nestle opted out as third runner-up. But the first time in the quiz this year, both the finalists for the last round entered it at the same score — 80. Citibank secured a huge lead though,

winning the battle for the buzzer twice in a row, even as the fortunes of Chemplast Sanmar (who had a large portion of the audience backing them) oscillated wildly.

The suspense was at its heights during the fifth question in the 8 question round — "The illustration of the coca bean in the 1913 edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica inspired the original shape of —?" Chemplast Sanmar in desperate need of an answer, said Coca-Cola risking a loss of 15 points. **They were right!**

Soon after O'Brien called upon the sponsors Adinathan, assistant general manager,

Kothuri had this to say at the end of it all. "We fought a good fight. I feel happier still at winning cause the questions were very good." The winners walked away a whole host of prizes, including a vacation at the Kings Sanctuary at Nagarholey, Helvetica watches, a gift hamper from Nightingale, gift vouchers from Provogue and Mahaveer Optical.

**Prasad from Chemplast Sanmar claims the BEQ marks his return to quizzing after college. His team-member Ramkumar Shankar gave some tips on how he keeps up with his hobby. "I read every magazine I can and have a small book in which I**



Wine; Covansys; L. Murli, area manager, ING Vysya Life (extreme left) looks on as quizmaster Derek O'Brien (C) felicitates Rajiv Rai and Anil Kothuri of Team Citibank in Chennai.

Maruti Udyog, and L. Murli, area manager — Chennai. ING Vysya Life, to hand over the prizes, before informing the team that they in fact had the right answer. However, team Citibank quickly moved in for the kill with the next question.

The audience was enthused and participative throughout the quiz. They vied for the answers to the many questions directed at them, and sadly enough, on occasion even those intended for the contestants, earning them a sharp rebuke from O'Brien. But there were prizes galore for both the balcony and the stalls, with one audience member even announcing his cellphone number in the hopes of securing a prospective date.

Said a visibly relieved and elated Rai from Team Citibank: "This is the fourth attempt and it's the first time I've made it to the national finals." His long-term quiz partner Kothuri actually flew in all the way from Delhi to be a part of the quiz.

**record trivia. I'm also a member of some of the e-groups and keep in touch through them."**

The third runners-up from Nestle claim they had no expectations from the quiz and confess to being surprised at having made it this far. Sandeep Prasad, sales officer at Nestle says that he did not inherit quizzing from his father, but hazarded a guess that his stint at B-school quizzes may have revived Prasad Sr's interest. His partner Seethameth Reddy, sales officer, Nestle said, "The only reason we made it this far is we went to the temple before coming here."

The Brand Equity Quiz is presented by ING Vysya and the grand prize sponsor is Maruti Bizen. The local presenting sponsor was Suzlon. The local sponsors were TTC Hotel Park Sheraton and Towers, King's Sanctuary at Nagarholey, Indian Terrain, Nightingale Stationeries, Pa, Univercell, Helvetica watches, Eagle Diaries, Vivek's and Mahaveer Optical.



## Sarada Jagan adjudged Indira Super Achiever

Sarada Jagan, Chief Executive, HR, Sanmar Corporate Division, was one of the corporate personalities to receive the Indira Super Achiever Award on 18 December 2004 at a function at the Taj Connemara, Chennai. The award launched in 2003 and given out by the Centre for Change Management, Pune, consisted of a trophy and a citation. According to the organisers, Centre for Change Management by design of research have found the professionals from the corporate world who had a vision of the organization they served and the values they inculcated in their people must be recognized. We created

a platform by which we were able to let the younger generation know that role models and mentors are available in abundance in the corporate world. It is a question of finding them and learning from them, with this intention the Indira Group of Institutes instituted the 'Super Achievers Award'.

At the awards function, C K Ranganathan, Managing Director, CavinKare Ltd., was the chief guest, while P K Divakaran, and Dr R L Bhatia of the Indira Group of Institutes, Pune, were the other speakers.

*Sarada Jagan, Chief Executive - HR, Sanmar Corporate Division, receiving the Indira Super Achievers Award from C K Ranganathan, Managing Director, CavinKare Ltd., on 18 December 2004.*



## Employees' corner

# Hijack!

*K Balakrishna of Chemplast Hyderabad underwent a harrowing experience recently from which he not only escaped unscathed but also emerged with honour and pride showing character under duress while carrying out his official duties. Here he gives us a first person account of his adventure.*

Mr S Suresh, Senior Manager, PVC Division, asked me to collect 'C' forms from our customers at Nandyal, Kurnool, in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Accordingly I visited the Nandi group of companies at Nandyal, to effect rectifications in the 'C' forms and obtain signatures from six of the group's companies. I left my Hyderabad home at 4.30 in the morning and reached Nandyal at one o'clock in the afternoon. By 4.30 p.m., I collected the signatures of the company's executives on the annexures of all the invoices. The total value of the 'C' forms was Rs. 21.63 crore. I then went from Nandyal to Kurnool by bus. At Kurnool, I boarded a bus bound for Hyderabad at 7.00 p.m.

It was around 9.30 p.m. when the bus stopped at a ticket checking point, some two hours before Hyderabad. All the passengers were watching a film on the coach video when these three persons boarded the bus. They wore monkey caps to cover their faces and carried pistols, hand grenades and a dagger. They went to the driver and took over control.

### 'This bus is hijacked'

One of them announced: "Dear passengers, this bus is hijacked." They then took the bus into the forest, collected all our mobile phones from us and threatened us with dire consequences if we offered any resistance. One of them stood guard, while the other two went round collecting cash and valuables from all of us and putting them into huge bags they were carrying. They collected 20 cellphones in all. A number of businessmen were travelling by the bus, and the hijackers managed to gather

quite an impressive amount of gold, cash and other valuables. They spared nothing, even *mangalsutras* were forcibly removed. My own loss was worth about Rs. 20,000, including my cellphone, Rs. 1,000 in cash and my gold ring with a 12 gm diamond stud.

### Physical violence

The hijackers were tough on anyone who tried to hide their money or valuables or refused to part with them. They bodysearched each of us three or four times, looking inside footwear and other hiding places. They even hit one of the lady passengers when she tried to hide her ornaments. I got hit too and was made to hand over my ring. They were curious about my briefcase which I was constantly clutching as it contained the valuable 'C' forms. They thought I was carrying a lot of money in it. Luckily, I managed to save Rs. 1,000 which I had hidden in my 'thief pocket.' The hijackers left us finally after 24 hours of terror.

One of the passengers, Mr Zakir Hussain of Kolkata, had flung his cellphone out of the window. He retrieved it, and I was able around midnight to call Mr Suresh, who called me back. We were by then in the Jadcherla police station, where the police took written statements from all the passengers. I was able to retrieve all my 'C' forms even though the thieves had scattered them in anger, when they found no money in my briefcase.

The police let us go around 4 in the morning. I reached home at six o'clock. By then we were in the news, all Telugu newspapers and TV channels broadcasting recorded passenger statements on the incident. I appeared on TV too!



*K Balakrishna*

# IE Singapore panel

## A new institution-building experience

*N Kumar, Vice Chairman, The Sanmar Group  
Chairman, IE Singapore panel in India*



*N Kumar*

International Enterprise Singapore (IE), earlier called “Trade Development Board” (TDB), is akin to India’s commerce ministry. It also used to maintain the key statistics of trade and customs, discussions on bilateral negotiation, rules, laws etc., until the rules and statistics part was taken over by the Government. IE became purely a trade body like India’s Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB). Another body called Economic Development Board (EDB) invests abroad. For example, in India, it has forged investment in the hi-tech parks in Bangalore, Hyderabad, etc.

In 1991-92, Barry Desker, who was the CEO of TDB, came over and requested me to become Singapore’s Honorary Trade Representative in India, because he thought I knew Singapore and Indian industry well. After I accepted, we (TDB) focused on the South, and a great deal of activity was generated. Mr V Subramanian, who was in my office, assisted me. We met various Singapore delegations to India, gave

them office space at Indchem and helped them understand India and Indian business. TDB had similar offices in Delhi and Bombay. By 1996, the activities of TDB in Chennai and the South expanded and we hired full time employees. Subra was deputed to work for TDB fulltime from 1997 and moved to a new office in Besant Nagar.

I decided to involve myself only at the government level and in the strategic planning and discussions of TDB and not in the day-to-day activities of the centre, as I was a businessman and there could be a conflict with potential local partners of Singapore businessmen. This planned separation, I believe, contributed to our success. TDB grew and developed over the years and a great deal of investment came from Singapore into the South. When we met former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong recently, he congratulated us on accomplishing this focus.

In 2003, the strategy changed, and the Trade Development Board became rechristened as IE, with its focus entirely on investment promotion. There was even more activity, and IE moved to a larger and posh office in Raheja Towers (Standard Motors premises) on Mount Road. The centre is now a high growth office that helps all Singapore companies with what they need to do in South India, among other things, providing them office space and secretarial support.

### **A new concept takes shape**

My association with IE has always been documented with an annual review, and last year I suggested a change in strategy, as I had been involved for more than a decade and become familiar with IE’s plans. They also wanted to appoint

*N Kumar, introducing (l to r) Vaishnav Puri, Hon. Trade Representative - Mumbai, IE Singapore, and Alok Prasad, High Commissioner of India, to Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong (former Prime Minister), Republic of Singapore.*



another Honorary Trade Representative (HTR) in Bangalore as the work had expanded, but asked me to continue.

I then recommended a panel of advisers instead of appointing individuals, though in every other country, IE have only individuals as HTRs. They liked the idea, and Kathy Lai of IE and I started working on this plan. We developed the concept and chose this panel with leaders from different parts of the country and involved in different activities. The panel has, in software, S Ramadorai of TCS, Mumbai and Ashok Soota from MindTree, Bangalore, in telecom, Sunil Mittal, in financial services, K V Kamath and in bio-tech, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw. M S Banga, Tarun Das, Vaishnav Puri and Mukesh Ambani complete this high power panel.

Representing IE has given me great exposure and I like the process of institution building it involves. It's an exercise similar to my stint in CII but involves two countries. In this regard, Kiran made a significant observation to me when she complimented the Singapore Government for using nine experts from India to help their businessmen to understand and invest in India, displaying their entire country's strategy to all of us, when the Indian polity did not allow even NRIs on our Economic Advisory Panel.

Singapore is run professionally like a company. They function in a clean, planned, transparent manner. They go by the book, adhere to the law, but with the Sanmar experience in corporate governance, I found it easy to deal with them. The first meeting of the panel took place in February 2005. We met Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and the who's who of Singapore business over the two days. We were treated like royalty.

Coming to the meeting, the topics covered eight different areas of specialisation, like real estate, software, biotech and manufacturing. Singapore companies interested in investing in

India were asked about their areas of interest and opportunities identified for them through these topics. It was a very open panel with people to people interactions and very frank views were exchanged.

Some members of the Indian panel felt that with logistics poor in India, it was a tall order to bring in investment in electronics manufacturing. But the panel finally felt that since manufacturing in India is popular and evokes a lot of interest, the Indian panel could guarantee investment in the sector provided the transformation in the logistics infrastructure happens. A suggestion was that EDB and a group like the Tatas could together prepare a white paper on setting up a global manufacturing centre in India. This could be presented to the Government while addressing the problems of bureaucracy, delays, etc.

The Singapore side of the panel was concerned with how to make Singapore more popular and how to attract more investments from India as compared to other centres like Dubai, and Hong Kong. This was another topic of discussion.

Mr Goh Chok Tong and his successor, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, have been very emphatic that India is crucial to Singapore's plans. Their clear strategy is to have one leg in China and an equally strong one in India. 'We want to create an Asian powerhouse, which will be a force for the world to reckon with,' he stresses.

Smaller than Tamil Nadu, Singapore has huge strengths. Its weakness is its relative lack of manpower and this is where we have an advantage. There is great synergy in this area between the two countries. With CECA coming through, the future for Singapore and IE and the InAP bodes well. I believe that the InAP will play a crucial role in the years to come and I am excited at this opportunity to assist the two nations to grow closer together and help each other.

## Madhuras Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children

### MNC attracts some interesting visitors



The Madhuras Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children continues to be a beehive of activity. The eighth annual sports meet held there on 11 February 2005 had star cricketer Hemang Badani taking the salute at a marchpast by the students. Kannan Pugazhendi, Director of the Physical Fitness Foundation Academy of the College of Physical Education, YMCA, gave away the prizes to the winners of some fiercely contested events.

Indian Test cricketer Hemang Badani who captains the Sanmar cricket team, was a popular chief guest at this year's annual sports day of the Madhuras

*George Meyrick, a student volunteer from the U K, training children in play acting.*

*Cricketer Hemang Badani with a student of Madhuras Narayanan Centre at the Annual Sports meet of the Centre.*



Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children.

Another interesting visitor was Sebastien Gergaud of Champaign, France, a yoga teacher at the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, who taught the children, teachers and parents, as part of his own training in special education.

Two British students, Tim Moody and George Meyrick, gave the children, teachers and parents some interesting glimpses into the techniques of playacting.



Sebastien Gergaud, a student of Special Education in France, training children in yoga at MNC

## Sankara schools celebrate Annual Day

Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School and Sri Sankara Vidya shramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School celebrated their Annual Day function in January 2005. Speaking on the occasion, chief guest M S Ananth, Director IIT Chennai said that intuitive knowledge should be verified with logic to boost the confidence of students. He explained the need for character-building of students and suggested that teachers act as facilitators and expose them to learning in a congenial atmosphere rather than by force.

A colourful cultural performance by the students of the schools was the highlight of the celebration.



Students of Sankara schools perform an orchestral symphony on their Annual Day function in the city on Wednesday.

### Stress on logic to bolster self-confidence

Express News Service

Chennai, January 12

Intuitive knowledge should be verified with logic to boost the confidence of students, said M S Ananth, Director of Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, at the annual day function of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School and Sri Sankara Vidya shramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School held here on Wednesday.

Ananth regretted that the present education system lacked the crucial component of character-building and suggested teachers act as facilitators and students be exposed to learning in a congenial atmosphere rather than by force as then nothing could be taught, he said.

On the lines of the West, "we should concentrate on the documentation of knowledge which will enhance effective learning. The students should take pride in being Indians and we should track down ourselves

to the unique value of India that is non-violence, by which we gained our Independence", said Ananth. Later, the staff were honoured for their service and proficiency and prizes to meritorious students were presented by Ananth, which was followed by a spectacular cultural programme that included an orchestral symphony performed by the students. The Principals of Sankara schools, Subala Ananthanarayanan and Kalpana Mohan, were among others who attended the function.

# Memorable comeback by Balaji

## Lakshmipathi Balaji

Born at Chennai on 27 September 1981

### Career Statistics

#### *In Test matches*

O	M	R	W	Avg	Best
292.4	64	1004	27	37.18	5 for 76

#### *In One Day Internationals*

O	M	R	W	Avg	Best
213.1	11	1162	32	36.31	4 for 48

#### *In First Class matches*

O	M	R	W	Avg	Best
1594.2	352	4798	182	26.36	7 for 42

#### *In other Limited Over matches*

O	M	R	W	Avg	Best
521.2	30	2621	94	27.88	5 for 36

(O = Overs; M = Maidens; R = Runs; W = Wickets; Avg = Average).

Lakshmipathi Balaji, the Chemplast and Jolly Rovers paceman, had a memorable comeback to Test cricket after an injury layoff that lasted nearly a year. He toiled hard to regain his fitness and iron out some technical flaws in his bowling action. His hard work really paid off when he took nine Pakistan wickets in the First Test against Pakistan at Mohali and followed it with a memorable spell at Kolkata. In an Indian XI that had Zaheer Khan and Irfan Pathan, Balaji emerged as the leading bowler.

Unfortunately, Balaji sustained a rib injury after his successful run in the Test series, and had to withdraw after the first one-day international against Pakistan at Kochi, where he gave some vital breakthroughs.

### Dinesh Mongia recalled

Balaji's Chemplast teammate Dinesh Mongia has been rewarded for his consistent performances with a recall to the Indian squad.



# Sanmar has a new library

N Sankar, Chairman, inaugurated the Sanmar Group library on 23 February 2005 at Corporate Headquarters, Chennai. The library is proving to be popular among employees whose usage of the facility is steadily growing.

Some of the ideas under consideration to make the library a desirable destination are a 'Name your Library' contest for users in Chennai, video screening sessions on management related topics, book reading and book review sessions, inviting guest speakers of stature to interact with library users, and quiz contests. These are ambitious plans but feasible, provided there is enthusiastic participation from employees.



# On-site emergency mock drill at Mettur plant



An on-site emergency mock drill was conducted at the Chemplast plant at Mettur to educate the workers on ways to secure themselves in the event of an accident. The training included measures to be taken in an emergency situation which was well attended by all workers and officials of all the departments. K Manoharan, Inspector of Factories, Salem, appreciated the training offered and suggested guidelines to workers on precautions to be taken while at work.

*Scenes from the on-site emergency mock drill at Chemplast, Mettur.*



# Chemplast bags State Safety Award

Chemplast Sanmar received the State Safety Award for the year 2002. The award, instituted by the Government of Tamil Nadu, was given to Plant III at Mettur, where caustic soda, chlorine and chlorinated solvents are manufactured. The award under the Group 'A' category was given for the highest reduction in the weighed frequency rate compared to the previous year, employing more than 10 lakh man hours.

While the company's Plant I at Mettur received the second prize in Group 'C' for 2001 and the third place for 2002, the Vedaranyam Salt Works received the second, third and second prizes under Group 'C' for 2002 under schemes 1, 2 and 3.

T AN Thenappan, Vice President - Operations and L Subramanian, Manager - Safety of Chemplast Sanmar received the awards from P Annavi, Minister for Labour, Government of Tamil Nadu at a function organised at Chennai in March 2005. M B Pranesh, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Labour and Employment, K A Mohamed Aziz, Chief Inspector of Factories, Government of Tamil Nadu and R Thiruvengadam, Chairman, National Safety Council, Tamil Nadu Chapter, were present at the function.

*The Tamil Nadu State Safety Award for the year 2002 was received by T AN Thenappan, (centre) Vice President - Operations, and L Subramanian, Manager - Safety (right), Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, from P Annavi (left) Minister for Labour, Government of Tamil Nadu, at a function organised by the Tamil Nadu Government at Chennai on 4 March 2005.*



# Wild peacock chase!

**A**LRIGHT, it was the lure of peacocks. It wasn't the famed Muruga Temple that took me to Viralmalai and my indifference to the Lord taught me a lesson. I spent the day on a 'wild peacock chase', hearing stories about the divine status of the national bird but hardly seeing any in this small temple town near Tiruchi. The tourism brochure (never, never believe in it) misled me by describing Viralmalai as famous for its peacock sanctuary. As an RLT junkie, I jumped at the idea and jumped on a taxi.

The bus route from Madurai to Tiruchi on the NH 45B was smooth, barring the odd speed breaker. This was not going to be my first date with peacocks, but my interest was fired by the thought of seeing them in dogens at one place. In my mind, I equated it with the famous pen-guin parade in Melbourne. Close to Viralmalai, there were boys selling peacock feathers sealed in cellophane paper, waving frantically to potential customers. They asked for Rs. 100 but settled for Rs. 20 without so much as a protest leaving me with the suspicion that I had paid too much. From the main road to the narrow street leading to the village, I saw more feathers than I wanted to. But where were the peacocks? A question asked at the forest office elicited an answer, "There" I saw a finger pointing to a garbage dump. On the other side,



Pic by M. Moorthy

**Viralmalai: but where are the birds, asks SOMA BASU**

Thanks to the Forest Department's supply of grain, the number rose to 400, forcing the Department to stop feeding and letting the birds on their own. The birds then decided to move along and now the estimated population of 500-plus is scattered over Pudukkottai district. Result: Viralmalai's claim as a home for peacocks is a gross exaggeration.

However, the temple priests continue the practice of feeding and a sizeable number turns up each day.

I ended up counting the 210 steps on the small, rocky hill that takes you to the 11th Cen-

his nicotine fix, he prayed to Lord Muruga who appeared and voila ... provided him with a cheroot and a matchstick. Ever since, the community offers cheroots to the Lord.

The boulders one sees on the Viralmalai hills are believed to be more than rocks. They are said to be the agglomeration of bodies of yngis who sat in penance and attained samadhi. Apparently, the peacocks here know which one is a 'yogi rock' and which one is merely sedi-

**"They are with us!": SEC**

The response to Soma Basu's question in The Hindu Metroplus would be that peacocks can be found in good numbers within the compound of the Sanmar Engineering Corporation units at Viralmalai. They find a safe haven in the green belts developed by Sanmar, as can be seen in the pictures below.



*The Hindu, Metroplus, dated 5 February 2005.*

## Tyco Sanmar a sellout at Power-Gen Fair

Tyco Sanmar participated in the Power-Gen India & Central Asia Conference and Exhibition held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 1 to 3 February 2005. Close to 100 exhibitors took part in the fair.

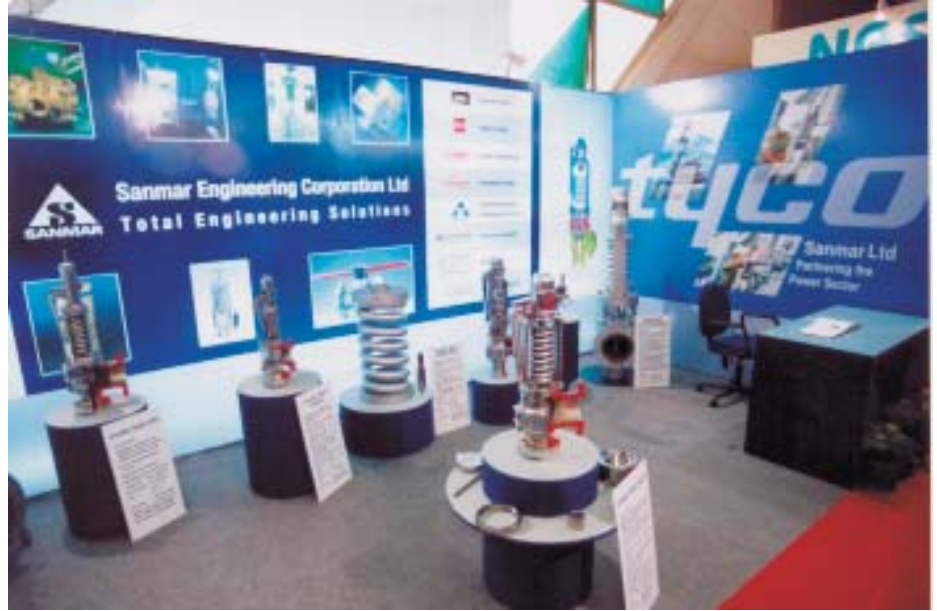
The exhibitors included manufacturers of equipment and their representatives, providers of services and technology relating to the power generation industry.

Products from Australia, the US and UK, Italy, France, Azerbaijan, Germany, Sweden and other countries were on display.

The participants' list included such names as Alstom, Ansaldo, BHEL, Bosch Rexroth, Clarke, Cummins, Doosan, Escorts, GE Energy, Man B&W, Sanmar Engineering, Siemens, Skoda, Thermax, Tata Power, and Turbomach SA.

This was the first major event addressing the power industry in which Tyco Sanmar showcased its products and made animated presentations on

*Ashok K Puri, Chairman & Managing Director, BHEL, with the Tyco Sanmar team.*



*A view of Tyco Sanmar's impressive display at the Power-Gen expo.*

product performance on steam applications of its product range.

The Tyco stall was a sellout, with both existing and prospective customers as well as potential vendors of Sanmar Engineering Corporation thronging the stall.

*Ravinder Bhat (left) escorting R V Sabi, Secretary, Government of India, to the Tyco stall.*



# Legends from the South

## M Visvesvaraya

Born on 28 August 1860 in Muddenahalli village of the Kolar district in the princely state of Mysore, Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya was one of India's foremost engineers and lived to the ripe old age of 101.

The creation and nurturing of several major institutions in Mysore (Karnataka today) are credited to Visvesvaraya. Among these are the Krishna Raja Sagar Dam, Visvesvaraya Iron & Steel Works, Mysore Sandalwood and Soap Company, Mysore University and Hindustan Aeronautics. According to biographer Dilip M Salwi, he was "an able economist, statesman, visionary, writer and humanist." He received many awards and honours, crowned by the nation's highest honour, the *Bharat Ratna* award, which he received in 1955.

The youngest of four children born to Srinivasa Sastry and Venkachamma, Visvesvaraya went to school in Chikballapur and Bangalore. Even as a child, he had an engineering bent of mind. When he was barely 13, his father, a Sanskrit scholar and an authority on Hindu dharma, besides being an Ayurvedic doctor, died while returning from a pilgrimage to Kasi, in the north.

Amidst uncertainty whether the dire circumstances of the family would allow him to continue his studies, the boy received help from his maternal uncle H Ramaiah, who "had seen the sparkle in the eyes of the thin and shy Visvesvaraya." Ramaiah took him to Bangalore and admitted him to the Wesleyan Mission High School in 1875. He later went to Central College where he obtained his bachelor's degree.

Visvesvaraya won scholarships throughout school and college, but also took up tuitions to support his family after his father's demise. His mother, brother and sister lived in Chikballapur while he studied at Bangalore, and young Visvesvaraya always found the time to visit them despite his hectic schedule of studies and tuition.

Impressed by Visvesvaraya's academic brilliance and capacity for hard work, Charles Waters, the principal of his college and mathematics teacher, recommended him for a scholarship to study engineering after the young man stood first in B A Honours. In 1880, Visvesvaraya joined the Poona College of Science to study civil engineering. In the final examination held in 1883, he stood first in the Bombay Presidency and won the James Berkeley Medal.

Joining the Public Works Department (PWD) of Bombay as Assistant Engineer, Visvesvaraya came up with a number of ingenious solutions to numerous engineering problems in the course of his work.

One of Visvesvaraya's significant contributions as an irrigation engineer was to design and patent a system of weir water floodgates called the Automatic Sluice Gates in 1901. These were installed at Lake Fife, the Khadakvasla reservoir in the water works department of Poona and Kirkee cantonment. These gates prevented flooding and loss of water. The success of these gates led to similar measures in the Tigris dam in Gwalior and the Krishna Raja Sagar dam in Mysore. The Krishna Raja Sagar dam across the Kaveri River was the biggest reservoir in India at that time.

Visvesvaraya's consistent performance, his innovative schemes and problem-solving ability facilitated his rapid growth in his career. His British superiors not only posted him to the problem areas of the country to take advantage of his sterling qualities, they also made sure he received promotions, often 'out of turn', in recognition of his merit. They also sent him abroad on a number of tours to learn the state of the art in engineering systems.

Visvesvaraya realised that when he became the seniormost Indian in the service, he would not be appointed the Chief Engineer of Bombay Presidency, a post reserved for Britons. The proud and principled officer that he was, he resigned from government service at age 48.

### Diwan of Mysore

Visvesvaraya was then appointed Chief Engineer of the Mysore princely state in 1909, and the Diwan of the state in 1912. In these roles, he contributed to the all-round development of the state, with the support of Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar.

Harnessing the river Kaveri to generate electric power was one of the most significant engineering projects promoted by Visvesvaraya. When, after crossing several obstacles, the Krishna Raja Sagar dam was commissioned in 1931, it became the largest hydroelectric power scheme in the country. Next to the dam are the Brindavan Gardens, with their musical fountains, parks flower beds and avenue trees, the result of Visvesvaraya's vision, watered and nourished by the releases of the dam. "As Visvesvaraya had foreseen, the gigantic scheme changed the landscape of the neighbouring Mandya and Mysore districts. These now became rich and prosperous, yielding rice, sugarcane and cotton."

Visvesvaraya was instrumental in setting up the Government Engineering College

in 1917 in the city of Bangalore, which was later named after him. The University Visvesvaraya College of Engineering is one of the most reputed institutes of higher learning in the state of Karnataka. He also promoted the Mysore University.

### Centenary

Knighted in 1915, Visvesvaraya retired as Diwan in 1919, but continued to serve state and country as an active consultant engineer for the rest of his life. He was involved in the construction of Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, the establishment of the Chemical Technology Institute in Bombay, and the reorienting of research in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The modification of the drainage system of Karachi, and monitoring the Back Bay Reclamation in Bombay were some of his other contributions. His 1939 report on floods in Orissa led to the conception of the Hirakud Hydroelectric Project. At age 75, he played a key role in starting Hindustan Aeronautic Laboratories in Bangalore, though his original intention was to set up a foreign collaboration to manufacture motorcars in the state. A byproduct of Visvesvaraya's efforts was the Premier Automobiles Limited in Maharashtra, which manufactured Fiat cars in India.

Visvesvaraya had the unique distinction of participating in his centenary celebrations. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, on 28 August 1960. The Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department issued a special stamp to honour him and the Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum was set up in Bangalore to commemorate the occasion.

Visvesvaraya died on 14 April 1962, and he was cremated at

his village, Muddenahalli, where a memorial has been erected at his home. In his own words, he had "achieved all I dreamed for in my youth."

### AWARDS AND HONOURS

Crown of the Indian Empire	1911
Knighthood of the Indian Empire	1915
Bharat Ratna	1955

### Other awards and honours

- Durga Prasad Gold Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
- Life Membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London
- Life Membership of Institution of Engineers (India)
- Fellowship of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
- Fellowship of the Institute of Town Planners

### Publications

- Planned Economy of India, 1934
- Memoirs of My Working Life, 1951



Illustration by S Girish

# Long innings depend on good partnerships.



The Sanmar group has come a long way since its first international joint venture, back in the 1960s.

Since then, the group has set the benchmark for global partnerships. Partnerships based on trust and transparency.

With collaborators, customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, government and other agencies.

With the community—through massive investments in environment protection measures in its plants; by supporting schools, special education centres and speciality medicine; by providing street lighting and clean drinking water to nearby populations; by lending a firm helping hand to the government in its humanitarian initiatives at times of natural calamities.

With each of these constituents, Sanmar forges lasting relationships.

And each of them is an equal partner in Sanmar's journey to excellence.

#### Core Areas



Pharmaceuticals



Specialty Chemicals



Engineering



Shipping



Life Insurance

#### Major Investments



Consort

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