

# MATRIX

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Old Hat, New Hat



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

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# IACC-Sanmar Award

The flow of things to come in Indo-US business co-operation



*L to R: Hiren Shah, Vice Chairman, IACC, N Sankar of The Sanmar Group, David Hopper, US Consul General in Chennai, Lewis Kling, President & CEO, Flouserve Corporation, USA, R Anand, Chairman, IACC and KV Rangaswamy, Member of the Board and President, L & T - ECC.*

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) and The Sanmar Group have jointly instituted the IACC-Sanmar Indo-US Business Co-operation Award. The award recognises the efforts of individuals or business enterprises for their significant contribution in promoting Indo-US relationships through business or economic activity. The award, an annual event, will serve as a benchmark for excellence in building relationships between India and the US.

Both, the IACC and The Sanmar Group have promoted and strengthened Indo-US business relationships over the decades-Sanmar as an industry participant and IACC as an institutional body providing a platform for Indo-US interaction. The

*At the dinner hosted by Sanmar and L&T. L to R: Hiren Shah, IACC, Dr Shankaran P Ragunathan, IACC, N K Ranganathan, CEO, Grundfos Pumps India and R Anand, IACC (extreme right).*



Sanmar Group's association with US business houses is legendary; more so, the contribution in the development of institutions such as the IACC by the Sanmar leadership to promote bi-lateral trade. At the time of the inauguration of the IACC in 1969 by Kenneth Keating, US Ambassador at that time, K S Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus, was the Founder-Southern Regional President of the Chamber. N Sankar and N Kumar of The Sanmar Group, have been past regional presidents of the Chamber.

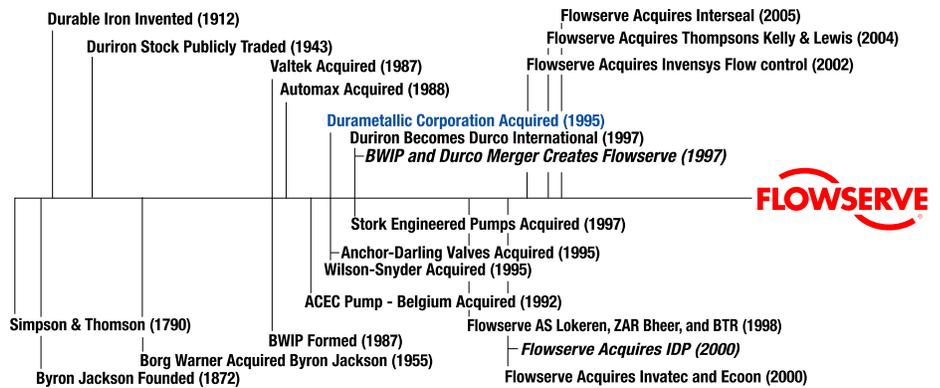
The first recipient for the prestigious award was Flowserve Corporation, USA. Sanmar is a front runner in several ventures with US corporations; it is especially heartening for Sanmar that IACC identified Flowserve, one of Sanmar's JV partners, as the first recipient of this award.

Flowserve's sojourn with India began 40 years ago, albeit in a different avatar. Flowserve's genealogy has part of its nucleus in Durable Iron, established in 1912. Duriron as it was called, flowed through the river of time expanding its shores through strategic acquisitions. One such tributary was the merger of Duriron with Durametallic Corporation. The union, Durco International further merged with Borg Warner Industrial Products (BWIP) and in 1997, Flowserve was born. Flowing through the twists and turns of acquisitions and organic growth, Flowserve offers a wide range of products and services in flow control, pumping systems and flow solutions. Today, the company has been associated with India through joint ventures with leading industrial houses such as Larsen and Toubro, The Sanmar Group and Microfinish.

Sanmar's association with Flowserve was yet another tributary that originated in the joint venture with Durametallic Corporation of USA in the mid seventies. N Sankar in his address at the award ceremony reminisced on the early days when he was out scouting for JV



Lewis Kling and K S Narayanan.



Vijay Sankar and Rebecca Kling.

relationships with US companies who were market leaders for the products in consideration. A very young Sankar was told in no uncertain terms that Durametallc was looking to deal with a corporation, as it spelt stability as opposed to individuals who may come and go. Much water flowed under the bridge since then. Durametallc today is morphed into Flowserve, but Sanmar and its JV philosophy remain, the relationships continue. The Flowserve-Sanmar partnership established about thirty-two years ago, is indeed the base that defined Sanmar's other JV relationships.



*Mark Blinn, CFO & Lars Rosene, Vice President, Global Communications & Public Affairs of Flowserve Corporation, USA*

Flowserve's association with Sanmar began in the avatar of Durametallc Corporation.

Under the stewardship of N Sankar and project management of S R Seshadri the first collaborative venture for the manufacture of mechanical seals in India came about with the establishment of Durametallc India Ltd. The reference came by from Chemplast's partners, B F Goodrich. This was the prelude to the rest of the joint ventures and the establishment of Sanmar Engineering Corporation.



"I am doubly delighted. Firstly, on behalf of Sanmar, to be associated with an award that will recognise business co-operation between the two greatest democracies in the world. Secondly, that the first recipient is Flowserve Corporation. Our relationship with Flowserve has particular significance for me personally since this was the first business that I started on my own and the first US collaboration I negotiated on my own."

**N Sankar**

*L to R: S R Seshadri, N Sankar and Lewis Kling at the Dinner.*



In his acceptance speech Lewis Kling of Flowserve thanked the Flowserve team and the JV partners for their commitment, support and dedication to the business. Lewis Kling referring to Flowserve’s customers, said, “The long term successful co-operation we have with our customers has allowed us the opportunity to address many

challenges and offer solutions to the oil, gas, chemical, energy and motor sectors.”

He reiterated that the workforce plays a significant role in the future of the company.

“I believe our most important asset is our people. With more than 14,000 employees in 56 countries, I am confident that we are well positioned to serve our customers anywhere in the world. I am encouraged by the expertise and positive attitude of our workforce in the region. As the number of employees grows in India, we will ensure that each of them will grow with us by continually having access to the skills and training necessary for success in an increasingly competitive world and having a work environment based on Flowserve’s core values. Our employees here in India will truly be the next-gen of experience in motion. While we celebrate the past I believe our best days in India are yet to come. I look forward to continued relationships as we set the stage for the next 40 years. While it has been a great 40 years, the next 40 years will be greater.”



“The long term commitment of Flowserve to India is one of the reasons, I believe that IACC and Sanmar are recognising Flowserve with this award.”

**David Hopper**

US Consul General in Chennai



R Anand, Chairman, IACC, Tamil Nadu branch, in his address said that the IACC Sanmar Award would be open to individuals and institutions for contributing to the growth of Indo-US ties.

The award is expected to propel further the growth of business with the US and recognise successful Indo-US joint ventures. Flowserve, he said, is a truly global company that has been doing business with leading Indian partners like Larsen & Toubro and The Sanmar Group for over four decades.

Elaborating the awarding process he explained that all Indo-US joint ventures would be listed and the US partner would be eligible to receive the award on the basis of guidelines and criteria formulated by the award selection committee of the IACC.

*S Gopinath, President, Flowserve India and M N Radhakrishnan of The Sanmar Group.*



# Old Hat, New Hat



## Sanmar Stalwarts

They may be old hat today, but it was this ‘boys- brigade’ that shaped Chemplast in its early years when it was fraught with challenges. Murali Prasad, Kalidas, Sivaramakrishnan, S R Seshadri and others made up a fiery young team that loved challenges and cricket. They were grappling with technology, financial constraints and a ‘not-so-liberal’ business climate. They worked with commitment and ownership, like the organisation belonged to them. They were mavericks who shaped management theories with their bold

approach – got together, thought together and worked together. They pooled their individual resources towards one goal – from a dead-end situation to a total turnaround, they DID IT. The reminiscence of these stalwarts and how they worked would perhaps be the story of perfect execution!

It is about 40 years now and Chemplast has come a long way. Let us look back at those days and hear from the stalwarts how things got done.





## S A Murali Prasad



Murali Prasad was the accounts whiz-kid at Chemplast. “When I think of those days, I can’t but talk of the people I was associated with, for, these are the people who steered the company through difficult times. First and foremost is K S Narayanan (KSN), Chairman Emeritus. His kindness was his weakness. He can completely forgive an erring colleague – a trait arising out of an innate kind heart. He and the late TSN provided Chemplast with a beneficial mix of contrasting styles – the combination of a great head and heart. S Ramaswamy, the GM and my boss, was all grace, and quiet confidence. He had an uncanny knack of striking a chord with anyone he came into contact

with-directors, bankers and government officials. I particularly recall a tough meeting we had with ICICI. Their team of analysts tore our proposal apart – the reschedulement of loans we sought stood no ground against their supportive facts and figures. Yet, after the bombardment when Ramaswamy reconstructed the story of Chemplast, the adverse meeting turned positive. Essentially, it was his own conviction about the inherent strength of the project, a certain transparency, his cool approach with no hype attached and the power of his communication that built the confidence. Young executives like me blossomed under his mentoring. Marv Larson, Director, B F Goodrich

## Old Hat, New Hat

stood by Chemplast during the toughest times. I recall the 'quickness' that he made us churn out during his visits! We had to produce a profit forecast within 15 minutes and the calculators we had took 30 seconds to churn a multiplication. We would use our own creative ways to arrive at these 'quicknesses', but what came out of this was a very clear understanding of the profit model for Chemplast. T S Narayanaswami (TSN) the other promoter-Director was a person who could think big! His memory, perceptive abilities and attention to detail were extraordinary. N Sankar and I were the youngest of the team and shared a cabin for some time! To me it was an experience seeing a great industrialist take shape. He had the same insatiable appetite for knowledge and facts then, and used to ask a lot of questions (some uncomfortable ones too!). I also recall, with warmth, working with Dev, Kali, Sesh, Pad, Siv, Renga and others.

"My days at Chemplast resulted in some strong convictions I nurture even today.

"There has to be a deep sense of ownership and commitment to the organisation which employs you-whether as an employee or as a consultant. I carry it forward even today in my consulting business in the way I approach my clients' problems. When I talk about commitment, I must also acknowledge management's commitment to me. It couldn't have been one-way. It was never about pay scales but more to do with position, role and management's commitment.

"People will get old but organisations do not have to. The average age of a company should be kept low, as this encourages positive vibes. To do something special, the core team has to be young. Chemplast was turned around because of a committed young team. I

was in my 30s when I was heading the accounts function at Chemplast. People at the sunset zone of their career, I find, are reluctant to take on big challenges. I must also add that during my time in Chemplast, we had no sacred cows to challenge and organisation politics was almost non-existent.

"There is no company or business that can't be turned around. In spite of the trying time we had, we turned the business around to post very good profits.

"Today things have changed, TQM and TPM have dramatically improved shop-floor practices, but I am saddened that these efficiencies have not percolated to accounting practices."

### R Sivaramakrishnan



Sivaramakrishnan the marketing man at Chemplast was with the organisation from 1967 until 1994. He wore many hats during his tenure, marketing a host of products, purchasing raw materials, import and export activities, Government liaisons, Legal, etc. He accepted various responsibilities assigned to him and continued to serve as Advisor for some more years till he finally called it quits. The man who introduced Chemplast rigid PVC pipes in India and abroad and whose efforts won the Best Exporters' Award for Chemplast from Plastics Export Promotion Council,

Govt. of India – that's Sivaram. He was one marketing man who understood the implications of his marketing decisions. His ways and means may well be theorized as measures of marketing profitability, but at that time, it was his native financial and marketing sense that ensured marketing with profitability. Murali Prasad recalls that Sivaram would pull out the P & L statement from the competitors' balance sheet, divide the profits by the output, deduce raw material costs per ton, wages, etc., to arrive at their cost and give a drill down to the accounting person on the costing strategy! But Sivaram believes, his strength was his documentation. He would document all the discussions in meetings. "If something happens to me, the organisation should not suffer," says Sivaram. His children got wind of it and once entered their own agenda in his meticulous event calendar - Lunch with Sriram, dinner with Usha!

"I am honoured to be considered a stalwart of this company for, I owe it to the management. They recognised a person's strength and provided the opportunities. I made full use of these opportunities using my own style of operations. The only parameters were that there can be no short cuts, no underhand dealings and total honesty. I was considered as one of the family, but from my side, I never took advantage of my relationships. That's why it extends even after 13 years of retirement.

"One incident I recall was the time I had a heart attack in 1991. My wife called KSN. I was rushed to the hospital and I found KSN and Sankar waiting for me at the hospital and they were there the whole night through.

"Today's environment is different. What we did those days may not work. Yet quality and efficiency, commitment and integrity stand you in good stead then and now. It is the survival of the fittest!"

## R Kalidas



(Trust Chemical Industries LLC, Egypt)

The very first employee of Chemplast, R Kalidas looks back at his career as one colourful rainbow, a spell of uninterrupted joy of doing things and learning on the job. He celebrated the 25th year of his life, standing on the soil where the Chemplast facility in Mettur stands today. Brick by brick, he saw the company being established. "I had the opportunity to work with experienced professionals like Dan Campbell and Elmer Schroeder and learn from them which helps me even today. Some of the engineering solutions I came up with are in effect to this day. Manufacturing PVC through ethyl alcohol was the first of its kind. The supply of alcohol for ethylene swung like a pendulum. Times got rough. At a 'B F Goodrich know-how exchange' program at Berlin, I met an engineer from British Petroleum who lamented about his piling ethylene dichloride (EDC) stocks. Sivaram took over and in a license-raj regime, we imported EDC and the company turned around. Then came the PVC pipes business. Sivaram built up the order books with requirements for the Middle East. We worked into the wee hours of the morning to fulfil the customers' orders and Sivaram kept us awake with his repertoire of jokes and stories. A 20-wagon goods train fully-loaded with

just Chemplast pipes was a great sight to see! I miss those days. Now history is repeating itself in a way here at Egypt. We still have challenges, some ten times bigger. Nevertheless, I am hoping to create the Mettur magic here, 'Insha Allah.' The team of yesteryears is missing though. Reliving the magic of those years I can go on singing the old Hindi song, 'Woh jab yaad aaye, bahut yaad aaye', but I must cry for a halt some time!"

## N K Rangarajan



His career spanned 30 years at Chemplast and he retired as Advisor - Marketing in April '97. In an old issue of *Matrix* he wrote, "Like the simple farmer who watches the seed being sown, and, over the years, revels at its marvellous growth into a big banyan tree, under which not only he but many more persons enjoy shelter and shade, while scores of birds rest and nest on the treetop, my heart warms to our organisation's growth today."

'Project EDC' was still very fresh in his mind. This could well be a case study for delegation and execution. Kalidas took care of the technology aspect, Sivaram the purchase and government liaison work and Rangarajan was in charge of identifying the port, storage facilities and onward transportation to Mettur. Sounds simple. But at that time it took ages for a telephone call to

come through, one had to yell into the receiver to be barely audible, documents had to travel from Delhi to Khandla for customs clearance and the nightmare of interstate logistics! "At that time there were only a handful of us working under the stewardship of N Sankar. That the whole operation went through without a hitch, speaks of the immense commitment of the team, which enabled the company's PVC operations to leap-frog to what it is today."

"In my time the commitment index of employees was very high. The 'one family' feeling was foremost while other considerations were relegated to the back seat. Perhaps when an organisation on the fast growth track expands phenomenally in a short span, there is a price to pay, largely due to environmental changes and the price may well be a reduced level of commitment. I hope and wish that this is only a myth."

"As a person who had exited the group a decade ago, and peering through the window now, my perception is that the achievements of Sanmar are truly rare and remarkable. Today The Sanmar Group has become a diversified conglomerate. The little seeds sown have grown to a "big banyan tree". Starting from the first visionary, Late Sri Sankaralinga Iyer, eminently followed through by Sri KSN, and now by the third generation of the N Sankar/N Kumar combine, each one of them has put his best foot forward and taken the conglomerate to ever higher levels of success. As poet H W Longfellow writes, "their success was not achieved by sudden flight... but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward into the night".

**These are the young mavericks that flourished under the Chemplast umbrella. Will their ways and means be applicable today? Anyone walking in their shoes would have stumbled in their footsteps, for these stalwarts ran the gauntlet and came out winners.**

# The Sanmar Diaspora



While the old hat reminisced about the oneness and ownership they had with Sanmar, generation next, the new hat, look at the world in a larger perspective. It is no longer 'my company, my people' but it is 'my world' in an oyster.

Several of Sanmar employees' children have crossed the shores of India to experience new cultures and greater diversity. It is heartening to note that our employees' children are doing very well for themselves. We proudly present to you some of them and their thoughts.



*Vishwanath  
Ananthakrishnan*

Cruising on chip design, working on cutting edge technology and creating tomorrow's products today, young Vishwanath, has no cause to complain. This Design Verification Engineer at

Silicon Graphics Inc. says he works at a place where employees are encouraged to be innovative, and taking on additional responsibility is considered a good thing. Generally the work culture is geared towards the highest productivity and efficiency. Studying and working in the US has made him independent and responsible and broadened his perspective both at a professional and personal level. He has the opportunity to work with people of different nationalities and cultures which he thinks will stand him in good stead. "While I am happy about where I am now, what I do from here is crucial. The greatest thrill is that I am working on next-generation technology in a field I am passionate about (chip design). But at times, when temperatures slide to -30 C, the greatest thrill in my world is the comfort of a room heater!"

(Vishwanath is the son of K V Ananthakrishnan, Asco (India) Limited)



*Subramaniam  
Venkiteswaran*

Subramaniam lives in New York City and is a financial software developer at Bloomberg. His company does not give formal titles to anybody. He took the academic research route and did an advanced

degree in Computer Science from the University of Austin, Texas. "I'm happy the way life has unfurled. I have been able to broaden my perspectives and increase my scientific temper to a large part attributed to the association with an extremely diverse set of people, intellectually and culturally. I have also been able to participate in state-of-the-art research with eminent professors and I continuously think about narrowing the spread between theory and practice." Presently he is making use of his free time to pursue a part-time degree program in MS in Finance.

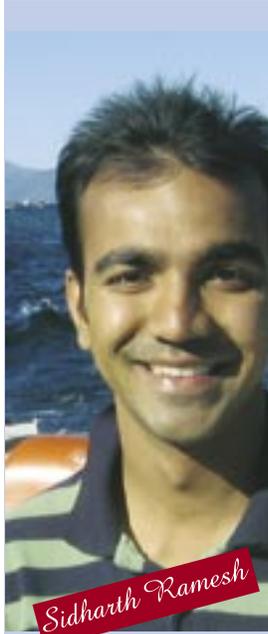
(Subramaniam is the son of K S Venkiteswaran, Corporate, IR)



*Sandeep Ramesh*

Sandeep Ramesh, B Tech and an MBA from IIM –A aspired to jumpstart his career in finance and starting at New York, the nerve centre of global finance seemed the

best thing to do. As Vice President at Lehman Bros., New York, Sandeep has had a wonderful experience. Living in the US has exposed him to various cultures and thoughts and has enriched him as a person. However flying off the nest, away from family and friends has been a tough adjustment. How is it different working in the US? “My colleagues here are brutally forthright and expect the same of me too. The work environment is invigorating and there’s no power play. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) are indeed sacrosanct. When I compared notes with my friends back in India, I find people in India tend to work harder and longer. My life here is dynamic and I get to experience something new ever so often but, when you say ‘home’, it is still India.”



*Sidharth Ramesh*

“Digging into research by doing an MS in Computer Science at Salt Lake City, I thought, was a good way to postpone work! During the course of life in the US, I discovered the joy of

cooking and was exposed to a great deal of diversity, both culturally and gastronomically. When I think of home, I recall the pampering, the food and, of course, the visits to the temples. As for life here in the US - I have started work with Microsoft Corporation and today the world and everything about it seems really good, except the weather at Seattle!”

(Sandeep and Sidharth are the sons of V Ramesh, Chemplast Sanmar Limited)



*Saravanan Arumugam*

Saravanan, a masters in Computer Science is a software engineer in London, U.K. with a Bangalore based firm, Nous Infosystems. His focus at work is always to deliver service on time and to the highest standards of perfection. He

admires the English people for their perfection in all that they do, amazing agility of the people even in their 60’s and 70’s, politeness and impeccable road-manners. According to him, the credit for what he has achieved so far in life goes to his teachers and his family members. Saravanan nurtures a wish to help people who are less fortunate and to motivate their children to be well-educated. “The natural beauty of England can be called the best in the world but while I am here, home is always India. I must say, I feel so happy to be featured in the house magazine of Sanmar Group. I never knew such a magazine existed!” says Saravanan.

(Saravanan is the son of C Arumugam, Plant II, Mettur)



*Takshin Bhat*

Takshin is a Channels Systems Engineer handling US-Canada Sales at Cisco Systems Inc., New York. He has an MS degree in Telecommunications from the Oklahoma State University, USA.

The lure of working with cutting-edge technology drew him to the US. "I have always believed in learning from experience. I wanted to experience different cultures and learn the best from each of them. The exposure to various technologies, cultures, ethnicities, festivals, food, fashion, music and lifestyles has contributed a great deal in developing my personality."

(Takshin is the son of Ravinder Bhat, Flowserve Sanmar Limited)



*Sriram Sivaram*

Here is a global Indian who flows with the 'reverse brain-drain.' Sriram, an engineer from IIT left for the US to pursue an MS degree and later an MBA from Cornell University. He worked in the US for about 15 years holding key positions in US-based multinationals in the energy sector. Presently he heads an automotive ancillary business at Chennai,

Madras Engineering Industries

Private Limited.

Sriram looks for challenges, keeps challenging himself, is full of optimism and confidence, and thinks like a maverick. The world to him is linked to one supply chain and one market. Living in the US, working outside of a protected environment, he believes, gave him this global mindset. Life overseas provided him with the spirit of entrepreneurship and there were no sacred cows. He made full use of the opportunities and enriched his life with experience. Yet this place called home – Madras, the friends, the relationships and the nostalgia remained with him wherever he went. Having touched base after a home run, what is it that irks him most? "The lack of respect for time drives me nuts. The other thing is that people tend to claim everything can be done even when it can't be done!" Looking back, has he achieved all that he wanted? Yes. Could he have done better? Yes. Is he unhappy? No. Is he satisfied? "I still want more out of life!" says Sriram.

(Sriram Sivaram is the son of R Sivaramkrishnan who is one of the pioneering teams that laid the foundation for Chemplast)



*Chitkala Kalidas*

Chitkala remembers her growing years in Mettur with fondness. The Chemplast colony was a cultural oasis in an industrial region, offering many social, cultural and sports events that fostered a strong sense of community

bonding for Chitkala and her brother Sanath.

As a Director at a multinational pharmaceutical company, Merck & Co, in Global Strategic Regulatory Development, she is working with worldwide regulatory agencies as well as internal product development teams to develop new medicines.

Prior to joining Merck, Chitkala was a consultant at the Boston Consulting Group in New York where she worked with Fortune 100 companies to develop business strategies for R&D productivity improvement, mergers & acquisitions and marketing. Chitkala has a PhD in Microbiology from Cornell University, New York. She now lives in Philadelphia, USA.

Sanath Kalidas, Chitkala's brother, is



*Sanath Kalidas*

an Associate Project Manager in Brailsford and Dunlavy in Washington DC. He has a Master's in Construction Management from the School of Engineering & Architecture in Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He also

has a LEED AP certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, which focuses on energy conscious and sustainable building design for the future.

(Chitkala and Sanath are the offsprings of R Kalidas, TCI LLC, Egypt.)

## S B Prabhakar Rao Felicitated

S B Prabhakar Rao was honoured as an eminent person in Chennai for his services to social, spiritual and cultural fields. He was conferred with the title “Astrikottana Samaja Seva Ratna” at the Sarvajith Ugadi celebrations under the auspices of the Telugu Brahmana Mahasabha.



*S Sathiyamurthy, President, Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum, presenting the citation to Prabhakar Rao.*

## G K Pillai's New Beginning



G K Pillai left Sanmar Engineering for newer pastures in Ranchi.

In his new assignment, he is the Chairman and Managing Director of Heavy Engineering Corporation, a unit under the Ministry of Heavy Industry, the Government of India.

“It is a wholly different life style here. Yes it’s a big challenge. The organisation is gigantic with a huge plant that stretches endlessly. But the infrastructure available is the best in the country.”

He has already set a target for himself- he plans to take the organisation to a turnover of Rs 10,000 crores in the next 5 years.

He hopes to work on the hierarchy-based culture and focus on human

resource development and training to motivate employees and build up passion. Team work and motivation with a built-in performance culture will be the way forward.

“I hope to put to good use some of the things I learnt in Sanmar. The lessons I learnt there as a professional, no B-school could have ever provided and this will stand me in good stead in the challenging days ahead.

Ranchi is the capital of Jharkand and this unit is its very lifeline. It is one of the oldest public sector organisations and is completing 50 years soon. This is a huge township and a beautiful place. I’m enjoying it.”

We wish you well GKP, may you make an NTPC out of HEC!

## Air Vice Marshal V Krishnaswamy, VSM (Retd)

“ A man of character, he showed Indchem and Sanmar that giving and discipline can be a way of life.

He and Jaya Aunty dedicated their ‘new lives’ in Madras (after his retirement in the 1980s), to the Group, to MNC, the children and the MNC staff.

We will always have a place in our hearts for him! ”

**N Kumar**



**A**ir Vice Marshal V Krishnaswamy, VSM (Retd) passed away at the age of 81 years on 21 April '07 at his residence in Defence Colony, near St Thomas Mount, Chennai.

On the 20th April, he stood at the forefront at the Graduation ceremony of the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children, yet another achievement in helping children with disabilities graduate to a normal life outside the Centre. The father of the Madhuram Narayanan Centre bid adieu for ever.

Sri Krishnaswamy's Early Intervention Program, designed to identify children who can cope better, provide intensive training and help them transition to the mainstream schools, brought about international recognition. He and his wife Jaya Krishnaswamy were honoured with the Sathguru Gnanananda Seventh National Award 2006 for "Families in Social Work".

He has worked tirelessly for 17 years to help children with disabilities lead a normal life. The Centre under his able

leadership was recognised as a professional organisation.

He has spearheaded various outreach and knowledge sharing programs that the MNC runs in conjunction with other rehabilitation centres, training centres and NGOs. The school conducts Disability Assessment camps, workshops and seminars to spread awareness and address the issue of disability and other disorders.

Sri Krishnaswamy has touched so many tender lives, so many families. It is with sadness that we bid farewell to this great soul. The light at MNC has flickered, but the torch that he lit will continue to burn in the years ahead. MNC is a never ending story that Sri Krishnaswamy helped to create. His memory will echo within the centre and outside. Our condolence to Jaya Krishnaswamy, the 'mother' of MNC, the rest of the bereaved

family, the children at MNC and their parents.

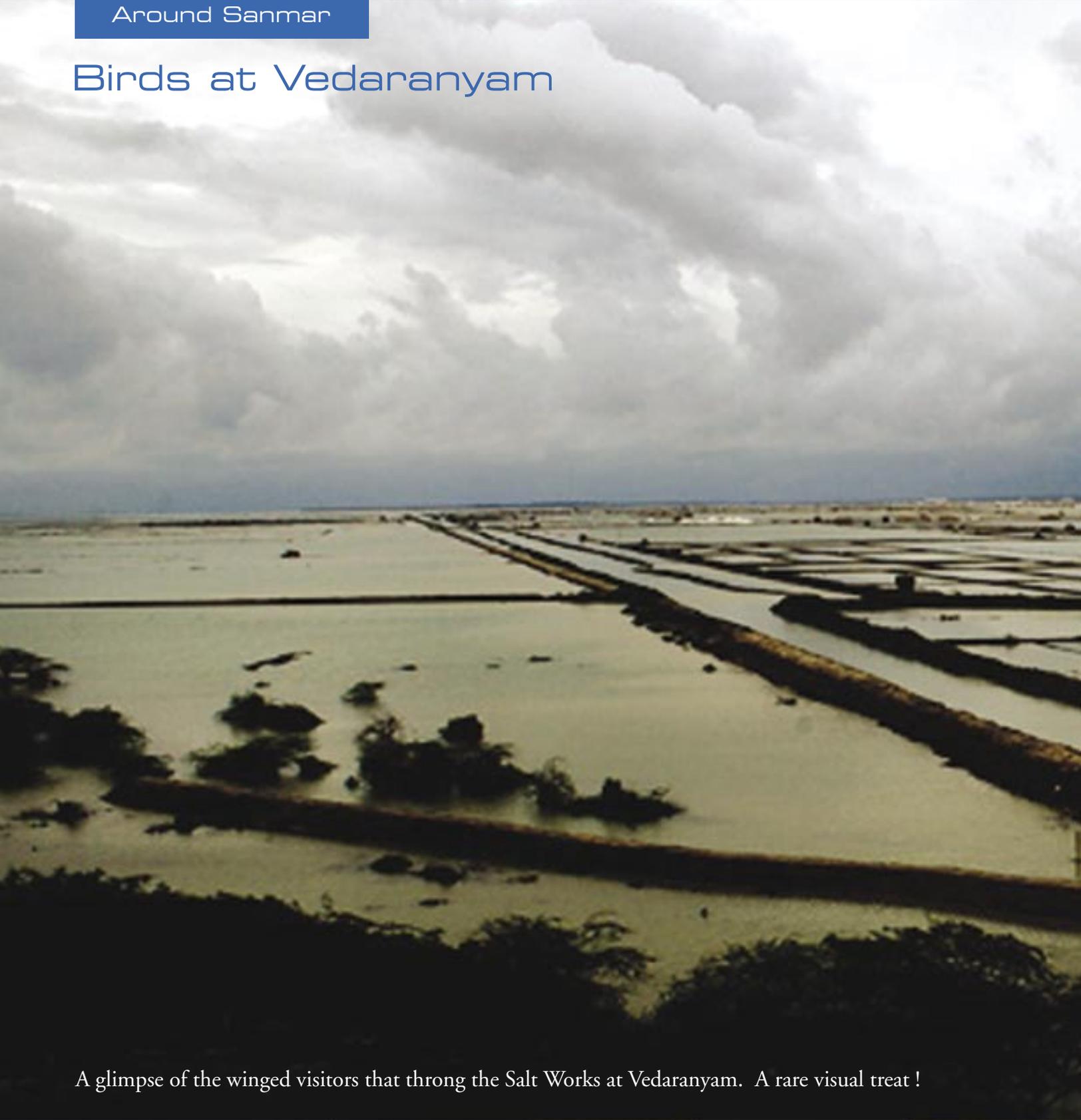


## Sports Meet at the MNC

The tenth annual sports meet of the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children (MNC) was held at the Bala Mandir premises in Chennai on 16 February 2007. The unique feature this year was the participation of children from mainstream schools including the Bala Mandir and the Little Flower Convent. Yet another feature was the enthusiastic involvement of the children from the Maithree group of schools begun by parents of children who underwent early intervention programme at MNC. This provided an opportunity for the children of the Centre to increase their awareness and sensitivity to each others' needs. Cricketer Tinu Yohannan who was the chief guest distributed the prizes for the winners in the various competitions held as part of the sports meet.



## Birds at Vedaranyam



A glimpse of the winged visitors that throng the Salt Works at Vedaranyam. A rare visual treat !





*Photographs: Mohanram Kemparaju*



## Vedaranyam - A Bird Watchers' Paradise

The swamps of Vedaranyam is a showcase of our feathered brethren in action. The flocks of migratory birds that swarm the swamps have drawn the attention of naturalists. Chemplast Sanmar and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have set up a study centre at a cost of 20 lakhs of which Sanmar advanced Rs 12 lakh. The foundation stone was laid by Pheroza Godrej, Vice President of the BNHS at Point Calimere sanctuary on the Vedaranyam coast in Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu in April this year. This centre by the BNHS and The Sanmar Group is the first of its kind in the country and is a boon to ornithologists, bird watchers and tourists. Two-and-a-half acres of land has been purchased by the BNHS for this purpose.



*Mukul Dixit, Pheroza J Godrej, Vice President of the Bombay Natural History Society and Dr S Balachandran, Scientist, BNHS, at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the study centre.*



## Lending a Helping Hand

Eswari, a class IX student of a Government school in Mettuthanampatti village suddenly found herself at a dead end. A heart ailment and not enough financial resources for medical treatment can be traumatic. Eswari's father managed to get an aid from the Tamil Nadu Government that covered the cost of the treatment. The girl's trip from Mettur for her treatment at Chennai was facilitated by a donation from the Sanmar Welfare Trust.



Eswari



Eswari accepts the cheque from TAN Thenappan of Chemplast Sanmar.

## CII-Ford India Tsunami Rehabilitation Project

As part of CII-Ford Tsunami Rehabilitation Project, the inauguration of the Community Infrastructure Projects at Pannaiyur Periyakuppam was held on 16 March 2007 in the presence of David T Hopper, Consul General of United States of America in South India and Pradeep Yadav, IAS, the District Collector of Kancheepuram. Also present were N Kumar of The Sanmar Group and Past President of CII, Arvind Mathew, Managing Director & President, Ford India Pvt Ltd, M Lakshminarayan, Chairman, CII Southern Region & Joint Managing Director, Motor Industries Company Limited and K N Krishnamurthy, Project Head-CII Tsunami Project & Technical Advisor to MD, Ashok Leyland Limited.

A community hall and a fish auction centre at Pannaiyur Periyakuppam near

Cheyyur in Kancheepuram district were inaugurated.

A three pronged approach was designed to cater to the needs of the 255 families residing at Pannaiyur Periyakuppam with Immediate Livelihood, Community Infrastructure and Capacity Building.



American Consul General David Hopper inaugurates a tsunami community centre at Pannaiyur Periyakuppam in Kancheepuram district. N Kumar of The Sanmar Group was also present at the inauguration.

## Water Purifying Units in Three Schools

Chemplast Sanmar has provided water purification facility at three schools in Karaikal by installing reverse osmosis units for potable water. The schools benefited are T R Pattinam Higher Secondary School, T R Pattinam High School and Keezhavanjore Primary School. The District Collector of Karaikal Dr N Vasanth Kumar inaugurated the installations of the units at the schools in June this year. The Principals and Vice Principals of the schools, several government officials and senior officials from the company were present at the inaugural function.



*S Ganesan, District Dy. Collector of Karaikal (Revenue) and the school Principal being welcomed by the school children.*

## Park at Mettur Gets a Make-over

The Lady Bradricks Stanley park at Mettur Dam was given a facelift by Chemplast Sanmar with the installation of a two-stage fountain. Additionally, two electrical lawn mowers and a Mitsubishi Sakthi tiller donated by the

company will help keep the park trim and in shape. TAN Thenappan handed over the equipment costing Rs 4 lakh to the Public Works Department's Executive Engineer R Subramanian at a function held in June this year.



*TAN Thenappan seen handing over the starting hand crank of the tiller to R Subramanian, Executive Engineer PWD, Mettur.*

## Free Tuition Centre for Veeranur

Following the success of the tuition centre at Mottur village, Chemplast Sanmar inaugurated the second one at Veeranur on 11 June 2007 in the presence of company officials, panchayat presidents, councillors and other local leaders. The centre is ideally located, close to the school from where most children will attend the classes. A qualified teacher has been recruited to give the children additional reinforcements to help them cope better with the school curriculum after regular school hours.



*Manickam, President of Gonor Panchayat, inaugurating the second tuition centre. Chemplast officials look on.*



# Sri Sankara Schools Post Excellent Results

## Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar



*Deepak  
Rajendran*



*Jyotsna  
Narayanan*



*N Vishwesh*

Students of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar, who appeared for class XII and class X examinations held in March this year by the Central Board Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, have done the school proud by securing very high percentage of marks. All the children who appeared for the examinations have passed securing 100% result for the school. In class XII (Plus Two) examination top scorer in the Science stream was Deepak Rajendran and in the Commerce stream, Jyotsna Narayanan was the topper. In class X examination, the school topper was N Vishwesh.

## Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur

P Supriya of Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, topped the class X, Tamil Nadu State Board Matriculation examination held in March this year. The school posted a 100% pass results and of the 97 who sat for the examination 77 students have passed with distinction. In class XII (Plus Two) examinations held by the State

Board, R Nayanthika of the Commerce stream was the topper obtaining state ranks in 3 subjects. Of the 177 students who appeared for class XII examination, 132 secured distinction. M Rajeev was the top scorer in the Science stream.

Children belonging to both the Sankara Schools have excelled in their performance in public examinations this year. Sanmar wishes the schools the very best results for many more years to come!



*P Supriya*



*R Nayanthika*



*M Rajeev*

## Top Scoring Sanmar Children



*S Padmavathy*

Among our employees' children, there were 2 known achievers. S Padmavathy, daughter of S Shankaran, Quality Control, Xomox Sanmar Limited, Viralimalai, scored 97% in the Higher Secondary Examination. She ranked third in her school, Savitri Vidyasala Hindu Girls Higher Secondary School, Tiruchirapalli and scored full marks in Mathematics and Chemistry.

M Raman at the Sanmar Corporate Division is the proud parent of R Ravi Kiran who scored 97.40% (overall) and a core subjects score of 99.33% in the class X examination with 100% in Mathematics. Ravi Kiran ranked II in his school, DAV Boys Senior Secondary School, Chennai in the CBSE stream. His total of 487 out of 500 comes as the 8th top total score when compared at the national level.



*R Ravi Kiran*

## A Culture of Safety

A culture of safety at the work environment is a commitment to Sanmar's employees. Every year, safety week is celebrated at the plants to create safety awareness. The week long safety

awareness campaigns feature several interesting events including quiz, slogan writing, safety skits, cartooning and safety suggestion competitions apart from demonstrations, training programmes

and mock drills. A photo feature on the safety week celebrations held at Viralimalai, Mettur and Karaikal.

### Viralimalai



*Fire safety training.*



*Dos and donts at work place. A training session in progress.*



*Evacuation drill.*



*First-aid training demonstration.*



*Fire safety.*



*First-aid drill.*

*Handling chemicals.*



Karaikal



*A solemn commitment to safety.*

*First-aid & life support demonstration.*



*Fire safety demonstration in progress.*



# Five Star Health and Safety Management System Audit



This is to certify that

## CHEMPLAST SANMAR LTD CHENNAI

after an extensive evaluation by a  
British Safety Council auditor, has been  
awarded a rating of Three Stars.

*Nina Wrightson*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of the Trustees

Nina Wrightson OBE

*D E Ballard*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive

D E Ballard



6818

No

23.04-03.05.07

Date



BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL

British Safety Council Services (trading as British Safety Council),  
70 Chancery Road, London W1S 9RS  
This certificate is awarded by, and remains the property of the British Safety Council  
Registered with the Charity Commission

Congratulations to Chemplast on the rating by British Safety Council for their safety practices.

## Chemspec 2007 at Mumbai

Sanmar Speciality Chemicals Limited (SSCL) participated at Chemspec 2007 held at Mumbai in April this year. Several leading manufacturers of fine and speciality chemicals from Asia, Europe and North America took part in the show. They exhibited a wide range of products, services and technologies for the custom, fine and speciality chemicals markets and a vast majority of them were optimistic about the response to business possibilities in the future. Sanmar Speciality Chemicals also had a favourable response and a good number of prospective clients visited the SSCL pavilion at the exhibition.

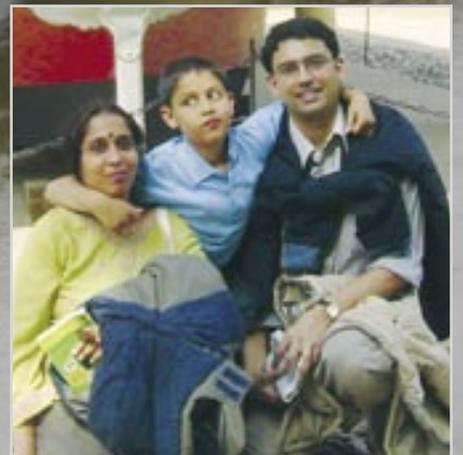


*SSCL stall at Chemspec 2007.*



## The Heat of Chennai to the Freeze of Erla

J Ramdas from Sanmar relocated to Erla, Germany, as CFO, Eisenwerk Erla GmbH. His wife Bhuvana recounts their experiences during the first fortnight.



*Bhuvana, Akash and Ramdas*

## Bhuvana Ramdas on the family's first fortnight in Germany

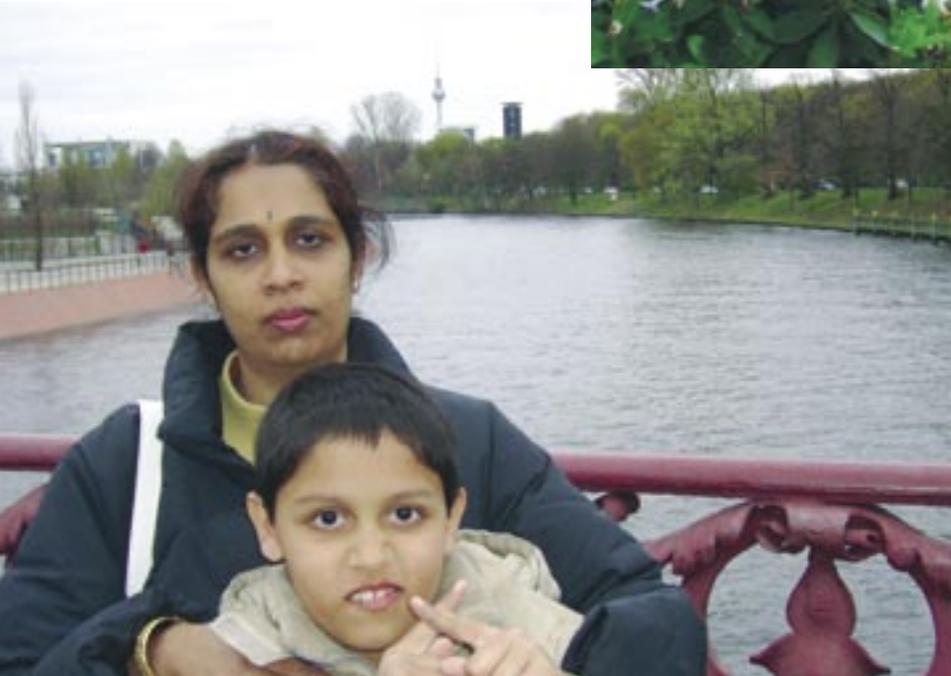
In a nutshell- We relocated from a stable, hot and hotter climate of Chennai to an erratic one that is, the cold, chilly, rainy, snowy weather of Dresden, Germany. We are settled in our new home, son Akash is settled in school, we obtained a three-year resident permit in Germany- all this even before our shipment from India came in.

### Week I

The flight from Chennai to Frankfurt to Dresden, was comfortable. Ms Anke Beckert, Ramdas' executive assistant received us at the Dresden airport with a warm smile. We checked into Hotel SMETANA (named after a Czechoslovakian music composer). At the hotel, we had a meal and the beverages came in pots. So, each of us had a pot of something to drink. Once rested, Ms Beckert showed us our new home. Her thoughtfulness and efficiency were very impressive. She spoke excellent



*A walk on the wild side – The Ramdas' in the heathlands.*



*Flowing with the tides of the Elbe – Bhuvana and Akash.*

English as she had been taking English speaking lessons to be able to work with Ramdas without a hitch. At the new house, there was a car ready for our use. Ms Beckert had the dimensions of the house handy. All we had to do was make a quick assessment of the furniture that we needed. She drove us to Elbe Park to buy furniture and we settled for IKEA, the Scandinavian furniture store. The furniture came in knocked-down pieces that we had to assemble ourselves. As we were not too confident of assembling the furniture, Ms Beckert promised to send help from Erla. By the end of the day, I had a Vodafone mobile connection,

a car, furniture for my new house, city map, tram/bus numbers and timings and details of Indian restaurants in Dresden, thanks to the efficiency of Ms Beckert! The weekend over, it was time to begin the new week with Akash's schooling.

The school is just three kms away from the hotel. I was pleasantly surprised to be greeted with a 'Namaste' from an Indian lady from Bangalore whose children went to the same school. Akash's class teacher is Ms Sharpe, an Australian. She teaches all the subjects except German, music and physical training. The best thing is that children didn't carry a huge load of books to school. Every student has a home bag in which the child brings the homework for the day. Akash was asked to fill a questionnaire that assessed his levels of listening, work levels, reading, writing and love for math. Akash had enrolled at a good time when the first half year was over and student-led conferences were held. The

child and the parent meet the class teacher and the child sets his/her own goal for the half year. During the course of the year, every child maintains a portfolio of the things he/she did during the half year. The portfolio is a collection of their work that the child thinks is very important. Then, during the student led conferences, the child presents the portfolio and tells if the goal setting has been met and shares the learning for the half year. On the first day Akash came home with math homework and a student reference manual which can be used to assist in the homework. Things are very different here for Akash.

Friends from the office helped to fix the furniture and fittings in our new home. We got our work permit formalities completed. My belongings that I had left behind during my last stay at Ingolstadt were also brought to my new house. So I was able to cook the evening meal in my new home.

Friday was a holiday for Akash. We settled in our new home. Nick Naderi from the neighbourhood came over to play with Akash. On Saturday, we showed off our new found skills to Ramdas. We knew tram routes and we went around the city hopping in and out of trams and buses. It was snowing gently and it was nice to be in the tram and watch the city getting snowed. Sunday was a rainy day and we went walking in the woods. The nature and scenery cannot be described in words. The cool air, silent unpolluted atmosphere, beautiful snow-clad rooftops and needle trees are a pleasure to be enjoyed. The children running in winter clothing with their parents, elderly couples walking hand in hand, serious joggers, walkers with dogs – you get to see all kinds of people during the walk. Sunday lunch was typical Bangalorean fare at our new friend's house.

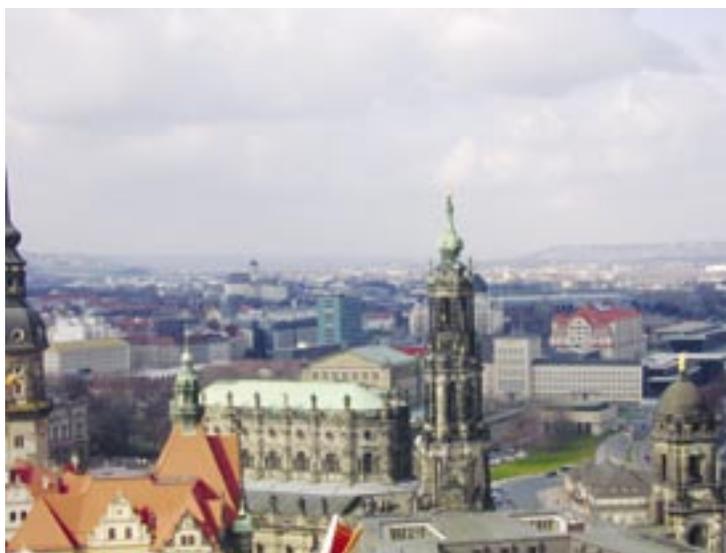
## **Week II – The routine falls in place**

I rise early, pack lunches for Akash and Ramdas, drop Akash at school, walk to Schillerplatz to buy the essentials, pick him up from school, etc. Akash has joined the chess club in school which he attends twice a week. My Indian friend took me to the Indian store

where I got most of the things I needed. Akash has picked up quite a lot of German. One of his school assignments is at least 10 minutes of compulsory reading (English) to his parents. Thanks to him, I have read a few nice kiddy books! There is a good library at the school and I have something to read in the afternoons. Without internet (as yet) and no newspapers in English, the library is a blessing for me.

Our Japanese neighbours, Mizuno have children going to Dresden International School. They speak more German than English. We befriended them and spoke to them in German. Once the residential formalities were complete, we opened an account at a local bank. We were told that, the account will be operational in 4 weeks time. The company has organised for German tuition for Ramdas and me at home for three days a week – Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6.30 to 8 p.m. So, more action starts from next week.

We still have some shopping to do in the weeks to follow and our consignment of personal goods is yet to come. Now, the house is settled and things in place, I have managed to key in the story for you all. A new way of life has begun and I will keep you posted with updates.



*Dresden – the Saxon capital is laden with culture and history.*

## Ramana Maharishi

Ramana Maharishi (1879-1946) is widely regarded as one of the great sages of the twentieth century. His version of advaita demands of its follower's relentless inquiry into the self rather than any ritualistic worship of God. His legacy, the Ramanasrama, located on the hills of Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu, draws devotees from all parts of India and the rest of the world.

*According to Ramana's teachings:*

*What is called mind is a wondrous power existing in Self. It projects all thoughts. If we set aside all thoughts and see, there will be no such thing as mind remaining separate; therefore, thought itself is the form of the mind. Other than thoughts, there is no such thing as the world.*

*Of all the thoughts that rise in the mind, the thought 'I' is the first thought.*

*That which rises in this body as 'I' is the mind. If one enquires 'In which place in the body does the thought 'I' rise first?', it will be known to be in the heart [spiritual heart is 'two digits to the right from the centre of the chest']. Even if one incessantly thinks 'I, I, it will lead to that place (Self).*

*The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?', destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre.*

Named Venkataraman at birth, Ramana was the second of four children of Sundaram Iyer and Azhagammal, in a village called Tiruchuzhi near Madurai in Tamil Nadu. He was born on 30 December 1879. His siblings were Nagaswamy (1877-1900), Nagasundaram (1886-1953) and sister Alamelu (1891/92-1953).

One November morning in 1895, three years after his father's death, Ramana met an elderly relative who had come from "Arunachala." According to a biography by Krishna Bikshu, "The word "Arunachala" was familiar to Venkataraman from his

younger days, but he did not know where it was, what it looked like or what it meant. Yet that day that word meant to him something great, an inaccessible, authoritative, absolutely blissful entity. Could one visit such a place? His heart was full of joy. Arunachala meant some sacred land, every particle of which gave moksha. It was omnipotent and peaceful. Could one behold it? "What? Arunachala? Where is it?" asked the lad. The relative was astonished. "Don't you know even this?" he asked, and continued, "Haven't you heard of Tiruvannamalai? That is Arunachala."

In mid-July 1896, at age sixteen, Ramana had a life changing experience. Suddenly and inexplicably overcome by the fear of death, he decided to simulate the experience, adopting the classical savasana pose, and even closing his nostrils, to stop breathing. In Ramana's own words, "The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: "Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies."

"Is the body I? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of I within me, apart from it. So I am the Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit. All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truths which I perceived directly almost without thought process. "I" was something real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with the body was centred on that "I". From that moment onwards, the "I" or Self focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death vanished once and for all. The ego was lost in the flood of Self-awareness."

After this event, Ramana lost interest in school-studies, friends, and relatives. He constantly sat alone, absorbed in concentration on the Self, and went daily to

the Meenakshi temple, ecstatically devoted to the images of the gods, tears flowing profusely from his eyes.

He decided to leave his home and go to Arunachala. He slipped away quietly one fine morning, telling his brother he needed to attend a special class at school. Ramana took out an atlas, calculated the cost of his journey, took three rupees from the five meant for his brother's college fees and left the remaining two with a note which read: "I have set out in quest of my Father in accordance with his command. It (a reference to himself) has embarked on a virtuous enterprise. No one need grieve over this act. And no money need be spent in search of it. Your college fee has not been paid. Herewith rupees two."

After much travel by foot and train, on the morning of the 1st of September (now observed as Advent Day), 1896, he boarded a train for the last leg of the journey to Arunachala. In Tiruvannamalai he went straight to the temple of Arunachaleswara. There, he found not only the temple gates open, but the doors to the inner shrine as well, and not a single person, not even a priest, in the temple. He entered the sanctum sanctorum and addressed Arunachaleswara: "I have come to Thee at Thy behest. Thy will be done." He embraced the linga in ecstasy. Venkataraman had arrived.

Ramana stayed in different parts of the temple for several months, sitting quietly in meditation. The first few weeks he spent in the thousand-pillared hall but urchins pelted him with stones so he shifted to other spots in the temple and even to the Patala-lingam vault. Undisturbed there, he would spend days absorbed in such deep samadhi that he was unaware of the bites of vermin and pests. Seshadri Swami, a local saint, discovered him in the underground vault and tried to protect him.

After about six weeks in the Patala-lingam, he was carried out and cleaned up. For the next two months he stayed in the

Subramanya Shrine, so unaware of his body and surroundings that food had to be placed in his mouth or he would have starved. From there, he was invited to stay in a mango orchard next to Gurumurtam, a temple about a mile out of Tiruvannamalai.

Shortly after his arrival at Gurumurtam a sadhu named Palaniswami first heard of Brahmana Swami, as Ramana was then known, and went to see him. Seeing Ramana filled him with peace and bliss, and from that time on he served Ramana.

Palaniswami joined Ramana as his permanent attendant providing him with a lifetime of care and protection. Ramana was lost in inner bliss most of the time and during those times protection was very valuable.

Gradually, despite Ramana's silence, austerities, and desire for privacy, he attracted attention from visitors, and some became his disciples. When his family discovered his whereabouts, his uncle Nelliappa Iyer pleaded with him to return home but Ramana sat motionless and eventually his uncle gave up.

In February 1899, Ramana moved further up Arunachala where he stayed briefly in Satguru Cave and Guru Namasivaya Cave before taking up residence at Virupaksha Cave for the next 17 years, using Mango Tree Cave during the summers.

In 1902 a Government official named Sivaprakasam Pillai put Ramana 14 questions about how to know one's true identity. These questions and young Ramana's answers were his first teachings on the method of self inquiry for which he became widely known. These were published as 'Nan Yar?' or 'Who am I?'

Several visitors came to him and many became his disciples. Ganapati Sastri, a Vedic scholar of repute, who came to visit him in 1907 proclaimed him as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi. Ramana was known by this name for the rest of his life.

In 1911, Frank Humphreys, then a policeman stationed in India, became his first western disciple. He published articles in The International Psychic Gazette in 1913 on Ramana. Ramana became internationally known after 1934

when Paul Brunton published the book, 'A Search in Secret India', which became very popular. Other prominent visitors included Paramahansa Yogananda, W Somerset Maugham, Mercedes De Acosta, Julian P Johnson, and Arthur Osborne.

Ramana's fame began to spread throughout the 1940s. However, even as his fame spread, Sri Ramana was noted for his belief in the power of silence and relatively sparse use of speech, and a lack of concern for criticism. His lifestyle remained that of a renunciate.

In 1916 his mother Azhagammal and younger brother Nagasundaram joined Ramana at Tiruvannamalai and followed him when he moved to the larger Skandashram Cave, where Bhagavan lived until the end of 1922. His mother took up the life of a sanyasin, and Ramana gave her intense, personal instruction, while she took charge of the ashram kitchen. Ramana's younger brother, Nagasundaram, then became a sanyasi, assuming the name Niranjanananda.

Beginning in 1920, his Mother's health deteriorated. On the day of her death, May 19, 1922, at about 8 a.m., Ramana sat beside her. It is reported that throughout the day, he had his right hand on her heart, on the right side of the chest, and his left hand on her head, until her death around 8:00 p.m., when Ramana pronounced her liberated.

In December 1922, he settled at the base of the Hill, where Ramanasrama is still located today. Not long after the 50th anniversary in 1946 of his arrival at Arunachala, Ramana's health rapidly deteriorated. In November 1948, a cancerous lump the size of a pea was found, and in February 1949 this was removed by the ashram doctor, assisted by another devotee doctor. Soon, another growth appeared, and another operation was done by an eminent surgeon in March, 1949, and Radium treatment was given. Ramana refused to have an amputation when the doctors recommended it. A third and fourth operation were performed in August and December of 1949, but only weakened him. Other systems of medicine were then tried. During all this, Ramana remained peaceful and unconcerned. As

his condition worsened, Ramana remained available for the thousands of visitors who came to see him, even when his attendants urged him to rest. His attitude towards death was serene. To devotees who begged him to cure himself, he replied: "Why are you so attached to this body. Let it go." and "Where can I go? I am here."

By April 1950, Sri Ramana was too weak to go to the hall, and visiting hours were limited to 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the morning and 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the evening. Visitors would file past the small room where he spent his final days, to get one final glimpse. By April 14th, it was evident the end was near. Swami Satyananda, the attendant at the time, reports, "On the evening of 14th April 1950, we were massaging Sri Ramana's body. At about 5 o'clock, he asked us to help him to sit up. Precisely at that moment devotees started chanting 'Arunachala Siva', 'Arunachala Siva'. When Sri Bhagavan heard this, his face lit up with radiant joy. Tears began to flow from his eyes and continued to flow for a long time. The doctor wanted to administer artificial respiration but Bhagavan waved it away. Bhagavan's breathing became gradually slower and slower and at 8:47 p.m. it subsided quietly."

His disciples established the Ramanasram in Tiruvannamalai to propagate his message. Later, devotees in other parts of India and the rest of the world established additional centres dedicated to Ramana and his teachings.



*Illustration by S Girish*

