

MATRIX

April 2014

A PUBLICATION OF **THE SANMAR GROUP**



Cover photograph: 'If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man.' – *Albert Einstein*



The Sanmar Group

9, Cathedral Road, Chennai 600 086.

Tel.: + 91 44 2812 8500

Fax: + 91 44 2811 1902

Sanmar Holdings Ltd

Chemplast Sanmar Ltd

TCI Sanmar Chemicals S.A.E.

Sanmar Speciality Chemicals Ltd

Sanmar Consolidations Ltd

Sanmar Shipping Ltd

Cabot Sanmar Ltd

Sanmar Engineering Technologies Ltd

- *Products Divn.*

Flowserve Sanmar Ltd

BS&B Safety Systems (India) Ltd

Sanmar Engineering Services Ltd

Xomox Sanmar Ltd

Xomox Valves Divn.

Pacific Valves Divn.

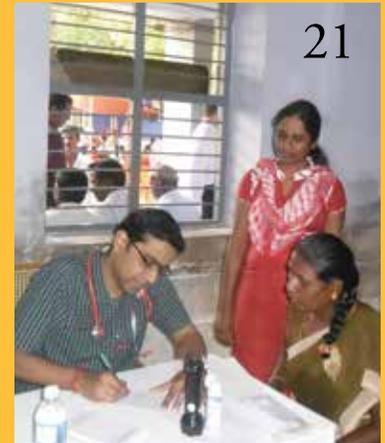
Tyco Sanmar Ltd

- *Steel Castings Divn.*

Sanmar Foundries Ltd

Matrix Metals LLC

In this issue...



- 4 | The Sanmar Group Annual Day
- 9 | CII Environment, Health and Safety Awards for Chemplast Sanmar
- 10 | IOB honours 'Eminent Citizens'
- 11 | Cabot and Sanmar in 'Paint India' show
- 12 | New Polymer Reactor and Paste PVC Drier dedicated at Chemplast, Mettur
- 13 | 'GASPAC' Quick Repair Centre commissioned at Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam
- 14 | Sanmartini Trophy: Learning with fun
- 16 | Sruti launches its Android/iOS App

- 12 | New Polymer Reactor and Paste PVC Drier dedicated at Chemplast, Mettur
- 18 | 'Stability - a key element for growth prospects' N Kumar's interview to 'Guiding Star' - Bank of India's publication
- 20 | "Preservation of Ozone Layer" workshop at Chemplast, Mettur
- 21 | Chemplast organises medical camp at Mettur
- 22 | Madhuram Narayanan Centre Early screening an answer to learning disabilities in children
- 23 | It's Madhuram Narayanan Centre's 24th Anniversary
- 24 | 'Coastal Cleanup' at Karaikal
- 25 | RV campus and VSD auditorium at Sankara Vidyashramam
- 26 | Legends from the South PB Srinivas

Matrix can be viewed at www.sanmargroup.com

Designed and edited by Kalamkriya Limited, 9, Cathedral Road, Chennai 600 086. Ph: + 91 44 2812 8051/ 52

For Private Circulation Only.

The Sanmar Group

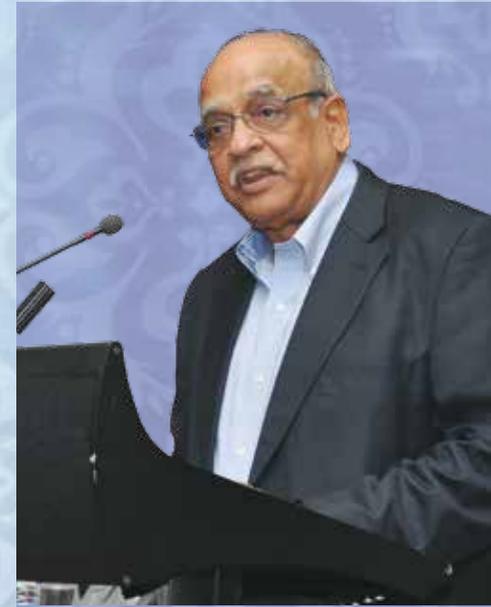
27 November 2013

The Sanmar Group Annual Day 2013 was held on November 26-27 at Hotel Leela Palace. Of the distinguished guest speakers of the morning, Arun Bharat Ram, Chairman, SRF, impressed the audience with his wisdom and wit during a thoughtful lecture on “Family businesses and family values,” drawing from his personal experience, while Tarun Das, former Chief Mentor, CII, took it on an exciting tour of “Politics and Economy”. Vijay Sankar’s presentation on the Group’s “Business Overview and Challenges” was grounded in hard facts and rendered with conviction. The day also witnessed team presentations from Chemplast, Mettur on “Best in class – A road map for maintenance function”, Sanmar Engineering’s Technology branch on “Leveraging



“Anything that affects our values or our strategic positioning in the market certainly needs to be escalated. Values are extremely critical. There is no compromise”.

-Vijay Sankar



“In family businesses values are sacrosanct and do not change over time including generational changes”.

- Arun Bharat Ram on *“Family Businesses and Family Values”.*



Annual Day

2013

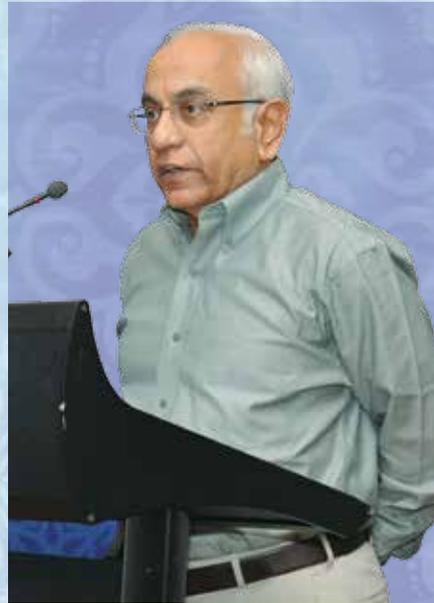


EVENT



“In 2017 we will pass China on growth rate. We will be number 1 in the world on growth. We are going to show the world a new model of development”.

- **Tarun Das** on “*Politics and Economy*”.

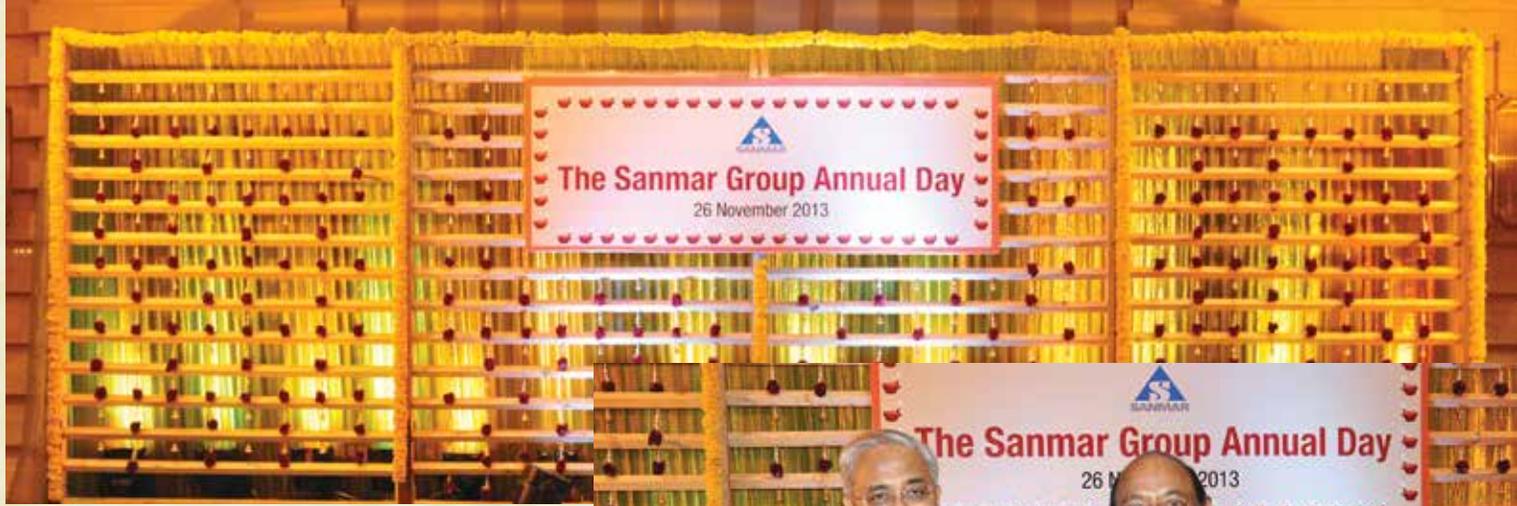


B Natraj anchored a presentation and discussion on “*Ethics policies and processes*”.



Sarada Jagan conducted the day’s proceedings.

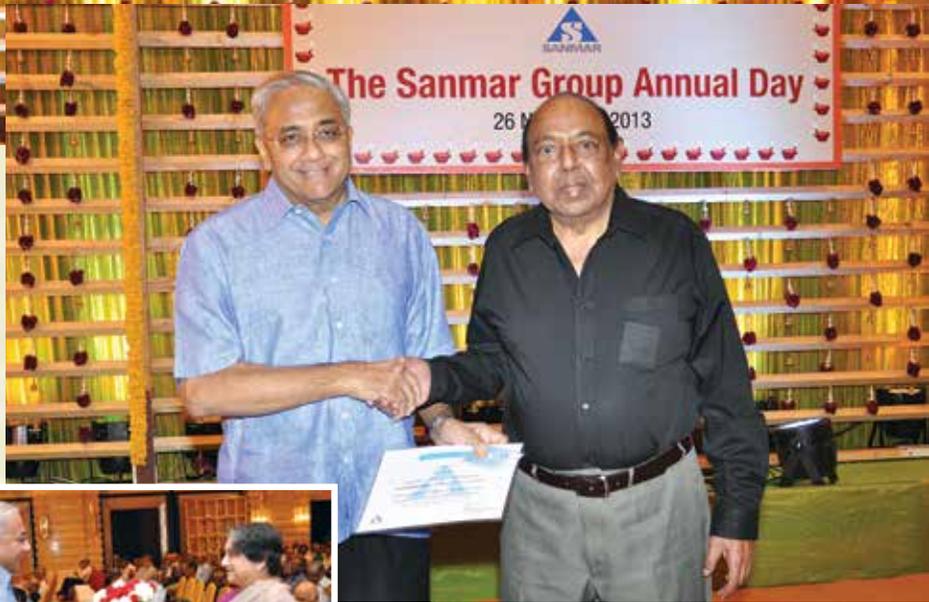




technology to increase sales productivity” and the Corporate HR team on “Digitisation of HR Personnel files”.

The previous evening, senior Sanmar employees and their spouses met at dinner to recognise and commemorate ‘long service awardees’ and ‘employees of the year’. Significantly, N Sankar received his Long Service Award for steering the Group from the helm for 45 years.

The décor at the hall was in keeping with this year’s theme for the evening - ‘Festival of lights’.



N Sankar received the long service award from V Narayanan, Director, The Sanmar Group Corporate Board.

Long Service Awardees



Clockwise: N Krishnamurthy, V Ramesh, S Surendranath, S Sekar, T Muralidharan and R Dharmarajan receiving their long service awards from N Kumar and N Sankar respectively.



Employees of the Year



N Krishnamurthy, G Sankara Subramanian, Narendra P Nemade, Ramadevi Ravi, and N Palanisamy receiving the 'Employee of the Year' award from Vijay Sankar.



The Chemplast cricket team, which won the all India BCCI Corporate Trophy and the Palayampatti Shield, receiving the 'Employee of the Year' award from N Sankar and Vijay Sankar.

Fun'n games



Sukanya Sankar (2nd from left) with spouses of Sanmarites, the winners of the quiz on the 'festival of lights'.



The Sanmar Group Annual Safety Awards 2013

Sanmar recognises and appreciates the efforts and progress made by its plants and units across business locations in adhering to safety standards and practices. The safety awards are presented under four distinct categories - Process, Non Process, Castings and Shipping. The awards are given based on reports by a panel of experts in the field.



<p>Process Category</p> <p>Cabot Sanmar, Mettur Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur Plant III Chemplast Sanmar, Cuddalore</p>	<p>Winner Runner-up 1 Runner-up 2</p>
<p>Non Process Category</p> <p>Tyco Sanmar, Viralimalai Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam</p>	<p>Winner Runner-up</p>
<p>Castings Category</p> <p>SFL, Sand Foundry, Viralimalai SFL, Investment Foundry, Viralimalai</p>	<p>Winner Runner-up</p>
<p>Shipping Category</p> <p>MT Sanmar Sonnet MT Sanmar Stanza</p>	<p>Winner Runner-up</p>



S Venkatesan received the award for Cabot Sanmar, Mettur.



L Sathyanarayanan and G Muralidharan received the award for Tyco Sanmar.



K Shankar and RS Rajendra Kumar received the award for SFL, Sand Foundry, Viralimalai.



Captain GNV Rajaram, Master MT Sanmar Sonnet received the award.

CII Environment, Health and Safety Awards for Chemplast Sanmar

Chemplast Mettur and Chemplast Cuddalore received three stars and Cabot Sanmar received two stars from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (Southern Region) for excellence in Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) the year 2013.

The awards and certifications were received by P Manoharan of The Sanmar Group from Ramesh Kymal, Chairman & Managing Director, Gamesa Wind Turbines, on 7 March 2014 at a function organised at Hotel Sheraton Park, Chennai.



Ranchhod B Dabhi of the Jamnagar branch of Sanmar Engineering Services Limited bagged the third prize in a safety talk competition on “Operational Discipline” held at the Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), Jamnagar. He received the award from Peter Abraham, Head Engineering and Maintenance, for RIL DTA and SEZ.



RECOGNITION IOB honours 'Eminent Citizens'

Indian Overseas Bank honoured N Sankar with an 'Eminent Citizen' award for his 'valuable contribution to society'. The award was presented to him on the occasion of IOB's 78th Foundation Day Celebrations on 10 February 2014 at Chennai.

N Sankar receiving the award from IOB CMD M Narendra.



(From R to l): Atul Agarwal and ADM Chavali, EDs, IOB, M Narendra, CMD, IOB, RS Munirathinam, Nalli Kuppusami Chetti (Art & Culture), G Narayanaswamy (Chartered Accountant), R Veeramani (Exporter), N Sankar (Industrialist), Sudha Raghunathan (Music), P Murari (Senior Citizen) and K Satyanarayana (Young Achiever).



Cabot and Sanmar in 'Paint India' show

Cabot Sanmar participated in the Paint India Exhibition held at NSE, Goregaon, Mumbai, during 6-8, March, 2014. The show is a premier event for professionals associated with the paints, adhesives and ink industries.

(L to r): Mahesh Pawar, Sriram Srinivasan and Manali Waichal of Cabot India and Dr Krishnakumar Rangachari, Prosenjit Chaudhri and S Venkat Raghavan of Cabot Sanmar at the 'Paint India' show.

Cabot Sanmar supplies fumed silica to major players in this segment.

Visitors and exhibitors included paint/adhesive/ink manufacturers, rawmaterial suppliers and equipment suppliers. The show was well attended by visitors from across the globe and from all parts of India.

Cabot Sanmar and our JV partner Cabot Corporation showcased the

entire portfolio of products for the paint industry including fumed silica and speciality carbon blacks. Close to 100 visitors including both existing and potential customers visited the booth. Sales and technical service teams were present to showcase the JV's range of products supplied to the client industries.

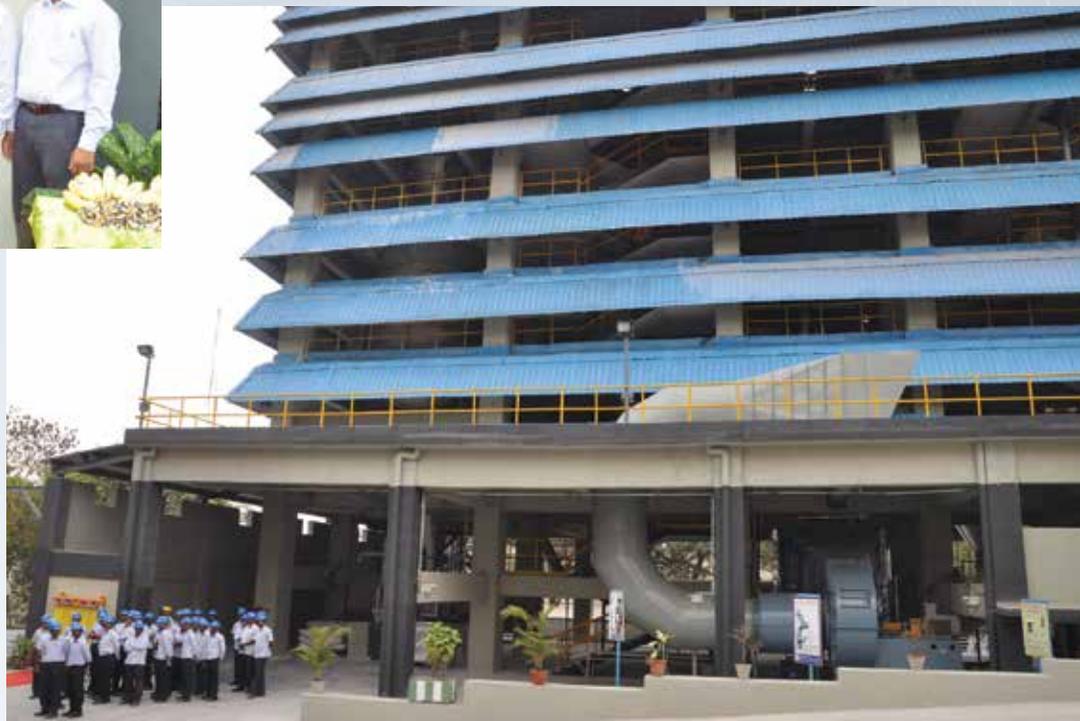


FACILITY New Polymer Reactor and Paste PVC Drier dedicated at Chemplast, Mettur



Additional polymer reactors and a paste drier, at a cost of Rs 750 million, were dedicated by Vijay Sankar on 1 March 2014 making Chemplast Mettur a complete paste PVC making facility with a capacity to produce 66000 TPA and flexibility to switch to suspension grades as well.

Chemplast Sanmar has achieved the unique distinction of producing commodity PVC at one location - Cuddalore - and speciality PVC grades at another location - Mettur - to its capacity production level.



'GASPAC' Quick Repair Centre commissioned at Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam

A 'Gas seal – Quick repair centre' has been functioning at the Flowserve Sanmar premises, Karapakkam, from November 2013.

Commissioned with support from Sanmar's joint venture partner Flowserve Germany, the facility is housed in an area of 1750 sq ft, complete with assembly, viewers' room, inventory storage, and compressor and chiller rooms – all in an air-conditioned and pollution free environment.

The Flowserve Sanmar quick repair centre will provide facilities for disassembly and inspection of seals, cleaning of seals, replacement of damaged parts, assembly of seals and static and dynamic test runs on the Gaspac tester.

With this QRC facility, Flowserve Sanmar can meet customer demand at lower lead times.



COMPETE Sanmartini Trophy: Learning with fun

The inter-business competitions 'Sanmartini' – a cocktail of explosive games – was played with much enthusiasm and verve this season from July to October 2013. The learning with fun began with 'Cricket Medley', a skill and mindgame combo on 15 July, followed by 'Talk

it Out', a debating competition, on 16 August, 'All Roads Lead to Rome', a variety entertainment programme on the theme 'Managing Change' on 23 August, 'Bridges and Tunnels', consisting of oral and written presentations on 2 September and concluded with

'Off Beat', and an explosive quiz finale on 17 October 2013. Team Midas from Sanmar Engineering Technologies, Karapakkam, was the winner all the way and went on to prove that the best 'team work' always wins.



H Karthik, Parveen S Rao and K Balasubramanian of Team Midas receiving the Sanmartini Trophy from Vijay Sankar.





ARTS APP Sruti launches its Android/iOS App

Sruti, a monthly magazine on the Indian performing arts, launched an Android/iOS based app that caters to enthusiasts of Indian classical music and dance and theatre. Filmmaker Rajiv Menon launched the app at a function organised at Kalakshetra on 15-16 March 2014 and sand artist

Rahul Arya illustrated the app through a live performance. 'Yashodhara', a dance theatre production by Gowri Ramnarayan, with Mythili Prakash (dance) and Amritha Murali (vocal), a sitar performance by Hindustani musician Anupama Bhagwat, accompanied by Rahul Pophali

(tabla), and a Carnatic recital by Sikkil C Gurucharan, accompanied by V Sanjeev (violin), Umayalpuram K Sivaraman (mridangam) and B Shree Sundarkumar (khanjira), were the highlights of the two-day programme.

Rajiv Menon launches the Sruti App at the Kalakshetra Foundation along with Sukanya Sankar, one of the trustees of the Foundation.





A scene from 'Yashodhara'.



“Technology has provided a platform for innovation and democratisation which will help arts reach a wider audience of youth, be it in India or Los Angeles, who’ll come back to the traditional arts sooner or later”.

– **Rajiv Menon**

Rahul Arya’s ‘Sand Art’.



Sitar recital by Anupama Bhagwat.



Carnatic recital by Sikkil C Gurucharan.

A view of the audience.





'STABILITY-A KEY ELEMENT FOR GROWTH PROSPECTS'

Reproduced with permission from 'Guiding Star' - Bank of India's publication, Jan-Feb 2014.

"I expect gradual but well tuned improvements in 2014. If bold initiatives are taken, new and growth-targeting policy initiatives are made to gradually vitalize the national economy, there will be a significant development".



N. KUMAR

Vice-Chairman, SANMAR Group & Former President-CII

Guiding Star: As a senior industrialist and widely respected economic commentator, how do you assess the economic prospects in the New Year 2014?

N.Kumar: Basically, I am a follower of politics and economic developments. I, like many others, believe that there will be a revival of economic growth in the new year-2014 if we ensure certain basic requirements. I always put my views straight: there should be stability-political, conceptual and functional; take bold initiatives, speed up reforms, improve infrastructure and refashion the taxation pattern to facilitate greater productivity, bring in a new and sustainable confidence for the growth of industry. The industry too should have a new and time-responsive growth strategy.

When you expect a turn around, putting the Indian industry on the growth mode once again?

A recent RBI Report says that 'after three years of deceleration, global growth is poised to improve in 2014, but risks to outlook remain with uncertainties about how growth will withstand the withdrawal of extraordinary monetary accommodation on the back of unconventional monetary policies and risks of renewed deflation in the euro area. Though growth in advanced economies (AEs) may improve, negative output gaps may persist. Recovery in the large emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) is expected to be slow, in part, due to tighter financial conditions.'

The observations are very relevant for our analysis. But, as an optimist, I expect gradual but well tuned improvements in Indian economy in 2014. I think it will be an useful exercise to analyse future economic behaviour and prospects in the medium term. If bold initiatives are taken, new and growth-targeting policy initiatives are made to gradually vitalize the national economy, there will be a significant development in the country's economic and social progress, benefitting large sections of people in the country. If this happens on the pedestal of stability factor as I mentioned earlier, India will certainly be on the growth mode once again.

There are views that the GDP growth rate during the year will be around 6.5 percent. Going by the present trends, how do you rate the projection?

I think, as per the present indications, the GDP growth rate at about 5.5 percent is a realistic assessment .

Official estimates indicate that the greenshoots of recovery is visible and the economy is poised to pick up in the second half recording a growth of 5-5.5 per cent in 2013-14. I trust that the estimates made by the Reserve Bank or the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council or various Research Bodies about growth being between 5 and 5.5 per cent is appropriate.

There is a new confidence line indicating revival of the growth tempo.

I also expect that the growth tempo will improve as we see significant improvements in many spheres. The point here is the country is recovering from the decline in growth which is

almost a global phenomenon. There are several factors for the decline in growth in many economies. But the predominant factor for the decline in growth in Indian economy, in my view, is lack of stability—both political and conceptual. We need to ensure stability at all levels in larger National interest. I do agree that various other factors both global and domestic also contributed to the poor growth but, the major factor is stability, consensus on key issues and coordination.

What, in your view, are the major issues in reviving the growth journey?

From the policy initiative point of view, the Union Government has taken several measures to tone up the growth. The Reserve Bank of India has also been taking measures to imbibe a new element of confidence. But, still the key issue is stability, consensus and coordination which, in my view, is vital for effectively reviving the growth journey.

Further, there is an urgent need to strengthen the infrastructure, bring about reforms and for paying increased attention to the social sector.

Do you think that the India story (of becoming a powerful middle income country) is slowly vanishing and the state of the Indian industry is an indication?

No. Certainly not. I strongly believe that the India story is not going to vanish. It will emerge stronger. Because we have millions of brilliant young people committed to take the country forward. We have a strong middle-class which is a great propeller to growth. With well-knit social initiatives in place, the bottom of the pyramid is also going to become a transformation tool. Look how successful are Indian technocrats, intellectuals, managers abroad. You find Indians in top slot in every multinational company abroad. Why should Indians fail at home? The recent downtrend is transitory in nature and with right policies and bold corrective actions by the Government, the India story will become stronger and wide reaching.

Under the present circumstances, if Indian industry works out a new growth road map in the medium term perspective, what in your view are the priority areas?

There are many aspects that deserve attention. One critical area is the



infrastructural requirements like availability of power, water etc., Assuming that such fundamental requirements are in order, units need to improve internal systems, cost efficiency and rational projections on future demands etc., I consider systemic efficiency as an important element. When we work out a new road map we have to take proper cognizance of all these aspects.

Which segment of Indian industry is poised to move forward in growth and future prospects, especially in the next 2-3 years?

I think information technology is one area where India is poised to make a mark in the coming years. Our IT competence is well recognised and our frontline technology companies are sure to exploit the new opportunities. Of course, there is a need to improve our competitive efficiency and industry leaders are working

on that. There is no dearth of talent with us. The issue is how competitive we are.

In your opinion, which are the areas where reforms are needed urgently?

Infrastructure, Taxation methods, Insurance, Retail sector. It is not an exercise of listing out but to fix the opportunity areas and convert the opportunities to gains to the national economy, growth of business and a better quality of life for people.

What kind of new initiatives and supportive measures you expect from the banks and financial institutions?

Banks should have innovative approach to provide the credit routes to new entrepreneurial efforts. For large industries I expect a more rational approach in credit appraisal.

The recent thrust on SMEs, inclusive growth etc., are move in the right direction. The crux of the issue is vision for the future in the right dimension., I greatly admire the achievements made by the public sector banks in India in technology implementation. I am sure our banks are well positioned to move towards global standards in many spheres.

I find that banks in recent times are driven more to retail banking. Perhaps the focus on retail banking is propelled by motives of profit and customer demand. It is a trend and I don't find any fault on that. But, policy makers should find new routes for greater facilities for financing large infrastructural projects and growth arms of industry. ■



Policy makers should find new routes for greater facilities for financing large infrastructural projects and growth arms of industry.



“Preservation of Ozone Layer” workshop at Chemplast, Mettur

To create awareness about the need for the preservation of the ozone layer among user industries, a half-day workshop was organised by Chemplast Sanmar, (the sole refrigerant gas manufacturer in Salem District), at the behest of the Tamil

Nadu Pollution Control Board at Mettur on 9 October 2013.

N Rajagopal, District Environmental Engineer, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Salem, welcomed the participants from various industries

and users of refrigerant gases including MALCO, SAIL, JSW Steel, Mettur Thermal Power and Hatson Agro. Chemplast’s S Venkatesan made a detailed presentation on the ozone issue.



Chemplast organises medical camp at Mettur

A health camp was organised by Chemplast Mettur in coordination with Sri Gokulam Hospitals on 2 March 2014. Seven hundred and three persons underwent cardiac and diabetes tests and general screening at the camp. Dr Anish Sekar IAS, Sub Collector, Mettur, was present. Blood sugar, ECG and ECHO tests were also carried out. Free medicines were distributed.



One hundred employees of Chemplast Sanmar Mettur volunteered to donate blood to mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October this year.



Madhuran Narayanan Centre

Early screening an answer to

While studies attribute several factors, ranging from genetic aberrations to pathological reasons for learning disabilities, many of them can be treated if detected early, said experts at the 4th International Conference and 10th National Workshop of the Madhuran Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children on

“Early Intervention in Learning Disabilities”.

The conference, held at Hotel Savera during 20 – 23 November 2013, was well attended by experts and senior consultants in the field.

MK Bhan, National Science Professor of IIT Delhi and former secretary of

the Department of Biotechnology, delivered the Air Vice-Marshall V Krishnaswamy Memorial Oration.

US Consul General Jennifer McIntyre highlighted the common traits of India and the US in promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities.

P Shivashankar, Secretary,



“By capitalising on big and small opportunities, we can make a huge impact on the quality of life of the differently abled people and their ability to realise their full potential.”

-Jennifer McIntyre, US Consul General

“The Tamil Nadu Government should start newborn screening programmes in the State to save babies from neo-natal disorders.”

- MK Bhan



N Kumar welcoming the delegates of the conference.

for Exceptional Children

learning disabilities in children

Department of Welfare of Differently Abled Persons, listed out the State Government's efforts in early intervention for children at the district level centres.

"MNC is now involved in assisting special children get mainstream education and creating awareness among such schools on the needs of such children", said Jaya Krishnaswamy, founder-director.



Jaya Krishnaswamy (2nd from right) with VK Jeyakodi IAS and other delegates.



It's Madhuram Narayanan Centre's 24th Anniversary

The staff and students of MNC celebrated their twentyfourth anniversary on 12 December 2013 at Bala Mandir German Hall with the usual gusto. The theme for the annual day was "Aadi Paadum Nam Paravaigal" - birds as the best examples for friendship and sharing. S Mohanchand Dadha, Managing Director, Dadha Pharma and Director Sun Pharma was the chief guest.



'Coastal Cleanup' at Karaikal

An International Coastal Cleanup Day was organised at Karaikal district on 21 September 2013. Chemplast Karaikal supported the coastal cleanup initiative by handing over a cheque to Udal Singh, Commandant, Coastal Guard Station, Karaikal.



RV campus and VSD auditorium at Sankara Vidyashramam

Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tiruvanmiyur, Chennai, now has a state-of-the-art auditorium that can accommodate up to 300 persons, complete with air-conditioning and acoustics facilities.

Named after VS Dhandapani, the Managing Trustee of the Sankara Schools for more than two decades, the auditorium was inaugurated on 31 October 2013 by Mrs Gomathy Dhandapani.

Padma Venkataraman, daughter of R Venkataraman, former President of India, unveiled a plaque which has inscribed on it the words 'R Venkataraman Campus' for the Sankara Vidyashramam school premises.

N Sankar, N Kumar, V Sriram, Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar, Trustees of the Indian Education Trust, Mrs Dhandapani, Chandra Sankar and

other family members, Principals and teaching faculty of both Sankara schools were present. Children of both schools gave song and dance rendition which enthralled the audience for almost two hours.



(L to r): Kalpalatha Mohan, V Sriram, N Kumar, Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar, Gomathy Dhandapani, Subala Ananthanarayanan, Padma Venkataraman and N Sankar at the inauguration.

PB Srinivas (1930-2013)



Visitors to Chennai's iconic Woodlands drive-in restaurant near the Gemini flyover during the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium came to expect the presence there of another icon of the city—PB Srinivas, the man with a mellifluous voice who had entertained film music listeners for decades earlier. Srinivas was already a senior citizen but with his creative instincts intact and his productivity as a composer of semi-classical and devotional songs amazingly high. Grandly attired in traditional south Indian clothes topped by a

resplendent zari-bordered turban, he sat through the day at one of the tables of the restaurant surrounded by files and his pocket filled with pens of different hues. Over the years, some of the restaurant's regular clients picked up the courage to go up to him and engage him in conversation, discovering in the process that his voice was still as strong and resonant as when he sang his immortal melodies in films.

When the drive-in restaurant was taken over by the state government in 2008, not only were residents of Chennai deprived of a popular

meeting place where students, salesmen, entrepreneurs and executives wove their dreams and planned their projects, they were also denied the pleasure of running into a much-loved celebrity of the city. Srinivas shifted his informal office to other Woodlands cafeterias in the city, but it was never the same again.

Srinivas, popularly known as PBS, was arguably the most versatile, cerebral and well-read musician in the film world for the six decades he was part of it. He was a fluent linguist, for one thing, with mastery over the enunciation of lyrics in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi, among other languages. For those not familiar with Indian films, they often have songs in them (six to ten songs in a movie was par for the course for several decades until recently), with the actor lip-syncing with the recorded voices of 'playback' singers. Tamil cinema was dominated by a handful of stars when PBS entered the scene, and singers like TM Soundararajan lent their voices to the leading stars of the day, like Sivaji Ganesan and MG Ramachandran. PBS's voice was not a good match for those of these stars, but fortunately for him, it suited the voices of some other actors like Gemini Ganesan and Muthuraman, for whom PBS sang some of the most memorable melodies in southern cinema.

Born to PBVL Phanindraswami, an inspector of cooperatives, and Seshagiriamma, in coastal Kakinada

in Andhra Pradesh, Srinivas grew up in a sprawling house belonging to his grandparents. He was in his early teens when he fell in love with Hindi film songs composed by such wizards as Naushad.

In the early 1950s, PBS and film music composers GK Venkatesh and MS Viswanathan — who brought out Srinivas's best in Tamil cinema — made a trio of musicians who swore by Naushad. Encouraged by maternal uncle Kidambi Krishnamacharya, a theatre actor and director, Srinivas dreamt of becoming a playback singer like the famous Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh and Lata Mangeshkar of Hindi cinema.

His disciplinarian father discouraged him, even tried to forbid him, and insisted he obtain a degree even after he tripped twice in his school finals. Thanks to tutorials in Madras, PBS finally earned a B.Com degree, but his father now wanted him to study for a law degree. Moving to Madras to join the Government Law College, PBS spent more time on music practice than law classes, even winning inter-collegiate singing competitions in the process. He enlisted the services of an astrologer to convince his father that his future lay in film music rather than a conventional job!

Veena virtuoso Emani Sankara Sastri, one of the music directors of Gemini Studios in charge of Hindi films, and a family friend, recognised merit in Srinivas's lovely voice and started employing Srinivas as his assistant. Emani proved a loving benefactor

who tended to the younger friend like a father, showering him with warmth and affection. Sastri mentored him in growing into a sensitive purveyor of raga-based songs. ("A few decades hence, Emani was to witness the mature Srinivas compose and sing a ragamalika tribute to Tyagaraja. Srinivas even stumbled upon a new raga, which he named Navaneeta Sumasudha," says film music expert Vamanan in his obituary).

Adinarayana Rao, G Ramanathan and MB Srinivasan, great composers of film songs with a classical touch to them, were some of the music directors to spot the talent in PBS and give him early breaks in Tamil and other southern cinema.

Through the 1960s and seventies, PBS enjoyed success as the most delicate and sensitive voice in Tamil cinema, with his duets with woman singers of the calibre of P Susila, winning him a sizable number of admirers, but without the fanatical following of the likes of TM Soundararajan. He was at his evocative best while rendering sad or philosophical songs. He became part of a popular trio that included the music directors Viswanathan-Ramamurthy and lyricist Kannadasan, and delivered some of the most tuneful and emotive songs of the era.

Competition soon caught up with PBS, with some brilliant new voices in KJ Yesudas and SP Balasubramaniam; and music directors like Ilaiyaraja transformed the film industry altogether with a predominance of

SPB and Yesudas. Fading away from the playback-singing world, PBS reinvented himself as a composer of semi-classical and devotional music, exploiting his proficiency in languages, poetry and compositional ability. Though no longer a star singer in the films, he continued in the music field almost till his death in April 2013.

A man of many interests, PBS was a regular at many classical music concerts in the city, Hindustani music in particular, and invariably made it a point at the end of a performance to applaud the artists with some choice phrases of praise, including verses he composed on the spot. This writer was among those who marvelled at his devotion to music that made him nonchalantly climb a steep spiral staircase to attend a Hindustani vocal recital at a suburban venue one evening just a couple of months before his death.

Among some of the quirky sidelights of PBS's life was a song he composed when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. PBS sent a recording of the song to Armstrong and Richard Nixon, then president of the US. He treasured their replies to him.

According to his devoted wife Janaki, 'He lived a carefree man; he has departed just as he lived'. The singer had had close brushes with death earlier, once butted by a cow with fierce horns on a busy Chennai street. When the end came, however, he had just sat at the dining table and passed away peacefully.

