

MATRIX

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A PUBLICATION OF **THE SANMAR GROUP**



BLUE WHALE - *one of earth's many endangered species*



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SHL Chemicals

Chemplast Sanmar Ltd

Sanmar Speciality Chemicals
(A division of Chemplast Sanmar Ltd)

Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Ltd

TCI Sanmar Chemicals S.A.E.

Sanmar Consolidations

Sanmar Shipping Ltd

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Sanmar Matrix Metals Ltd

Matrix Metals LLC

Acerlan Matrix Metals S.A. de C.V.

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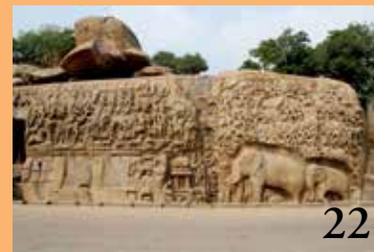
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Global Recognition for

British Safety Council's 'Sword of Honour 2020' for Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Limited



Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Limited (CCVL) has been awarded the 'Sword of Honour 2020' in recognition of its commitment to excellent health and safety management.

In order to compete for the Sword of Honour, CCVL achieved the maximum five stars in the British Safety Council's health and safety management audit scheme in the period August 2019 - November 2020. It also demonstrated to an independent panel of experts that it achieved excellence in health and management throughout the business – from shop floor to the boardroom.

Lawrence Waterman, Chairman of the British Safety Council, said: "On behalf of the board of trustees and staff of the British Safety Council, I would like to congratulate CCVL on achieving the topmost standards of health and safety management. Accomplishing such distinction takes real commitment and professionalism. We are delighted to have supported you in your achievements in what has been an unprecedented year given the COVID pandemic."



Acerlan Matrix Metals safety practices and performances recognised

Acerlan Matrix Metals was awarded the 2019 Safety Award from the Steel Founders' Society of America. The recognition is for maintenance of safety record during 2019 equal to or less than the most recent published national average for all manufacturing.

In keeping with Sanmar's commitment to safety as an integral part of business, Acerlan Matrix Metals adopted several measures including zero hand and finger injury campaign, training and counselling to reinforce safety behaviour, intensive audits and risk assessments as per local statutory requirements as well as global best practices and follow up of findings with time bound corrective and preventive actions.

Sanmar Safety initiatives

British Safety Council Five Star rating for Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur

Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, Plant II underwent a comprehensive, quantified and robust evaluation of its occupational health and safety policies, processes and practices by the British Safety Council. The audit process included documentation review, interviews with senior management, employees and other key stakeholders, together with sampling of operational activities.



The audit measured performance against key occupational health and safety management best practice indicators and wellbeing and did a detailed review of over 56 component elements.

Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, Plant II with its five-star grading following the audit, is now eligible to enter the British Safety Council Sword of Honour Awards which recognise excellence in the management of health and safety.

David Parr, Policy and Technical Services Director at the British Safety Council, said: "The award of a five-star grading following our occupational best practice Health and Safety Audit is an outstanding achievement and is reflective of a proactive organisation which is committed to continual improvement in its health and safety arrangements and managing risks to workers' health, safety and welfare."

Chemplast shares the British Safety Council's motto that 'every worker goes home at the end of the day as healthy as they were when they went to work.'

by Steel Founders' Society of America



Remembering Nari:

V Narayanan (1938-2021)

Mr Narayanan, a long-term director of the Group passed away after a brief illness on 21 January 2021. *Matrix* presents some memories from his many years of association with Sanmar.

N Sankar recalls, ‘Nari and I were close friends since the mid 60s when he moved to Madras with Chesebrough-Ponds, as it was then. You can understand I have far too many memories of him to put down in a paragraph or two. We shared numerous common interests. We loved tennis and cricket, though it is only the former that we played ourselves. We both enjoyed the fellowship at the Madras Cricket Club (MCC), where we were almost daily visitors for over three decades. Nari and I have travelled together in many parts of the world - sometimes on business delegations, and sometimes we would, “by coincidence”, meet at the French Open or Wimbledon, or for a weekend in London or San Francisco. We worked together in many organisations like Chambers of Commerce, The Tennis Association and so on.’

‘Chemplast was the first external Board that Nari joined, way back in 1980 - he had to get special permission from Ponds US. Thereafter he became a much sought after External Director on some of the most important Boards of India like Hindustan Lever, Glaxo, Lafarge, Bata, Rane, Sundram Fasteners and so on. He moved to The Sanmar Group Corporate Board when it was formed, and served on it till the end. In a way, Sanmar was his first and last external corporate affiliation - over the last couple of years, he had retired from all the other Boards. For most of this forty plus years, Nari was Chairman of our Audit Committee, and his contributions were fantastic. I can vouch that he brought the same diligence to all his Directorships since I served with him on the Board of Bata India Limited and observed his continuous and valuable contributions there.’

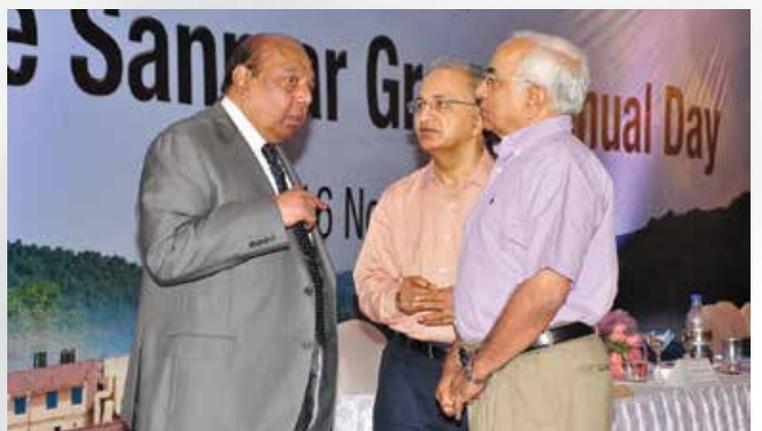
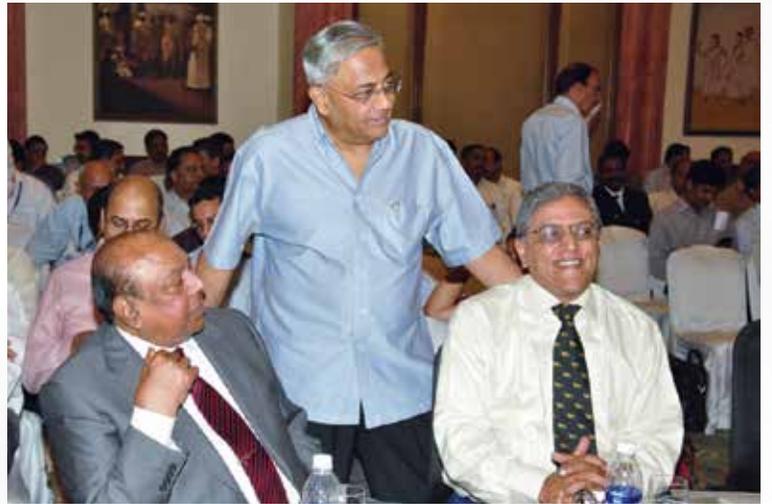
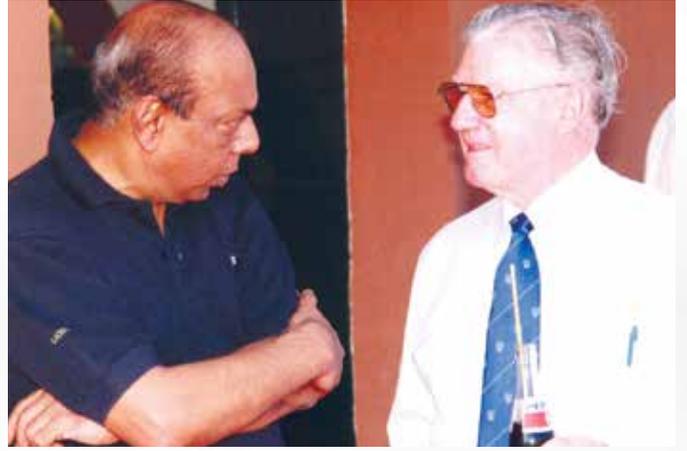
‘When he set up Ponds India Limited as an independent, listed Indian company in the late sixties, Nari, as Managing Director, made many



innovative and pathbreaking innovations. He hired executives only from the management institutes, and although they were very young, he gave them a free hand. Many of the people he trained at that time went on to occupy very senior positions in a variety of companies in India and abroad. He had a Board of Directors made up of experts from different fields, a true working Board. He launched many export-oriented diversifications such as footwear, mushrooms, thermometers etc. He put into practice many management innovations which took Ponds products to the top of the FMCG ladder in a very short period. All this resulted in the Ponds India share being one of the bluechips on the stock market at that time. There is no doubt that it would have continued thus if not for the takeover of Chesebrough-Ponds Worldwide by Unilever. I recall I was the first to give this news to Nari. I was in the US watching a tennis match when there was a flash news header announcing the takeover, and I immediately conveyed this to Nari - it was probably the middle of the night for him in India. When Ponds India was integrated with Hindustan Lever, its operational headquarters obviously moved to Mumbai but he chose to stay behind in Chennai.’

‘Towards the end, he was very careful about his health, given the prevalent Covid pandemic. I believe my house was one of the few he visited in the last twelve months. He came home on December 29th when we bonded over a drink with another friend of a half-century - Algy (M A Alagappan). I had no idea that was the last time I would see him but the three of us had a great time reminiscing over almost sixty years of good memories.’

‘I will miss him. Nari, rest in peace! You are remembered fondly by so many people whose lives you have enriched.’



N Kumar recalls his association with V Narayanan - 'Nari was a personal friend for over four decades. I have known him to be a knowledgeable person, meticulous in his approach and God fearing. I remember that when Nari was heading Ponds, they always had their first yearly board meeting at Tirupathy for almost 30 years. It is an understatement to say that Ponds flourished under his leadership and business acumen. He in fact started the very profitable "Russia Exports" and other companies followed the lead!'

'His Board acumen was second to none. Every word and dot would have been read and would raise pertinent issues at the meetings without fear. The Internal Auditors would be wary of his questioning. I fondly remember the affection we shared for Tennis, both on and off court. Will miss him.'



S Sankaran, Managing Director, Finance at Sanmar having been associated with Narayanan in his role as the Chairman of the Audit Committee of The Sanmar Group Corporate Board comments, 'Narayanan's understanding of the business, finance and other subjects always was exemplary. His significant contribution was in structuring the audit committee presentations to ensure meaningful discussions. His attention to detail and the methodical way of conducting the Audit Committee meetings ensured that the auditees as well as the auditors are well prepared to achieve the desired objective.'



Narayanan passed away on 21 January 2021 leaving behind his wife and two daughters. He will be remembered as a visionary leader, who inspired ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the business he helmed.

ICC Sustainability conclave second edition: 'Sustainability makes Economic Sense'

The second edition of the Sustainability Conclave organised by the Indian Chemical Council on the topic "Sustainability makes Economic Sense" was held on 20–21 January 2021. It was a virtual conclave covering various aspects of sustainable technologies relevant to the chemical and petrochemical industry.

The conclave was organised by ICC in association with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), American Chemistry Council (ACC), European Chemical Council (Cefic) and in coordination with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India. Environment Resource Management (ERM) was the knowledge partner.

The two-day conclave aimed to bring together industry experts from across the world to chart out a sectoral roadmap for the chemical industry in India.

Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in his message on the Sustainability Conclave wrote,



"A harmonious co-existence with nature has always been an integral part of our way of life. India's value system accord topmost priority towards caring for our surroundings..."

From transformative use of technology to emphasis on zero effect on nature, we remain steadfast in our efforts to build a new and self-reliant India, while adopting an inclusive and participatory approach towards development. Efforts such as leveraging renewable sources of energy, eliminating single use plastics and converting waste to wealth and waste to energy reflect our sincerity for an even better planet for the coming years."

Speaking at the concluding session of the conclave, presenting the vision for "Looking ahead," Vijay Sankar said, "the Indian Chemical Industry is expected to reach a size of US \$ 300 billion by 2025 and this growth has to be built on sustainability."

Winged visitors flock to Point Calimere this monsoon

The highlight of this season at the bird sanctuary at Point Calimere, near Vedaranyam is large flocks of bar-headed geese, known for their ability to fly in extreme altitude and weather conditions. Sanmar has established the Sanmar-Nahar BNHS Bird Migration Study Centre at Point Calimere to facilitate research on migratory flock.

The annual visitors including flamingos, pelicans, sandpipers, garganey, pin-tailed ducks, black-winged stilt, Northern shoveler, and gull-billed tern flock to Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary.

Migratory birds usually arrive at Point Calimere from the Arctic regions during winter and the shallow brackish water provides food, by way of small organisms.

According to forest officials, 15,000 to 20,000 flamingos have arrived at the Great Vedaranyam swamp beginning last October.





Flamingos

Mixed flock of waders (shorebirds) predominantly belonging to Sandpipers group Greenshank and Marsh Sandpipers.



*Photo courtesy: S Balachandran, Ph.D., Deputy Director
Bombay Natural History Society.*

Endangered species nearing extinction

Scientists have estimated that there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals that exist in nature. Human beings have endangered many species that they have even left the face of earth and become extinct.

An endangered species is very likely to become extinct in the near future, either worldwide or in a particular geographical jurisdiction. They may be at risk due to factors such as habitat loss, poaching and invasive species. They become endangered for two main reasons: loss of habitat and loss of genetic variation.

According to the The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list there are more than 35,000 species that are endangered. A selected few are featured in these *Matrix* pages.

Giant panda

Found mainly in temperate forests high in the mountains of southwest China, where they subsist almost entirely on bamboo, pandas do eat around 26 to 84 pounds of it every day, depending on what part of the bamboo they are eating. Being excellent tree climbers despite their bulk, giant pandas first became endangered in 1990 due to excessive poaching in the 80s and deforestation, depleting their bamboo food source.

Blue whale

The largest and the loudest animal on the planet, the blue whale weighing as much as 200 tons (approximately 33 elephants), and even louder than a jet engine, has a heart the size of a Volkswagen Beetle. Its stomach can hold one ton of krill and it needs to eat about four tons of krill each day. The primary threats currently facing blue whales are vessel strikes and entanglements in fishing gear.

Asian elephant

The largest land mammal on the Asian continent, the Asian elephant inhabit dry to wet forest and grassland habitats in 13 range countries. More than two-thirds of an elephant's day may be spent feeding on grasses. Since 1986, the Asian elephant has been listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List, as the population has declined by at least 50 percent over the last three elephant generations, which is about 60-75 years.

Asian elephant



Javan rhinoceros





It is primarily threatened by loss of habitat, degradation, fragmentation and poaching.

Giant otter

Giant otters, endangered top predators which live in Amazon River ecosystems, were nearly wiped out because of demand for their fur. Following the banning of fur trade, giant otter numbers have recovered across South America. However, there are several emerging threats to this sensitive species. Illegal gold mining activities and deforestation are severely affecting the habitat of giant otters in the Peruvian Amazon other than less fish to feed on and harmful contaminants such as mercury being flushed into the river.

Great Indian bustard

The great Indian bustard or Indian bustard is among the heaviest of the flying birds. Once common on the dry plains of the Indian subcontinent, as few as 150 numbers were estimated to survive in 2018 and the species is critically endangered by hunting and loss of its habitat, which consists of large expanses of dry grassland and scrub. It is protected under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 of India.

Tasmanian devil

The Tasmanian devil is the world's largest carnivorous marsupial, reaching 30 inches in length and weighing up to 26 pounds, although its size will vary widely depending on where it lives and the availability of food. Its oversized head houses sharp teeth and strong, muscular jaws that can deliver, pound for pound, one of the most powerful bites of any mammal. Listed as endangered, they are threatened with extinction due to the deadly Devil Facial Tumour (DFTD), a devastating disease that emerged in 1996 and still has no cure.

Bornean orangutan

Bornean orangutan populations have declined by more than 50% over the past 60 years, and the species' habitat has been reduced by at least 55% over the past 20 years. The Bornean orangutan is now critically endangered, with populations in sharp decline due to habitat destruction and illegal hunting.

Javan rhinoceros

The most threatened of the five rhino species, the Javan rhinos are with only around 60 numbers that live only in Ujung Kulon National Park in Java, Indonesia. It is dusky grey coloured and has a single horn of up to

White rumped vulture



about 10 inches. Its skin has a number of loose folds, giving the appearance of armour plating. Initially, numbers dropped due to hunting, and the main threats to rhino are poaching and habitat loss.

White rumped vulture

This species qualifies as ‘Critically Endangered’ because it has suffered an extremely rapid population decline primarily as a result of feeding on carcasses of animals treated with the veterinary drug diclofenac. The species declined in South East Asia during the 20th century, apparently as a result of the collapse of large ungulate populations owing to overharvesting by human hunters.

Leatherback sea turtles

Leatherback turtles are named for their shell, which is leatherlike rather than the normally hard shell of turtles. They are the largest sea turtle species and also one of the most migratory, crossing both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Pacific leatherbacks migrate from nesting beaches in the Coral Triangle all the way to the California coast to feed on the abundant jellyfish every summer. Although their distribution is wide, number of leather back turtles has seriously declined during the last century as a result of intense egg collection and fisheries by catch.

Atlantic bluefin tuna

Built like torpedoes and made for speed, Bluefin are the largest tunas and can live up to 40 years. They migrate across all oceans and can dive deeper than 3,000 feet.

They are tremendous predators from the moment they hatch, seeking out schools of fish like herring, mackerel, and even eels. Their population have declined severely from illegal fishing over the past few decades.

African wild dog

One of the world's most endangered mammals, the wild dog remain in southern Africa and the southern part of East Africa. Wild dogs are social and gather in packs of around ten individuals, but some packs number more than 40. They are opportunistic predators that hunt medium-sized ruminants, such as gazelles. In a sprint, African wild dogs can reach speeds of more than 44 miles per hour. African wild dogs are endangered mostly due to ongoing habitat fragmentation, conflict with human activities and infectious disease.

Sea lions

Sea lions are pinnipeds characterised by external ear flaps long fore flippers, the ability to walk on all fours, short, thick hair, and a big chest and belly. They haul out in large colonies on rocks and sandy shores on Islands. They move into the water to feed and cool off as needed. The largest threat to sea lion pups come from those within their own group. Sea lion bulls may inadvertently sit on and squash baby sea lions.

Darwin's fox

Darwin's fox is found in only two places in Chile: the Nahuelbuta National Park and on the Island of Chiloë. Named after scientist Charles Darwin, who discovered the species in 1834, Darwin's foxes are critically endangered. It is an “umbrella species,” so by protecting the primary temperate forests where they live, the entire ecosystem can be preserved.

We all have a responsibility to protect these endangered species, both for their sake and for the sake of our own future generations. Conservation of any endangered species must begin with stringent efforts to protect its natural habitat against human encroachment.

Sea Lions



Sanmar Swara, latest addition to Sanmar Shipping fleet

Sanmar Swara, a clean petroleum products tanker, joined the Sanmar Fleet taking the number of ships in the fleet to 10.

Swara is a long range 1 (LR1) product tanker which generally operates in a niche commercial market and is capable of carrying different grades of clean petroleum products.

Similar to many of Sanmar's other tankers, Swara was built in Onomichi Dockyard Limited, Japan, a quality assured shipyard, building the best-in-class tankers. Sanmar Swara was built in March 2006, and joined the Sanmar Shipping Fleet on 31 December 2020.

The vessel is a double hull oil tanker, 218 m long and 32.2 m wide. With around DWT 75,000 MT, she is capable of transporting approximately 82,000 CBM of clean petroleum products. She is powered by 12240 KW engine with an operating speed

of 14.0 knots. The main and auxiliary engines are in compliance with the Tier 1 NOx environmental standards.

With the addition of Sanmar Swara, the Sanmar Shipping fleet has expanded its presence in the three segments of clean products transportation, the LR2, LR1 & MR, thus providing the flexibility for carriage of various parcel sizes of clean petroleum products, across markets.



Sanmar, an investor in society



Mrs Ellen Sharma Memorial Nursery and Primary School - Karapakkam.

The Clarke School for the Deaf.



The Sanmar Group, as part of its CSR activities has been supporting education, health care, sports and other social welfare activities over the years.

Recently, financial support was given to:

- Three special schools - The Clarke School for the Deaf, Swabodhini Charitable Trust and V-Excel Educational Trust - organisations working with people with neurological disabilities.
- Minding Tiny Hearts Foundation, for conducting heart surgeries on ten children.
- Udhavum Nanbargal, towards equipping the Vocational Training Centre with smart classroom board, photocopier machine and furniture.
- Mrs Ellen Sharma Memorial Nursery and Primary School-Karapakkam (Unit of The Children Garden Society) for buying a new school bus.
- Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) in Ayikudy Village in Tirunelveli District for conducting civil work for the Spinal Injury Post-Acute Care Building, to rehabilitate people from across the country.

Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls initiative for women constables

In a first of its kind initiative, Chemplast Cuddalore Vinyls Limited (CCVL) sponsored sanitary pad vending machines for police personnel across Cuddalore district.

The project was inaugurated with the installation of a sanitary pad vending machine at the District Police office in Cuddalore on 16 February 2021 by Superintendent of Police M Sree Abhinav. As many as 59 machines were installed at the DPO, Armed Reserve, 46 police stations, 6 all women police stations and 4 traffic police stations across the district. The facility has also been installed in a mobile toilet for women cops.

A pad can be obtained by depositing a five rupee coin in the machine. This facility will provide conducive



work environment for women police constables who face difficulties in procuring pads while on duty.

M Sree Abhinav, Superintendent of Police, Cuddalore District, Karthik Rajasekhar and M Palanisamy from Chemplast Sanmar with women police constables outside Cuddalore District Police Office.



CSR activities at Mettur

Chemplast constructs shuttle court at Panangadu village



Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, constructed a shuttle court for the rural youth at the Panangadu village near Mettur, upon their request. The existing court in mud has been upgraded to a cement court at a cost of Rs. 1.5 lakhs. The shuttle court is open to young players since 13 February 2021.

Chemplast Sanmar sponsors Offset Printer for Salem Police station



Chemplast Sanmar sponsored the purchase of a mini offset printer at the SP's office, Salem, costing Rs. 7.2 lakhs to facilitate printing instruction materials and booklets for circulation to all police stations in the district.

Sanmar donates to Samayapuram Sri Sakthi Mariamman Temple



Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur, had constructed the Samayapuram Sri Sakthi Mariamman Temple at TSN Nagar near Chemplast Plant II on public request. Chemplast has also sponsored the painting of the temple and its Kumbabhiseham expenses by contributing Rs. 3 lakhs on 22 January 2021.

Chemplast facilitates water drawal at Thippampatti village



Chemplast donated equipment costing Rs. 4.80 lakhs on 20 March 2021 to the Gonur panchayat to enable villagers draw water from the common borewell for their daily use.

Beyond Sanmar

New CRRT machine donated by Sanmar to Childs Trust – a life saver

(Dr Bala Ramachandran, Head of Pediatric Intensive Care at Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital shares the recovery story of a 12 year old boy brought in critical condition)

The CRRT machine (Baxter Prismaflex) was acquired through a donation from our trustee, Mr N Sankar, in December 2020. The machine was installed on 10th December and used the same evening on a boy with severe dengue fever.

Master Sarabeswaran, a healthy 12 year old boy, was admitted on 10/12/2020 to the PICU because of fever, vomiting and bleeding. He was in shock, had low blood pressure, was unresponsive and was bleeding from the nose. He was intubated (breathing tube inserted into the lungs) in the Emergency Room and shifted to the PICU after obtaining a CT scan of the brain. The CT scan showed brain swelling. In the PICU, he had profuse bleeding from the mouth/nose and was very unstable. Investigations showed that he had dengue fever, with liver and kidney failure, low platelet count, inability of blood to clot. He was immediately started on CRRT, using the new machine installed only two hours earlier.

Over the next few days, he developed multiple complications of dengue, including a serious hematological condition called Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH). He was very unstable because of bleeding and multi-organ failure. The PICU team supported him with various measures, including medicines like IV Immunoglobulin and corticosteroids to treat HLH. Dr Sairam, our Nephrologist, was instrumental in arranging for technicians to come from other institutions and continue CRRT. Dr S Sivabalan, the child's primary Consultant, also gave valuable inputs into his management.

He gradually improved, the liver and kidneys recovered and CRRT was stopped after 11 days of continuous therapy. He was extubated (removed from the ventilator) successfully and eventually transferred out of the PICU on 26/12/2020. He made a full recovery and was discharged from hospital on 2/01/2021.

Despite having gone through such serious illness, including severe brain swelling, he recovered well and should be a normal boy. This goes on to prove, yet again, that children have remarkable powers of recovery. Given the right support, most can be saved even if they are very seriously ill.

This boy would not have recovered but for the availability of a CRRT machine. I would like to emphasize that all this is a team effort and requires the combined efforts of multiple doctors, Nurses and other personnel.

Dr Bala Ramachandran



A longterm employee's reminiscence



(KA Ravindran retired as Assistant General Manager, Sales and Marketing from Chemplast on 31 December 2020 after having served the organisation for 36 years).

I can only simply thank!

'A customary note of thanks will be very formal. I think a brief about my journey from my heart would be more appropriate.

Yes, today is my last day in Sanmar. Thirty six years of journey together facing and braving headwinds. Fair weathers and tailwinds were rare in business. Reaganomics, Perestroika, Glasnost, Globalization, Liberalization and finally Covid19 were challenging and changing the business and life across borders. Whatsoever the climate outside, the pilot and the crew assured me a safe landing. Unperturbed by the weather, I was able to cruise myself to new altitudes along with my family. It was a transformation and refinement as an individual in all aspects. It was a paradigm shift of an agrarian non-English educated family from a typical village to an industrialized modern world. Today both my children are professionally qualified, employed and married.

I started my carrier as a Jr. Clerk in Billing Division, at Mettur as a fresh graduate after attempting many service exams including Indian Economic Service. After that there was no looking back. The learning process started immediately after joining. I was one among the few who got the opportunity to become part of the very first batch of computer learners during 1987. Training programs continued periodically like, Personal Effectiveness Training and The Complete Manager in 2011-12 to mention a few. Sanmartini Season 1 was really a treasure of knowledge shared. "Who moved my cheese", "Seven Habits of Highly effective People", "Principle Centred Leadership", "What they don't teach you in Harvard School of Business" etc., were the books read and discussed. Immense was the knowledge and experience shared by the leaders. "Me to you", from the desk of SJ, deserves a special mentioning. I used to forward this to my children those days. If my memory lane is right, the very first "Scribble" carried my small poem on the first page. ...There were many "first times". The very first caustic shipment from Karaikal is still a great memory...

Freedom to express, freedom to execute, clarity in guidelines, unambiguous policies, personal respect and professional dignity - the hallmarks of Sanmar - made my 36 years proud.

As I am disembarking, I feel very happy and satiated. My grandson Viaan is waiting for me on the door steps at home to play elephant and mahout. What else does one need...

Business is a saga. Long live Sanmar and let its culture flourish.

I bow my head in gratitude.

KA Ravindran

31 December 2020

Legends from the South

Narasimhavarman I (Reigned 630 - 668 CE)



*King Mamalla
(Narasimhavarman I).
Dharmaraja Ratha,
Mamallapuram. The king is
identified by inscription above
this statue.*

Hailed as the greatest ruler of the Pallava dynasty under whose reign the Pallava reached the pinnacle of power, Narasimhavarman I not merely shared his father Mahendravarman I's love for art, but surpassed him in his contribution to the art and architecture as well as military achievements.

As soon as Narasimhavarman claimed the throne, he avenged the defeat of his father at the hands of the Chalukya king,

Pulakesin II in the year 642 CE. Hence the title 'Mamalla' or 'great wrestler,' by which name he is well known. His other titles include Sribharan, Srimehan, Srinithi and Vadhya Vidyatharan.

Narasimhavarman I is claimed to be one of the seven Indian kings who never lost on the battlefield to their enemies, the others being Karikala Chola of the Sangam age, Samudragupta, Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Rajaraja Chola I, his great warrior son Rajendra Chola.

Based upon his successful military conquests, Narasimhavarman was worthy enough to celebrate ashvamedha yajna (sacrifice). As per his Sivanvayal

inscription, he did perform ashvamedha and bahusuvarna sacrifices.

Pulakesi II, a renowned early Chalukya king, had previously raided various northern Pallava provinces and forts. However, he was unable to capture the Pallava capital, Kanchipuram. This led to a long conflict between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas.

Pulakesi II attempted to seize the Pallava capital and undertook another expedition several years later. However, the Pallava reign had moved on to Narasimhavarman I from his father Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman defeated the Chalukyas in several battles, including one at Manimangalam, 20 miles to the east of Kanchi.

Encouraged by this victory, Narasimhavarman led his army along with his general Paranjothi and invaded Vatapi, successfully defeating the Chalukya king Pulakesi II in 642 CE. As per Kuram, Udayendiram, Kasakudi and Velupalaiyam grants, Narasimhavarman destroyed Vatapi (current Badami) as Sage Agastya destroyed the demon Vatapi. A rock inscription of Narasimhavarman at Badami proved that he won that city in thirteenth year of his reign. After conquering Vatapi, he assumed the title of 'Vatapikonda' (one who conquered Vatapi). Velurpalaiyam grant further states that he took the pillar of victory standing in the centre of the town of Vatapi after defeating his enemies and compared him with Upendra (Vishnu).

Narasimhavarman I constructed a Mallikarjuna Temple at Vatapi to commemorate his victory. He carved an inscription recording his victory on the walls of the Teggina, Irappa temple in Vatapi. Paranjothi, his army commander, brought numerous items of war booty to the Pallava kingdom from Vatapi, including a famous idol of Lord Ganesha, known as Vatapi Ganapati, which he enshrined in his hometown, Tiruchenkattankudi.

Copper plates, found in a Kanchipuram village on the banks of the Palar River, reads: "Narasimhavarman, the equal of Agastya the crusher of Vatapi, who frequently conquered Vallabharaja at Periyar, Bhumanimangala, Shuramara and other places."

The Sinhalese prince Manavarma lived at the court of Narasimhavarman I and had helped him crush his enemy Pulakesi II. In return, Narasimhavarman

supplied Manavarma twice with an army to invade Ceylon. The second attack was successful. Manavarma occupied Ceylon, and he is supposed to have ruled from A.D. 691 to 726. The Kasakudi copper plates refer to Narasimhavarman's conquest of Ceylon. The Mahavamsa also confirms these facts.

It was during Narasimhavarman's reign that the Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang visited the Pallava capital Kanchi, and has given detailed information regarding the greatness of Kanchi in his travelogue. He stayed there for some time and studied in the Buddhist Kadigai.

He was a devotee of Lord Siva, and the great Nayanmars Appar and Tirugnanasambandar lived during his reign.

Kalki Krishnamurthy's work, *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*, is based on Narasimhavarman's early years, his love for dancer Sivagami and his fights with the Chalukyas and the same author's *Parthiban Kanavu* is based on the later years of Narasimhavarman's rule.

Narasimhavarman I was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman II.

Known for his patronage of the arts, Narasimhavarman took great interest in creating this remarkable shore town of Mamallapuram, named after his title, with its famous shore temple and the monolithic Rathas.



Arjunas Penance, Mamallapuram

