

K.S. Narayanan passes away

CHENNAI, September 29, 2012 / Special Correspondent

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ks-narayanan-passes-away/article3946334.ece>



K.S. Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of the Sanmar Group, passed away here on Friday. He was 93 and is survived by his sons, N. Sankar and N. Kumar. Mr. Narayanan, as one of his long-time associates remarked, “walked with kings and commoners.” He treated all alike, and earned the respect of one and all in and outside his organisation.

A co-promoter of the India Cements Ltd., he went to Denmark in the late 1940s and returned with a thorough knowledge of cement and PVC. A technology-savvy industrialist, it used to be said that he could run the plant on his own. With a well-diversified knowledge base, he dealt with a range of industries — cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals, shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide. He was involved in the promotion of diverse enterprises such as Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd. and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

Mr. Narayanan was the founder president of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce-Southern Region and former president of the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce. He also served as the Sheriff of Madras (1974) and as the Honorary Consul of Denmark for South India.

He was involved in the management of several educational and charitable organisations such as the Indian Education Trust, Mrs. Madhuras Narayanan Charitable Foundation, the Sanmar Welfare Trust and the Uttara Swamimalai Trust, among others. Mr. Narayanan lent a helping hand to good causes — from fighting cancer and eye ailments to promoting schools. He had a long association with the Music Academy, Chennai, and was once its Managing Trustee.

Much before the Indian Premier League took the Indian cricket by storm, Mr. Narayanan was an owner of a cricket team, Jolly Rovers.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
TIMES OF INDIA	Sep 29 th , 2012	2

Sanmar head Narayanan dies at 93

Chennai: K S Narayanan, chairman emeritus of the Sanmar Group, died here on Friday after a brief illness. He was 93.



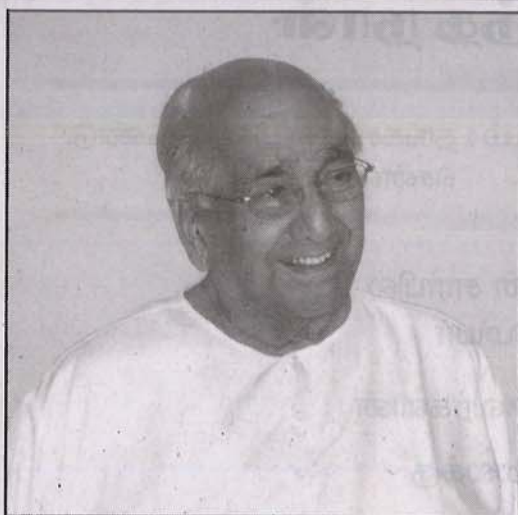
Narayanan had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in sectors like cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals, shipping and ceramic insulators. He was, for many years, promoter and managing director of the India Cements Ltd and was promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar Ltd, Sanmar Shipping Ltd, WS Industries Ltd and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

He is survived by his sons N Sankar and NKumar. TNN

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
DECCAN CHRONICLE	Sep 29 th , 2012	4

OBITUARY



K S NARAYANAN

(30.1.1919 - 28.9.2012)

Chairman Emeritus, The Sanmar Group

Passed away on 28 September 2012

Deeply mourned by



The Management & Employees of
THE SANMAR GROUP

INDUSTRIALIST K.S. NARAYANAN PASSES AWAY

**DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, SEPT. 28:**

KS Narayanan, chairman emeritus of Sanmar Group, passed away on Friday after a brief illness. He was 93. A leading industrialist and a pioneer in the cement and PVC industries in India, Mr Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular, and philanthropic initiatives.

He had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry, including cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals besides shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide. He was for many years promoter and MD of India Cements Ltd., the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd., Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

Mr Narayanan was involved in the management of several educational and charitable organizations. Mr Narayanan is survived by his sons, N Sankar and N Kumar, his sister and brothers, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS	Sep 29 th , 2012	3

Leading Industrialist K S Narayanan Dead

Express News Service

Chennai: Veteran industrialist, champion innovator of the cement industry and chairman-emeritus of the Sanmar Group, K S Narayanan, passed away at the age of 93, here on Friday, following a brief illness. Narayanan is survived by two sons.

A great sports enthusiast,

Narayanan was instrumental in taking cement major India Cements to great heights during his stint as its managing director and promoter.

However, his expertise was not restricted to the cement industry, as he branched out into avenues as diverse as pharmaceuticals, rubber, sugar and plastics.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS	Sep 29 th , 2012	20

Sanmar Group chairman emeritus passes away



feBureau

Chennai, Sept 28: KS Narayanan, chairman emeritus of Chennai-based business conglomerate Sanmar Group, passed away on Friday following a brief illness. He was 93. One of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in the cement and PVC industries in India, Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports and philanthropic initiatives.

Narayanan had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry,

NARAYANAN HAD OVER FIVE DECADES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE IN DIVERSE AREAS OF INDUSTRY

including cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals, shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide. He was involved for many years as promoter and managing director of India Cements. He was also promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar, Sanmar Shipping, WS Industries and Tamil Nadu

Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

He was the founder-president of Indo-American Chamber of Commerce - Southern Region (1969-70) - and former president of Hindustan Chamber of Commerce (1975-76). He was the Sheriff of Madras (1974) and the honorary Consul of Denmark for South India (1975-88).

Industrialist KS Narayanan passes away

2012-09-28

<http://www.asianage.com/chennai/industrialist-ks-narayanan-passes-away-176>

KS Narayanan, chairman emeritus of Sanmar Group, passed away on Friday after a brief illness. He was 93. A leading industrialist and a pioneer in the cement and PVC industries in India, Mr Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular, and philanthropic initiatives.

He had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry, including cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals besides shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide. He was for many years promoter and MD of India Cements Ltd., the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd., Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

Mr Narayanan was involved in the management of several educational and charitable organizations. Mr Narayanan is survived by his sons, N Sankar and N Kumar, his sister and brothers, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

THE HINDU **Business Line**

Sanmar group Chairman Emeritus K.S. Narayanan passes away

2012-09-28

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/article3945551.ece?homepage=true>

K.S. Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of the Chennai-based Sanmar Group, passed away today after a brief illness. He was 93. Narayanan is survived by two sons, N. Sankar and N. Kumar. One of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in cement and PVC industries in India, Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular and his many philanthropic initiatives.

Narayanan had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry, including cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals, shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide.

He was involved for many years as promoter and managing director of The India Cements Ltd, the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar Ltd, Sanmar Shipping Ltd, WS Industries Ltd and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

A great supporter of cricket and tennis, he was a patron of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association and the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association and a former President of Tirunelveli District Cricket Association, says a company press release.

Chairman Emeritus, The Sanmar Group, passes away

2012-09-28

<http://newstodaynet.com/newsindex.php?id=28773%20&%20section=1>

Mr KS Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group, breathed his last on 28 September 2012 after a brief illness. He was 93. One of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in the Cement and PVC industries in India, Mr Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular, and his many philanthropic initiatives.

Mr Narayanan had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry, including Cement, Plastics, Sugar, Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Shipping, Ceramic Insulators, Rubber and Calcium Carbide. He was involved for many years as Promoter and Managing Director of The India Cements Ltd., the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also Promoter Director of Chemplast Sanmar Limited, Sanmar Shipping Limited, WS Industries Ltd., Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals, etc.

Mr Narayanan was actively associated with business and industry associations. He was the Founder-President of Indo-American Chamber of Commerce Southern Region (1969-70) and Past President of the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce (1975-76). He was also the Sheriff of Madras (1974). He was the Hony Consul of Denmark for South India (1975-88).

A generous large-hearted, person, Mr Narayanan was involved in the management of several educational and charitable organizations, including Indian Education Trust, Mrs Madhuram Narayanan Charitable Foundation, Sanmar Welfare Trust, Uttara Swamimalai Trust and many other trusts. A great supporter of cricket and tennis, he was a patron of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association and the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association and a former President of Tirunelveli District Cricket Association.

Mr Narayanan is survived by his two sons, N Sankar and N Kumar, Mrs Chandra Sankar, Mrs Bhavani Kumar, his sister and brothers, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
FINANCIAL CHRONICLE	Sep 29 th , 2012	4

Industrialist Narayanan passes away in Chennai

D GOVARDAN

Chennai

KS Narayanan, chairman emeritus of the Chennai-based Sanmar Group passed away on Friday morning after a brief illness. He was 93.

One of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in the cement and PVC industries in the country, Narayanan was also known for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular, and philanthropic initiatives.

Narayanan had over five decades of entrepreneurial management experience in diverse areas of industry, including cement, plastics, sugar, drugs and pharmaceuticals, shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide. He functioned for several years as the promoter and MD of The India Cements, the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also the promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar, Sanmar Shipping, WS Industries and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals among others. Narayanan was actively associated with business and industry associations.

govardan
to people without spurs
@mydigitalit.com

THE HINDU Business Line

Doyen of TN industry K. S. Narayanan passes away

Our Bureau

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/article3945551.ece?ref=wl_opinion

Chennai, Sept 28: Chairman Emeritus of the Sanmar Group K.S. Narayanan passed away today after a brief illness. He was 93.

In an interview to *Business Line* in April 1999, Narayanan had said that his wish was everything should have a happy ending.

"I'm very happy. The business which my sons are looking after is doing well, and my family life is very happy... if the same continues, I don't mind living till 100." Fate, however, willed otherwise. He is survived by his two sons, N. Sankar and N. Kumar.

One of the leading industrialists and a pioneer in the cement and PVC industries in India, Narayanan was also famous for his patronage of sports, cricket in particular, and his many philanthropic initiatives.

Venu Srinivasan, Chairman, TVS Motor Co, said that Narayanan was among the last doyens of Tamil Nadu industry who was part of a pioneering generation of industrialists. "He, along with the TVS family, Amalgamations, Murugappa Group was part of a golden age of TN industrialisation. It's the passing of an era," he said.

Narayanan had over five decades managed diverse industries, including cement, plastics, sugar, pharmaceuticals, shipping, ceramic insulators, rubber and calcium carbide.

He was involved for many years as promoter and Managing Director of The India Cements Ltd, the largest manufacturer of cement in South India. He was also promoter director of Chemplast Sanmar Ltd, Sanmar Shipping Ltd, WS Industries Ltd, and Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals.

Says N. Srinivasan, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, India Cements, "I had the privilege of being closely associated with him in the 1970s. He managed India Cements and its group companies very ably, particularly as cement was under price and distribution control in those days."

Narayanan was competitive in business, but had a generous heart, he added. Married at 16, Narayanan got the message loud and clear when his banker-father told him that he could not be dependent on him for money to buy 'seep (comb) or soap' for his wife. After a brief stint in the bank, the youngster found it more adventurous to be on his own. By 1938, when he was 19, he had taken over a printing ink factory.

Next came rubber works followed by a calcium carbide plant, says an article about him published in *Business Line* in 1999. A great supporter of cricket and tennis, Narayanan was a patron of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association and the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association. He was also Sheriff of Madras (1974).

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE
DECCAN CHRONICLE	Oct, 26 th , 2012



IN MEMORIAM | Former TN health minister H.V. Hande, former governor of West Bengal Gopalkrishna Gandhi, and chairman of Sanmar Group N. Sankar recall the life of doyen among industrialists late K.S. Narayanan, chairman Emeritus, Sanmar Group, at a memorial meeting, in Chennai on Thursday. — DC

PRESS CLIPPINGS

NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE	PAGE NO
THE HINDU (METROPLUS)	Oct 8 th , 2012	4

CHENNA

THE HINDU • MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2012

A jolly rover

Once again, I have to sadly record the passing away of another significant contributor to Madras, a nonagenarian this time. Our paths did not cross too often, but when they did there were always two things that K.S. Narayanan left in my memory: one, his ever-present smile and, two, a born raconteur that he was, the stories he'd always have to tell me. Given his personality in company, it is no wonder that he named the cricket team he sponsored from the 1960s the Jolly Rovers. There was a jollier side to life that he always saw.

KSN, another of those from the Deep South who have contributed significantly to industrial development in Madras and Tamil Nadu, first with India Cements and then with the Sanmar Group, will no doubt be remembered in the wider context for that signal contribution. But there are many, certainly most of all his closest friends, who will remember him for his passion for sport, particularly cricket and tennis - and those games of cards for which his friends would gather regularly at his home till almost his last week.

A similar KSN group would meet for tennis at the Madras Cricket Club every morning from six to about 7.30. Once the Club got its lights, they'd be on the courts at 4.30 a.m.! I remember when writing the history of the MCC, he got me out there one morning to meet the gang: Chandra Chellam, Mohan Punja, Jimmy Thambuswami, M.V. Pratap and Bobjee, and a perennial guest, C.C. Ganapathi. KSN was in his late seventies at



K.S. Narayanan

the time and age certainly did not stop him moving about the court like a younger man.

And it was there that he had yet another story to tell me, just as he had wherever we met. This one was about another tennis fanatic, H.V.R. Iengar of Parry's. When Narayanan met Iengar at a

party one day and commented on his long absence from the courts, Iengar told him that his doctor had asked him to stop playing tennis because of his heart condition, "so, I have taken up golf." KSN in characteristic fashion responded, "But I have heard of more deaths on golf courses than on tennis courts," and was surprised to be tersely told to "shut up."

Later in the evening, when they found themselves a quiet corner, KSN wanted to know what that had all been about. And Iengar whispered, "My wife was standing by me. If she had heard you, she would have stopped my golf too."

On another occasion, when he discovered that I had been in printing, he sat me down to tell me how he started his industrial career by fortuitously getting into printing ink manufacture.

And then he chuckled, "If you ever used Ganges ink, I'm sure it would not have been like when I made Nanco in the 1930s. Ink is not what it was." Nanco Ink Ltd., instead of Nana & Co, is what he chose to start his industrial career with on Guindy Road, Adyar.

When Ganges Ink from Calcutta, headed by a Norwegian, Emil Fjermos, took over Nanco, there began the family's connection with Scandinavia.

This narration took place soon after his son, N. Sankar, had helped to resurrect *Madras Musings*. KSN was one of its most loyal readers. I'll miss that occasional call from him commenting on one story or another.

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under R.N.I. 53840/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

HOME

MADRAS MUSINGS

CHENNAI HERITAGE

SPONSORS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CONTRIBUTIONS

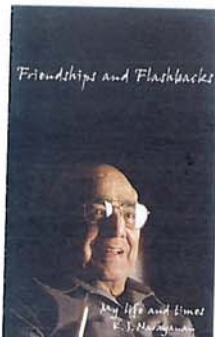
CONTACT

(ARCHIVE) VOL. XXII NO. 14, NOVEMBER 1-15, 2012

Enjoying life with Nana

By A Staff Reporter

K.S. Narayanan, who passed away recently, was a person who enjoyed company, enjoyed storytelling, and enjoyed life – with a broad smile always in place. These excerpts from his memoirs, *Friendships and Flashbacks*, reflect that life.



K.S. Narayanan, Chairman-Emeritus of the Sanmar Group – KSN as he was known in corporate circles, and as Nana to friends – came from a lineage of Tirunelveli bankers. He joined his father's Indo Commercial Bank in 1936. A co-appointee was T.S. Narayanaswami (TSN). It was to be the beginning of a lasting friendship that was to see the spawning of several enterprises in future.

In 1947, with the group's interests in cement becoming manifest, he co-founded India Cements, along with TSN. Chemplast (now a constituent of the Sanmar Group) came about in 1965. WS Industries (of which KSN was Chairman till the 1990s) was also founded around that time. The sudden passing away of TSN in 1968 was a setback, but KSN weathered the crisis, his passion for new enterprises and managing them continuing unabated. He retired at the age of 60 in 1980, but retained a keen interest in corporate

affairs almost till the very end.

In private life, KSN was married to Madhura who passed away in 1973. They had two sons – N. Sankar and N. Kumar.

KSN was a man known for his positive attitude to life, his active interest in sports and his vast circle of friends. His friends, he often said, were made for life and the only capital he had after years in business.

In 2001, KSN narrated the story of his life till then to Srividya Natarajan. This was published as *Friendships and Flashbacks*. More than an (auto) biography of a captain of industry, it is a warm-hearted and humorous chronicle of life in South Indian industry and the city of Madras. We bring you excerpts:

KSN moved to Madras in the 1930s, joining the Hindu High School, Triplicane.

My own best moments from this time were of riding to school on a Humber bicycle that had been bought for the fabulous sum of Rs. 200 (ordinary bicycles in those days cost around Rs.25). I had entertained hopes of roaring about on a motorcycle, but my father made it clear that I had no business wanting one at the age of fifteen. I was given, instead, this paragon among bicycles, this construction of gears and gadgetry that became my pride and joy. It even, for a while, replaced the joys of riding the trams up and down Madras. It was particularly fascinating to me that at the end of a run the driver would simply move to the other end of the tram, so nothing had to be turned around.



Seen at the Indo Commercial Bank's Vizianagaram branch: K.S. Narayanan and T.S. Narayanaswami at the extreme left and right respectively.

My family didn't seem to mind the idea of my driving a car before I was of an age to take my driving licence, and so I went about in a new model Ford when I was not yet seventeen. This model had a 'double horn,' an innovation that the police frowned upon, since it sounded as if there were two cars instead of one and it was believed that this could cause accidents. Inevitably, one morning, as I was parp-parping my way through George Town, an Inspector of Police stopped me and hauled me off to the Commissioner's Office in Egmore.

The Assistant Commissioner of Police, an Englishman, looked at me up and down, noting, no doubt, my obviously beardless youthfulness. "Have you a licence, young man?" he asked, insinuatingly. No, I admitted, I was deplorably licenceless. He had just begun to lecture me about my culpability on various grounds, when we heard a double horn at the gate of the Commissioner's Office. We both stared. "Are you going to prosecute that man too?" I asked hopefully. "He has the same horn." The Inspector turned hurriedly from the window and told me I had better shut up. The door opened, and the Commissioner himself came in: the owner of that car, the possessor of one of only two double horns in all of Madras!

After this particular epiphany, the ACP's mirth at the whole situation bubbled up through his official anger with me, and instead of the rebuke he was planning he offered me a reprieve. "Take him out, and see if he can drive," he told the Inspector, who immediately began to look murderous. When I was reported fit to handle a vehicle, the ACP himself filled out a licence application, letting his pen wander vaguely and forgetfully past the column that

[Click here for more...](#)

[Please click here to support the Heritage Act](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

'Save this landmark building'

Why is our city 'Sink'ara Chennai?

For Metro Rail success a ring line is needed

Enjoying life with Nana

The national treasure that was M. Krishnan

A Vijayanagara-Chennai connection

'Munro' arrives in Madras

We regret...

Our Regulars

Short 'N' Snappy

Our Readers Write

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

ARCHIVES

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

[BACK TO ARCHIVES](#)

[BACK TO CURRENT ISSUE...](#)

asked for my age. He even phoned my father: "Don't worry that your son is late coming home, he'll be back soon." That was how I came back to my village to become something of a celebrity among my mates, a man of parts, a man – of sixteen summers, admittedly – but with a driving licence!

In 1939, KSN was asked to manage Nanco Inks, a business the family had acquired just then. KSN refers to the role played in the acquisition by T.R.V. Sastri, this being T.R. Venkatarama Sastri, the legal luminary. The Anna referred to in this passage was S.N.N. Sankaralinga Iyer, KSN's father. T. Sadasivam is of course M.S. Subbulakshmi's husband and well-known founder of *Kalki* magazine. The Abboy referred to is T.S. Narayanaswami.

In a huge property on what was then Guindy Road (now Sardar Patel Road), a High Court officer built a shed and installed some newly bought machinery, to give his son a start in life. The son was a chemist, with some knowledge of inks, and had wanted to try his hand at running a printing ink factory. Friends of the official – lawyers all – helped finance the outfit.

The unit was called Vishakan Printing Ink Works and, by 1938, it was floundering for want of fresh capital.

A legal man called T.R.V. Shastri, who was a friend of my father, mentioned this factory's difficulties to Anna. This happened at a time when Anna was looking for a chance to break the banking mould. He called me over and said, "Nana, I think someone should take over this ink factory and make a success of it."

I was delighted to comply. We bought the entire unit, with its three ink-grinding 'mills', machines made by Torrance of the U.K., and retained the original owner's son as our chemist. We also hired one more chemist. The factory was now called Nanco Printing Inks. This was a version of "Nana and Co." that I was to use for more than one enterprise I was involved with. It made sense in those days to give a company a name that was not too unmistakably 'Indian'.

Almost immediately after we took it over, the ink factory began its climb out of the red. What we needed now was a marketing boost, a buyer who would place large orders.

The large orders at this time were placed mainly by the daily newspapers; in Madras, that meant *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express*. They would not take us seriously, I think, because there was a technical problem with our ink, which cropped up only when it was applied to the fast-spinning rollers of the big presses that ground out the dailies. As the rollers whipped around, a cloud of black particles flew up from them, making a sort of sooty miasma in the room and coating the technicians until they were black in the face.

The finest break for Nanco Inks came when T. Sadasivam of the Tamil magazine *Kalki* placed an order. *Kalki* was then struggling with teething problems of its own and was not above applying for its raw material to a small-time local supplier. Its rollers were the smaller, slower kind, for which our inks held no terrors. The only small catch was that *Kalki*'s management was also not inclined to give us any time to meet the order: Sadasivam wanted the ink the same night as the order was placed, so that he could run off the next day's magazine.

The Nanco Inks factory was closed for the day by the time the order was confirmed, both workers and chemists snug in their homes and inaccessible (cell-phones: oh, the difference they make!). In this kind of crisis, there was only one person to turn to: rock-solid Abboy, who could turn his hand to anything. It was a stroke of luck that he was in Madras. I roused him out of his evening reverie, and hauled him off to the factory: he and the driver of our car were the only forces I could muster.

Working in frantic haste, the three of us fed the raw materials into the machine and waited for the rollers to grind the ink to the required fineness. Then we spooned the ink off the rollers into a container and packed it off to the *Kalki* office in Egmore before retiring to bed, sweaty and begrimed but feeling that we had endeared ourselves to *Kalki*'s owners forever and a day. Abboy was the kind of person who got a great kick out of that kind of situation. As a matter of fact, *Kalki* became one of Nanco's most loyal clients after this incident, and remained a client for many years.

On the initial years of WS Industries and its early crisis consequent to the rupee devaluation of 1966: The CS Loganatha Mudaliar referred to here was a cement magnate of those years. He was better known as the partner of JH Tarapore in several building contracts.

Among the companies that floundered was W.S. Insulators of India, another collaborative effort between a giant U.S. corporation – Westinghouse – and Indian entrepreneurs, in the manufacture of electrical goods. Abboy had been one of the prime movers and Loganatha Mudaliar was started off as Chairman. The factory had opened in Porur, near Madras, in 1966.

W.S.'s main client was the Electricity Department, and any one who has dealt with any arm of the PWD knows that extending credit is part of the game. When Abboy's sudden passing away in February 1968 left me holding this baby, I discovered that there wasn't even enough money in the kitty to pay the workers that month. I turned to the Finance Secretary, but he shook me off, claiming helplessness. M.G. Balasubramaniam, a man I numbered among my friends, was the Industries Secretary, and R. Tirumalai was the PWD Secretary in the Tamil Nadu Government at the time. When they learnt of my plight they agreed to help: they felt that the PWD was at fault, and ought to pay its arrears. M.G. Balasubramaniam and Tirumalai marched into the Finance Secretary's office with me and delivered their ultimatum:

"If the government can't give W.S. Insulators an advance, the Electricity Department will pay their bills right now. But then the Electricity Department won't be able to pay any salaries to its own workers this month!"

The crisis passed. The Finance Secretary coughed up from the Government's funds, and both W.S. and the PWD salaries were paid. For the running of the company, I had to borrow from the ICICI against my personal guarantee. On the strength of that, among other things, I eventually became Chairman of W.S. Insulators after Loganatha Mudaliar's demise, and retired after many years as Chairman-Emeritus.

(To be concluded)

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under R.N.I. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

HOME

MADRAS MUSINGS

CHENNAI HERITAGE

SPONSORS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CONTRIBUTIONS

CONTACT

VOL. XXII NO. 15, NOVEMBER 16-31, 2012

Of tennis and impromptu clubs

(Continued from last fortnight)

K.S. Narayanan, who passed away recently, was a person who enjoyed company, enjoyed storytelling, and enjoyed life – with a broad smile always in place. These excerpts from his memoirs *Friendship and Feedbacks* reflect that life.



On his interest in sports and a rather strange outcome of it: *The Sadasivam that KSN refers to here was C.K. Satchi, the life-partner of film star and singer N.C. Vasanthakokilam.*

In the 1950s, when my interest in sport was revived by a remarkable old man called Jagadeesa Iyer, my habit of early rising gave me time for a few vigorous games of tennis. Tennis gradually became a mild obsession and, though I was by no means a superb player, I became a steady and committed one. I played, on an average, 300 days in a year, for something like fortyfive years; and didn't give up the game until I was in my mid-seventies.

Since Jagadeesa Iyer was a tennis enthusiast himself, he nagged me until I leased a court at the Mylapore Ladies Club, and began playing both singles and doubles games every morning. I became a demon for practice; the early morning sessions worked off all my excess energy.

By now I was the focus of an entire tennis-playing coterie, which included Jimmy Thambuswamy and 'Jappu' – C.G. Ganapathy. We played a doubles game at the Mylapore court, and most mornings I would be outside Jimmy's Gandhinagar house at five in the morning to pick him and Jappu up on my way to the club. This circumstance led to the only piece of scandal that touched my life.

A newspaper called the *Indunesan* carried an insinuating piece that went something like this: "S.N.N. Sankaralinga Iyer's son had better mend his morals if he does not want to find his picture in the papers. Every morning, at five o'clock, his car has been noticed parked in Gandhinagar, opposite the house of a woman of loose reputation. No doubt he stays with her all night." This bit of scurrility was too laughable to take seriously. I bought two copies, sent one to Anna and one to Madhuram; the one trusted me and the other knew where I spent my nights.

"This is an outrage, Nana!" a couple of my friends said. "We ought to file a suit for defamation!" Another friend even rolled up his sleeves and offered to beat up the editor of the paper, whose name was Lakshmiathanam.

"Don't do a thing," I said to them, "If I start issuing denials now, this incident will be blown up out of all proportion. If we keep quiet about it, it will die down of itself."

Later, I learnt that the part about the lady, at any rate, was correctly reported and that the gentleman she was entertaining had an office in the Vanguard Buildings where India Cements was also located. The reporters had seen his car outside the same two parking spaces as I frequently used. Putting two and two together, too circumstantially, the editor had made five. We also discovered that this editor was a seasoned blackmailer who had been making similar threats to many important citizens of Madras. Another acquaintance of mine, a film director called Sadasivam, was warned that *Indunesan* was going to carry a picture of him 'with his girlfriends'. He waltzed into the paper's office the next morning with a bagful of compromising pictures. "All right," he said cheerfully, "Now which one do you want to choose?" Lakshmiathanam met the doom reserved in all the novels for blackmailers: he was murdered. Does anyone remember the famous case in which M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavatar, N.S. Krishnan and Sriramulu were implicated?

Sometimes, I do believe I have a ruthless streak after all, especially when I have set my heart on winning a game. Some of my friends banked so completely on my sheer determination to win that they would make wagers on the games I played. Sometimes they won small sums, and sometimes the loser stood everyone drinks at the MCC bar.

In the 1960s, I began to take an interest in cricket, partly because I was already a member of the Madras Cricket Club. Cricket sponsorship was considered, at that time, the preserve of public limited British companies, banks and wealthy individuals. S. Rangajaran of *The Hindu*, for instance, had his own protégés. I thought that if India Cements ventured into this new territory it would be to the mutual benefits of talented cricketers and the firm. As far as I know, India Cements was among the first indigenous private sector corporate enterprises to become involved in cricket sponsorship. In 1966, we became the patrons of a team called the Jolly Rovers, which included seven or eight players of repute. At the end of the 1960s, incidentally, India Cements also sponsored a really international scale sports event: the Asian Athletics Meet.

The Jolly Rovers carried off most of the First Division level trophies for the first decade of its existence. It was a little subdued for a decade or so after this, until Bharat Reddy took

[Click here for more...](#)

The Complete Archives

Archived issues of Madras Musings, compiled from 1991 onwards, are now available online.

[Click here to access the complete archives of Madras Musings. Happy reading!](#)

[Click here for more...](#)

[Please click here to support the Heritage Act](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

[INTACH invited to restore 5 HC buildings](#)

[Will the latest plan reduce T'Nagar chaos?](#)

[Five years on, still no power from Udangudi](#)

[A great address to have](#)

[A Chennaivaasi's Chennai](#)

[Of tennis and impromptu clubs](#)

[Juicy success](#)

[The pleasure of walking at Elliot's Beach](#)

Our Regulars

[Short 'N' Snappy](#)

[Our Readers Write](#)

[Quizzin' with Ram'n'an](#)

[Dates for your Diary](#)

ARCHIVES

DOWNLOAD PDF

charge of it in the 1980s. Reddy did something magical to the team's chemistry and they are back on a winning spree. My sons feel that our cricket sponsorship, which has now been taken over largely by Chemplast, was an excellent way of boosting our corporate identity, though I didn't exactly think of it in these terms when we got started.

On the beginnings of the Indian Education Trust. Vaidyasubramania Iyer was secretary to Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar and later known as a philanthropist.

In 1970, a group of people in Raja Annamalaipuram resolved to start a good school for the children who lived in the area. Vaidyasubramania Iyer donated 1½ grounds of land to this cause, and a committee called the Indian Educational Society was set up to help the process along. A friend of mine called Pattabhiraman was on that committee and was appointed manager of the schools. The committee also had, as its Chairman, another man who knew me well: R. Venkataraman who, as Industries Minister of Tamil Nadu, had come to the rescue of many of my projects at one time or another.

The school started functioning out of a building that was bought from the Theosophical Society (it had in fact housed their old printing press, the Vasanta Press). The building had been bought out of money that had been loaned by the government. In 1976, when the repayment of the loan was scheduled, an emergency meeting of the school's committee was called, and I attended that meeting. Venkataraman put the case before us: the school was facing a cash crunch, it could not repay the loan, and it would look bad on Venkataraman's career record if he underwrote another loan from the government to repay this one. What were they to do?

Quite carried away by my enthusiasm at this point, I made an offer: I would raise the money they required. And raise it I did. I arranged the staging of a play by Manohar's company, and had a souvenir printed for the occasion which, as someone later told me, was a Who's Who of India Cements' suppliers, clients, retailers, well-wishers. I had by now, almost without being aware of it myself, been drawn into this school's trajectory. Pattabhiraman had gone away to Bombay and my brother-in-law, V.S. Dhandapani, had taken over the management of the school. At a subsequent meeting of the school's committee, I presented a cheque to Venkataraman, in his capacity as Chairman of the school committee; he gave it right back to me and said he was giving it to the future Chairman of the committee. With that meeting, R.V. handed over charge of the school to me.

With Dhandapani's able management, the fortunes of this school improved year by year and, by 1980, there was talk of setting up a Matriculation Higher Secondary counterpart to the original Central Board-affiliated school. Land was allotted in Tiruvanmiyur for the new branch, and by 1988 the Sankara Matriculation School was functioning out of makeshift sheds. Over the next decade, bit by painful bit, a new set of buildings was raised – until now the school's buildings are the envy of the entire locality. The buildings in Tiruvanmiyur also house APEX, an educational project for bright young people who are taking enhanced commerce degrees by correspondence. The Sankara Schools, both the C.B.S.E. one and the Matriculation one, follow a set policy: the best possible education for the children, with nothing denied. The fees are kept moderate, and no capitation fees are accepted. For all this, the schools are self-financing, without aid from the government. Earlier, I played an active role in their management; now, Dhandapani and Kumar keep me informed about developments whenever something interesting comes up.

On his role in saving the Music Academy from a financial crisis in 1968.

I always enjoyed good music, but what with being involved in business and in sports, I had never thought of becoming a regular patron of the arts. When the Music Academy of Madras ran into financial trouble at the end of the 1960s, my friend V.D. Swami was one of the people T.T. Krishnamachari appealed to for ideas. Swami was a cheerful philistine.

"Turn the place into a cinema hall for nine months of the year," V.D. Swami said. As far as the cultural crowd in Madras was concerned, that was like asking the U.S. President to hand over the Oval Office to the Russian Premier for nine months of the year. T.T.K. was livid, and so were a lot of other people. Worried that Swami would be blamed for the collective capacity apoplexy of the Madras intelligentsia, I chipped in:

"Why don't you ask the banks to reschedule your repayments?" I had just been through three years of doing precisely this, to stave off disasters at India Cements and Chemplast.

T.T.K. turned to me as if to a deliverer, "Will you try?"

I went to the Indian Bank and, on behalf of the Academy, successfully negotiated for something they called the 'easy repayment' scheme. That year I was nominated a patron of the Music Academy, though to this day I don't know who proposed my name. (KSN was later to be a trustee as well.)



A group of major cement manufacturers of Madras with R Venkataraman, then Industries and Labour Minister, Government of Madras (at the far right). From L to R – KSN, TS Sundaram (Panyam Cements), PR Ramasubrahmaneya Rajha (Madras Cements), TS Narayanaswami and CS Loganatha Mudaliar (Travancore Cements).

On his social groups and his impromptu clubs.

I am a very clubbable man. Like other businessmen and sociable people, I joined my share of clubs: the MCC, of course, and the Gymkhana Club in 1953; the Cosmopolitan Club when India Cements moved into the *Dhun Buildings* in 1959; and the Madras Club in 1966. But the clubs that I have belonged to that have given me greatest gratification were the impromptu ones. An activity I took up would often become a nucleus around which a whole coterie would form. My passion for walking led to the Walkers Club that had dedicated early morning constitutionalists. The walkers who took frequent rests and were unashamedly garrulous during these breaks formed a sub-group that was reviled as the 'Talkers' Club.' And the gin-rummy players who made up the 'Paplu Club' – the club house being my residence – would, I am forced to admit, sell their souls for a chance to outwit each other.

The Paplu Club is open age-wise or as regards professional qualifications, but exclusive as regards

the possession of the right spirit for it. It has grown by accretion, and a curious assortment the members are: all age groups are admitted, and people from every walk of life. The rummy evenings begin with ritual precision at three o'clock on weekdays, and go on through various riotous phases, until we wind up at around eight in the evening.

On a meeting with C. Rajagopalachari: SISCO referred to here was South India Shipping Corporation, founded by T.S. Narayanaswami.

One of the most memorable of the political leaders I ever met was C. Rajagopalachari. In 1965 or so, Lord Inchcape, one of the Directors of the P & O Group, visited India in connection with SISCO, and it fell to me to take him visiting. At Rajaji's office, I made the introductions and then faded into the background, content to watch while East met West. The elder statesman had done his homework. He knew everything there was to know about the Earl of Inchcape's genealogy and personal history. After some conversation in this vein, suddenly Rajaji said, "Will you tell your young friend there something? Ask him to invest in the Swatantra Party. We are the party that takes care of the capital, though we promise no returns just yet. If he backs the Congress, he will be assured of a large interest, but he will lose his capital as surely as I am sitting here."

(Concluded)