Can we grow beyond renaming roads?

T he State Government is back to what it does best – renaming roads in the city. There is of course the other thing they do equally well – unnecessary ‘beautification’ of neighbourhoods but we will not go into that. At least not just now. Since these are times when being critical of anybody in power usually means inviting the accusation that we are in the pay of the Opposition, let us assure everyone that we were equally critical when the previous regime did the same. Overall, the road-renaming exercise is one of the most wasteful activities possible, but State Governments do not seem to think so.

It was only last week that the Chief Minister announced with much fanfare that the East Coast Road, which had been getting along very well with that name for quite some time now, will henceforth be officially known by its new name, just as Nungambakkam High Road is in reality Uthamam Gandhi Salai and Old Mahabalipuram Road is Rajiv Gandhi Expressway. No connection of any kind – just a renaming. There was a time when roads were renamed after leaders or prominent citizens who lived on them, as for instance Radhakrishnan Salai and Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy Road, but now such connections are not of any importance. Any road can be picked up at random and renamed at will, just as the previous regime suddenly changed Halls Road to Tamizh Salai.

It is not as though the late Kalaigur does not already have places named after him. KK Nagar is a vast residential area that takes his name and it has been around for several decades. For that matter, we find the same leaders being commemorated in various roads and streets repeatedly. Surely even if there was a renaming exercise it can be done with some creativity? But then it is only by continuously reinforcing a few names repeatedly can they be retained in public memory and their link to the present be reinforced.

There was a time when roads named after colonial rulers and civil servants were the first targets for renaming. There again, Madras Musings had consistently argued (not that anyone in office would heed)

Perungudi landfill fire

A harsh reminder why waste segregation at source is non-negotiable

O n a Wednesday in the last week of April, residents in and around the Perungudi dump noticed a haze of smoke enveloping their localities. It became harder to breathe and vehicles plying the Pallavaram-Thoraipakkam 200 feet radial road found themselves driving in conditions of poor visibility. It was reportedly around 12.30 pm that day when local officials noticed that a fire had broken out in the landfill at Perungudi; they put out a call for help at around 2 pm, unable to contain the flames. The fire spread across a whopping 15 acres. It would take civic personnel across the Fire and Rescue, Corporation and CMWSSB departments four days of firefighting to put it out. Residents of the city as far as Velacheri, Guindy and Taramani reported being affected by the smoke. It was also said that night herons were spotted flying away from the ecologically-sensitive Pallikaranai marshland close by. The lake adjoining the Perungudi landfill turned a bright, cotton-candy pink days after the fire, indicating the presence of cyanobacteria – an algal bloom that turns air and water toxic when present in high concentrations.

(Continued on page 2)
RENAMING ROADS?

(Continued from page 1)

leaders who contributed to it. But then our political masters have probably realised that such new areas are not news anymore and have been focusing on the older parts and making sure that they are perpetually in a state of churn. It is time that the Government (Continued from page 2)

half the garbage generated by the city on any given day is sent straight to the Perungudi dumpyard, including 2000 tons of wet waste. Inconsistently such organic refuse – food and scraps, besides wood and paper – that produce the methane gas that exacerbated the fire at Perungudi. This means that our status quo of staggering waste segregation practices only courts more landfill fires, not just at Perungudi but likely at Kodungaiyur and OMR as well. The runoff and water pollution will translate to a poorer quality of life for us and our fellow citizens. Given the risks, the resistance to change our behaviour towards waste management is nothing short of puzzling. The city’s authorities have done their best to create awareness that segregation practices were implemented in Solid Waste Management Rules in 2019, empowering the civic body to penalize residents failing to separate the waste. According to the tune of Rs. 100. Contractors were brought in to collect waste from residents’ doorsteps on the need to segregate. The conservancy workers practically sing to most citizens every morning, urging households to hand over segregated waste. Unfortunately, it has largely been in vain so far. Hopefully, the choking stench of smoke from the recent fire has had an impact in changing minds across the city. If that doesn’t work, perhaps the authorities need to consider stringent measures – for instance, many cities have civic departments that refuse to collect waste unless segregated. It may be the only way to bring about a long overdue change in our waste management practices.

Perungudi Landfill Fire

(Continued from page 1)

The cause of fire is suspected by the authorities to be a pile of discarded coconut husk, supposed to have caught fire in the summer heat. The rapid spread and ferocity of the conflagration has been attributed to a pile of non-degradable waste – including coconut husk – that refuse to collect waste unless segregated. It may be the only way to bring about a long overdue change in our waste management practices.

from what (Wo)MMOM could understand, the driver’s top peev was the lack of seating for men, which he claimed was mandated by the State Government’s waste segregation practices only courts more landfill fires, not just at Perungudi but likely at Kodungaiyur and OMR as well. The runoff and water pollution will translate to a poorer quality of life for us and our fellow citizens. Given the risks, the resistance to change our behaviour towards waste management is nothing short of puzzling. The city’s authorities have done their best to create awareness that segregation practices were implemented in Solid Waste Management Rules in 2019, empowering the civic body to penalize residents failing to separate the waste. According to the tune of Rs. 100. Contractors were brought in to collect waste from residents’ doorsteps on the need to segregate. The conservancy workers practically sing to most citizens every morning, urging households to hand over segregated waste. Unfortunately, it has largely been in vain so far. Hopefully, the choking stench of smoke from the recent fire has had an impact in changing minds across the city. If that doesn’t work, perhaps the authorities need to consider stringent measures – for instance, many cities have civic departments that refuse to collect waste unless segregated. It may be the only way to bring about a long overdue change in our waste management practices.

T he Woman from Madras Musings was whiling away a traffic jam on the Adyar bridge when a strange, strangely familiar face caught her eye. She was looking balefully at the bus in front, which appeared to be the only one to have stopped.

The driver appeared to be deeply moved by one of the arguing parties who seemed to have gotten the short end of the stick. He suddenly declared with great feeling that he too had been a victim of an earlier round of the morning bus rides himself. Intrigued by this heartfelt announcement, the driver was asked for more details. She was not disappointed – the driver had a valuable trousseau of tales and conspiracy theories, a few of which (Wo)MMOM can't help but share. The opening story was a strongly-worded complaint about the status quo of re Circling the city is to be marked by progress and growth, it is nec essary that thoroughfares in the newer parts are named after leaders who contributed to it. But then our political masters have probably realised that such new areas are not news anymore and have been focusing on the older parts and making sure that they are perpetually in a state of churn. It is time that the Government...
Bidding Adieu to Sankar

T he untimely demise of N. Sankar, Chairman of the Sanmar Group, is a great loss to the country. He was not just a successful industrialist but also one with a heart full of compassion. Madras Musings has also lost a well-wisher and patron in his exit.

Sankar was a multifaceted person involved in various activities besides his family businesses. Corporate Social Responsibility was in his blood, which made him a spontaneous and voluntary donor for all good causes. Inshort, he was an excellent human being worthy of emulation by his peers in the social sector.

Hope N. Kumar, his illustrious brother, and Vijay Sankar, his son groomed by him, will carry on the good legacy left behind by Sankar.

Tharcius S. Fernando

B y dedicating the entire issue dated May 1-15, 2022, Madras Musings has aptly paid rich and respectful tribute to its mentor par excellence and his deep involvement in various fields. Very rarely do we come across men of excellence of late Sankar’s stature. As a reader, I bow my head and pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace.

*     *     *

Price revision of LPG cylinders

T he revision in the price of domestic LPG cylinders effected on May 7, 2022 comes at a time when the common man is already saddled with the skyrocketing prices of essentials. While this has come out the late patron’s brilliance and pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace.

*     *     *

May 16-31, 2022

MADRAS MUSINGS

OUR READERS

WRITE

Transforming an eyesore of a lane

H ow do you transform a public space that stinks from cattle dung and urine and is treated as a dump by auto mechanics? Beautify it with street art and get the residents to make use of the private lane. It has worked for much of the community on Kallukaran Street, a small colony that lives alongside the ancient Sri Madhava Perumal Temple in Mylapore. “Today, our children sit outside and play games with each other, like carrom. The seniors unwind and chat in the evenings,” says resident K.R. Jambunathan, a former employee of Bank of India staff who has lived here for about 70 years.

The seed for change was sown in January this year, even as the pandemic began to wane. The civic-minded members of this colony met to bounce around a few ideas that could improve the conditions outside their homes. Some of them had read reports of people in neighbouring colonies who had painted their public walls to discourage pedestrians and others from urinating if the face of dumping waste. The group decided that art could be a solution for them, too. Says local resident Appu Jagadish, who has been a member of the Madras Artists’ Group, “I thought we could improve the conditions outside our homes by beautifying the walls.”

And so, residents pooled in money to buy paint tins and brushes. They invited adults and children to paint and draw on the wall over a weekend. This effort was repeated on the following Sundays and will continue. The drab look had waned. The civic-minded residents of this colony met to bounce around a few ideas that could improve the conditions outside their homes.

All it took was simple seating arrangements for senior citizens to step out and chat with each other. The space has come alive. “The idea of getting residents to own the place and make good use of it so that it could not be vandalised has succeeded,” says Jambunathan, who now plans to invite the Mylapore MLA to formally launch the tree-planting effort here.

If you are wondering why this community made such an effort to bring change in their lives, then we must visit the recent past and understand the condition the place was in. The rear portions of almost all the houses on Kallukaran Street face one of the walls of Sri Madhava Perumal Temple. Between the houses and the temple wall is what could be called a lane, some 12ft in width. It was cemented recently. In the past, maids working in these houses would enter the house from the rear and work there.

Since this ‘L’ shaped strip of lane was in some ways, no man’s land, encroachments took place. At one point, there were a few cattle sheds where people reared cattle, and sold the milk locally. Now, only one remains and this remains a civic bother for the colony. Others also encroached on the lane and parts of it became garbage dumps. Today, an automobile repairs shop illegally operates here.

Civic-conscious residents like Jambunathan and Appu Jagadish realised that the face of this lane were to change, it must be a transformation encouraged by their own efforts. That is how creative ideas were discussed and the wall art effort began. The art effort led to other ideas and in all, has made this public space a welcoming one. – (Courtesy: Mylapore Times.)
I got a few weeks old and I was so enthusiastic – she considered him as her own – we declared that we liked it and presented us with roses from the inn. The passages below have been inscribed in the Sri Ranganathaswami temple that is truly amazing. It makes even the imaginary appear real. The power of the mind is truly amazing. It makes even the imaginary appear real.

It was in 2004 and as my book was being published. I met Sankar in 1985 to do a feature on Chemplast. He was interested in my work and he introduced me to the Chief Photographer of The Hindu. He showed me his pictures and we decided to do a feature together. It was a learning period and he gave me a lot of freedom in doing the feature.

He turned around this sleepy village and managed to pull it off and make it a commercial success. He was a great leader and a great entrepreneur. He was a pioneer in the field of industrial alcohol and he was exposed to every problem a leader has to face.

I was pregnant in the month of Adi ((Jul/Aug). I was pregnant and was in the public eye. The educated and affluent community was very concerned about the risks they faced on a daily basis. The Government issued orders banning travel to Bangalore and Mysore – this was the only disease proper. It was always like that. My parents too feared the worst. At least three smallpox epidemics flared up around the turn of the 20th century.

The passage below has been inscribed in the Sri Ranganathaswami temple.

The peregrinating inscription of Ellis

(4) Was it not a large bungalow? Was it not necessary to maintain it as well? Then, an agadipataru means to sod to the vast compound and the nutrooms would have continued. Each morning, elderly ladies would come to collect the fallen banyan, jackfruit and peelpeers and their belongings would meet with the same result when a dead rat was found anywhere in the house.

The Government issued orders traveling to Bangalore and Mysore – this was the only disease proper. It was always like that. My parents too feared the worst. At least three smallpox epidemics flared up around the turn of the 20th century.

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Unheard Voices of Tranquebar—II

(Continued from last fortnight)

The Tranquebar Society was the third oldest of the learned European societies, east of the Cape of Good Hope. The other two were the Kon-inski, Bataviaansch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschapen established by Jacob Cornelis Matthijs Radermacher in Jakarta in 1778, and the Asiatick Society by William Jones in Calcutta in 1784.

Christoph Samuel John (1747-1813) was a German by birth and ordained as a priest in Copenhagen. He spent nearly four decades in Tranquebar.

In 1789, John argued for a botanical garden with Tranquebar’s administrators to maintain plants from all over India for medicinal and entertainment and educational space for the locals. He could establish a garden that housed medicinal plants from all over peninsular India and Dutch Ceylon (Sri Lanka). John went on to touch with William Roxburgh in Madras, for he would regularly send plants for determination and description.

John was passionate to know more of animals than of plants in and around Tranquebar. He documented his notes on animals in a professional manner.

Copiously supplemented with photographs of tombstones and obelisks in the Aatankari Street (previously Niggai, New Street) of Tranquebar, the chapter The Old Cenotaph recalls the lives and works of DNK medical doctors such as Friedrich Wilhelm Rühde, Theodor Ludvig Frederich Folli, and Samuel Benjamin Cnoll, between 1620 and 1767. Cnoll is remembered for the Laboratory Ophthalmic (pharmacy) established in 1772. The text referring to the general health of Indians in Tranquebar by Rühde (tide Clausenske Litteraturtidskab, 1813) fascinates. As an example, I will quote PSR’s words paraphrased from Rühde on German measles and malaria:

‘In temperatures ranging between 37 and 60°C, people tended to develop Rubella – German measles. After a few years, the skin (of the European settlers) became less sensitive and prone to different ailments. During periods of flooding, malaria became prevalent. Intermediate fevers were cured with quinine – however this did not seem to work with Indians. In the case of two Europeans treating with quinine was not enough: Rühde cured them with strychnine.’

The above text attracted my attention for diverse reasons. Given that foundations of immunology laid by Emil Adolf von Behring (1854-1913) through serum therapy and by Paul Ehrlich referring to ‘specialised cells of the immune system’ happened only in the later decades of the 19th century, Rühde’s use of ‘less sensitive’ struck me as prophetic, because much science has progressed to later decades to treat susceptibility, resistance, and of course, the emergence of immunology as an independent medical discipline. Rühde’s comment linking flooding with the greater incidence of malaria evoked my interest, since we know today that the mosquito, the transmitter of the pathogenic protozoan, necessarily requires water during its early development stages. The rest of the chapter refers to Rühde’s observations on various aspects of medicine: methods used by vaityans, children’s common diseases, public healthcare, daily consultations, and the medical profession. A PSR renders Rühde’s notes on leprosy:

‘Leprosy is a bigger problem in the colony. It was brought to India by the later stages of the Africans kept as slaves by the Dutch in Nagapattam.’

The leprosy (Hansen’s disease, causal agent: Mycobacterium leprae) is known in India for ages as kshtha, recorded in ancient scriptures and the later-time medical treatises. That the African-bonded labour brought to India by the Portuguese introduced leprosy into India does not sound right. Moreover, few published articles speak of African population in Pahazhurakadu, a popular port of the Coromandel Coast, when the Portuguese arrived there in the 15th century. Thought-provoking comments on diabetes mellitus (DM) occur in p. 270: ‘DM affects a lot of Indians. Because of Daniel’s Urdu influence, he, representing the Danes, mediated with Lala Sahbe, commander of Hyder Ali’s army, and prevented an attack of Tranquebar by Hyder’s army hunting in Porto Novo. In 1780 and 1781, Daniel served as a Danish emissary to Hyder in Mysore. The role played by Daniel in the political and religious life of Tranquebar cannot be gainsaid. His letters written in Tamil in 1782-1785, archived at the Rigskivet, Copenhagen vouch for his influencing role. A photo reproduction of one letter written in Tamil by Daniel is available in p. 157. Daniel’s other letters, rendered in English in p. 158-185, offer clarity on troop movements and the problems faced by ordinary people during Anglo-Mysore wars. Daniel’s letters supplied in Unheard Voices will be of great interest to many an investigator.

Botched by its unsuccessful jaunts in classical western music in Copenhagen, Thomas Christian Rask became a Danish civil servant in Tranquebar. He rose in ranks quickly as the chief financial officer. Details of his probate — a document that forms us of the lives and works of a few of his more-important colleagues — are available in chapter 13, A musician and his tragic fate.

Gowan Harrop of non-Danish lineage arrived in Tranquebar in 1774 and joined the AC. He was appointed by David Brocken, Governor in Tranquebar, as an AC-representative and agent in Porto Novo. When Porto Novo was attacked by Hyder’s troops in 1780, Gowan was captured as a hostage. At that time, Gowan transcribed his experiences (available in det Ostindiske Government: Kolonien Trankebar, Rigsarkivet, which PSR qualifies as ‘meticulous’. In pages 281-350, PSR provides us with a slightly edited, easily readable full text of Harrop’s notes – another invaluable passage.

One major strength of this book is the availability of plain-English texts of vital records made by various people involved in the AC’s administration in Tranquebar in the 17th-19th centuries. Thanks to PSR for providing us details from official documents. PSR supplemented by translating many of them from Danish into English and some of them from ‘olde’ English into modern ‘plain’ English! A glossary of Indian terms, a bibliography of primary sources, a list of archived materials from Rigsarkivet (p. 373-374), notes (p. 375-408), and an index (p. 409-415) is user-friendly. I will compliment PSR for thoughtfully including a ‘notes’ section that comprehensively explains every secondary (or primary) source and section Tranquebar — a time capsule compactly captures milestone events in Tranquebar’s history between 1618 and 1845, a diligent inclusion.

It will be impossible for me to analyze and discuss all details beautifully presented by PSR in this book. I have touched on some, as samples, especially those that appealed to me and those I thought would interest readers of this journal. On the whole, I experienced fulfilment.

This book unravels many dimensions that were new to me pertaining to a tiny segment of Tamil speaking India. I am confident that reading Unheard Voices of Tranquebar will be as much as I experienced. The University Press of Southern Denmark deserves thanks for a splendid production. This book, I am sure, will be a prized inclusion in both academic and public libraries of India.

(Concluded)
Prof. Krishnamoorthy Srinivas (1933-2017) – an eminent neurologist, brought to his practice an old world grace, charm and much empathy. We remember this true friend of Madras Musings by publishing extracts from his book – Tusitala, Celebrating the Life and Work of Prof. Krishnamoorthy Srinivas, brought out last year. Our thanks to his wife Padma for graciously giving us permission.

(Continued from MM, April Vol. XXXII No. 1, April 16, 2022)

Srinivas would drive down at a leisure pace, through empty roads, along the Marina Beach, past Queen Mary’s College, Presidency College and the Senate Hall of Madras University in his Standard Herald, with occasional glimpses through his driver’s seat window at the placid waters of the sea in low tide, shimmering in the morning sunlight. The professional work was settling to a comfortable routine. The Neurology Department at GH had recognised Srinivas’s comfort with routine. Professor of Neurology in 1976.

The Madras Institute of Neurology (MIN), a state of the art Neuroscience facility, was declared open in 1972 by his Excellency, the President of India, V.V. Giri. Srinivas was appointed Hony. Clinical Professor of Neurology in 1976. That same year, at the age of 46 years, Srinivas was elected FRCP London. As Honorary Professor, he received an honorary of Rs. 150 a month, with added clinical and teaching responsibilities, and with working hours extending from 10 am to 1 pm. But Prof. Srinivas would never leave before 3.30 pm. He was there overtime with the doors of his consulting room in GH wide open to encourage his DM Neurology students to feel free to walk in. There would be dialogue on a problem case in the ward and its ideal management. These interactive sessions allowed for development of keen individual diagnostic acumen and innovative thinking. He would encourage his students to dip into his personal collection of books and journals on his office table and even to photocopy current medical literature. This was before the era of availability of the plethora of online literature. His students respected the jealous manner in which he guarded his books, as all bibliophiles do, and conformed to the basic rules of replacing the borrowed book promptly and in good condition as examiner for several years, Prof. Srinivas was internal examiner at Madras Institute of Neurology (MIN), GH for DM Neurology and MD Psychiatry and external examiner in almost every centre for these PG degrees in the country.

Dr. Pranesh was one of his earliest DM students at MIN. He had completed his MD in General Medicine before registering for DM Neurology. Prof. Srinivas would often mention the advantage Dr. Pranesh had of seeing Neurology through the lens of a well-trained generalist. Dr. Pranesh shadowed the professor’s search for excellence in clinical practice and teaching and later even initiated the Indian chapter of the Oster Club in his city of residence and medical practice, Coimbatore.

Below are excerpts from Dr. Pranesh’s message on the occasion of Prof. Srinivas’ 70th birthday. The excerpt also echoes the sentiments of those who have had the benefit of his intensive training for the DM Neurology course at GH.

“Prof. Krishnamoorthy Srinivas is one of the outstanding Neurologists of our country. He is a gifted teacher, institution builder and a leader who leads by example. I was one of those lucky PG students who worked in his Neurology unit at GH and was fortunate to go through his collection of journals and books, during my time there.

He is a bibliophile and a true Oslerian. He has always treated his younger colleagues with kindness and understanding.”

Another DM student of Prof. Srinivas, Dr. A. Srinivasan’s message on the occasion waxes eloquent, “He is an encyclopaedia of neurological knowledge, a perpetual student, and his hard work will put many youngsters to shame. Dwarfs like us stand on the shoulders of this great giant, who helped so many of us to see further in our quest of Neurology.”

He is a noble example of days industriously spent, opportunities wisely used and talents devoted to honorable purposes. Many persons and many causes have benefited by his generosity and public spirit. Prof. Kamakshi Shanbogue was another of professor’s DM Neurology students who later took over as Professor and Head of Neurology Department MIN. She contributes the lady student’s assessment of Prof. Srinivas. Her effusive praise is superlatives, as she would have it stands testimony to the professor’s charisma. “My first meeting with Prof. Srinivas was as a DM Neuro PG (1977-1979 Batch), I was clean bowled by his personality, crystal clear memory, penchant for dates and historical events was enchanting. I still cherish wonderful memories of his early life anecdotes of Japan and of training in Britain”.

“Born of illustrious parents, he had a stamp of class. He has the power of making the most unpleasant things sound pleasant. It is the trait of not hurting anybody that makes him a cut above the rest. His clinical acumen is par excellence. He always carries several bags and pouches to work, loaded with neurological testing tools and reference material”.

To conclude, he touched nothing for he did not thirst. Srinivas was proud of his students and encouraged them in every manner and showed keen interest in their future progress in the professional field and in their family life. Many came back to meet him and joyfully relived their achievements. One such incident was when Dr. Dhanraj presented him a copy of his book M. Dhanraj Acute Cardiovascular Diseases: an Approach, Orient Black Swan (1994).

Prof. Srinivas’s spontaneous review of the book (excerpts) are as follows: “The book has been written with a view of serving as a handbook in stroke management, with special reference to the Indian context. The author, a highly qualified Indian Neurologist, has based the book on his fourteen year experience in the management of stroke, in particular, at the Madras Institute of Neurology, Government General Hospital, Chennai.”

After recommending the book as a valuable ready reckoner for stroke, he ends with “I congratulate Dr. Dhanraj on this commendable effort and I cannot help feeling a personal sense of pride in his achievement. My association with the author has been over several years, first as my student, and later as my colleague at the Institute, when I was Honorary Clinical Professor of Neurology”.

(To be continued next fortnight)
He cared deeply for the Game and the Players

The packed ballroom at the Taj Coromandel said it all. It was the perfect tribute to N. Sankar as leading industrialists and sportsperson paid glowing tributes to a man who with his generosity, dynamism and far sightedness had touched numerous lives.

As a professional sports journalist, my association with Sankar centered around sport and I found him extremely knowledgeable and always aware of the latest trends around the sporting world. Most importantly, he cared deeply for the game and the players. Cricketing legend Kapil Dev put it succinctly at the memorial function when he said "there is no Indian cricketer who has not been touched by Sankar's kindness" while highlighting his passion for cricket. Vijay Amritraj and Ramesh Krishnan too chimed in while praising Sankar's role in promoting tennis.

Sankar's love for the two sports started at an an early age when he used to play both of them. He was more proficient in tennis and Ramesh recalls playing with him at the club level when he used to play both of them. He was more proficient in tennis and Ramesh says "there is no Indian cricketer who has not been touched by Sankar's kindness”.

Sankar will be remembered most for his role in promoting the game. For all his love for tennis, Sankar will be remembered most for his role in promoting tennis. Driven by an unmatched passion for cricket, he pioneered the concept of professionally run private cricket clubs. His love affair with the sport began as a cricketer who played for Jai Hind CC in the 60s. And at a time when there was not much money in the game, Sankar’s Sanmar group ran the famous Jolly Rovers club which has been the premier institution of cricket in the city. Over the years, it has held its own against strong opponents from other states in various tournaments all over the country. That’s because the company has recruited most of the leading players. As former Indian cricketer Bharath Reddy, who heads the cricketing operations at the Sanmar group put it, "Sankar had a knack of spotting talent." Several Indian players from S. Venkataraghavan to Mi Vijay have represented the Jolly Rovers.

It was Sankar's father K.S. Naryanan who took over Jolly Rovers in 1966-67. This was around the time Sankar joined the company, and a few years ago, when the club celebrated its golden jubilee, he organised an event to honour all the past players. It was a touching gesture, but one very typical of Sankar, who always had the good of the game and the players uppermost in his mind.

The father-son duo brought the concept of outstation players figuring in the TNCA league back in the 60s and thus Jolly Rovers had in their ranks E.K. Dharmalingam and V. Balaji Rao from Services, K.R. Rajagopal and Najam Hussain from Karnataka and K.V.R. Murthy from Andhra. Many other outstation cricketers benefited from this far-sighted move.

What stood out among Sankar's qualities was his generosity. He made sure that the cricketers got the best treatment, equipment and salaries. As Reddy recalls, "When Covid was at its peak Sankar made sure that full salary was paid to the players, scorers and other support staff. He always gave a lot of importance of the welfare of the players.” Former India pace bowler L. Balaji who played for Jolly Rovers from 2000 to 2009 termed his interactions with Sankar as a great experience — “Jolly Rovers gave me the opportunity during the initial stage of my career and I am forever grateful to Sankar for that. He was someone who had a lot of passion for cricket and ensured that all possible facilities were given to the players.”

In the long run, not just Jolly Rovers but Tamil Nadu cricket benefited from his visionary moves and Sankar who was TNCA president in the early 90s can take credit for this.

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*by Partab Ramchand*