

Dr A Vijiaratnam
Engineered for Success

The biography of Dr Arumugam Vijiaratnam, Singapore's first Asian engineer, was officially launched on the 18th of July 2016 at the South Asian Diaspora Convention 2016, an event organised by the Institute of South Asian Studies and held at the Raffles City Convention Centre, Singapore.

The book, "Engineered for Success", was unveiled by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Copies of the book were then presented by Dr Vijiaratnam's family to DPM Tharman and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

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PROLOGUE

The train pulled away from all that was familiar to him. Home, the hospitals he had worked at, his friends, his children's schools and their friends. The future stretched out in a blur, like the Malayan countryside around him.

His thoughts raced in tandem with the train's wheels. He had just been made redundant. Government jobs had become scarce. He seemed to have reached the end of his career track.

With six children and another on the way, worry was his new companion. His only choice was to return to his homeland, Sri Lanka, and try to eke out a living there.

The family was travelling to Singapore, to catch the ship bound for Sri Lanka. He would have to make a new start in a place where he had never worked before. He had no choice.

Well, new beginnings were not new to him. After all, he had ventured to Malaya over twenty years ago – foreign territory to him at the time. He was barely an adult then. Yet, he had managed to acquire higher education, make something of himself and raise a family.

No doubt, he is now older, with several mouths to feed. But he had experience, qualifications and skills on his side. He took comfort in that.

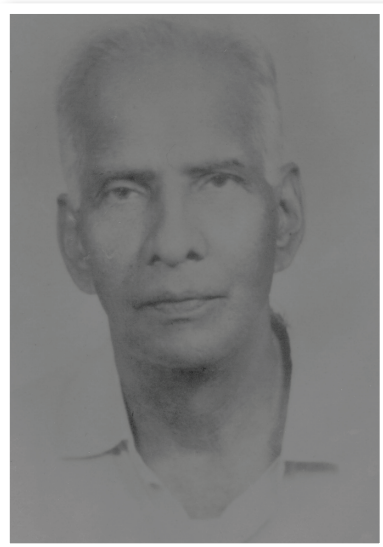
How would his children do? They have never known Sri Lanka. 'Viji', as he fondly calls Vijiaratnam, the eldest, was taking it all in with his usual calm demeanour. The boy has accepted with equanimity every move the family had made for his job, adjusting to new schools and new friends many times in his young life. He seemed equally unfazed at this latest upheaval. And he was a good role model for the rest of his siblings who followed his example. Perhaps, they will be fine after all. They have to be, there was no other choice.

He braced himself for the unknown as the city of Singapore drew in.

CHAPTER 1
FOUNDATIONS

The forerunner

In 1909, Arumugam Sinnathamby left his homeland of Sri Lanka to enrol in Malaya's King Edward VII School of Medicine. The institution was new and had been established to build up local medical expertise. Asian students were drawn from the region and Arumugam was among the hordes who had responded to the advertisements. His application had been successful.



Arumugam Sinnathamby

"There had been two types of courses. One course prepared medical assistants who would go on

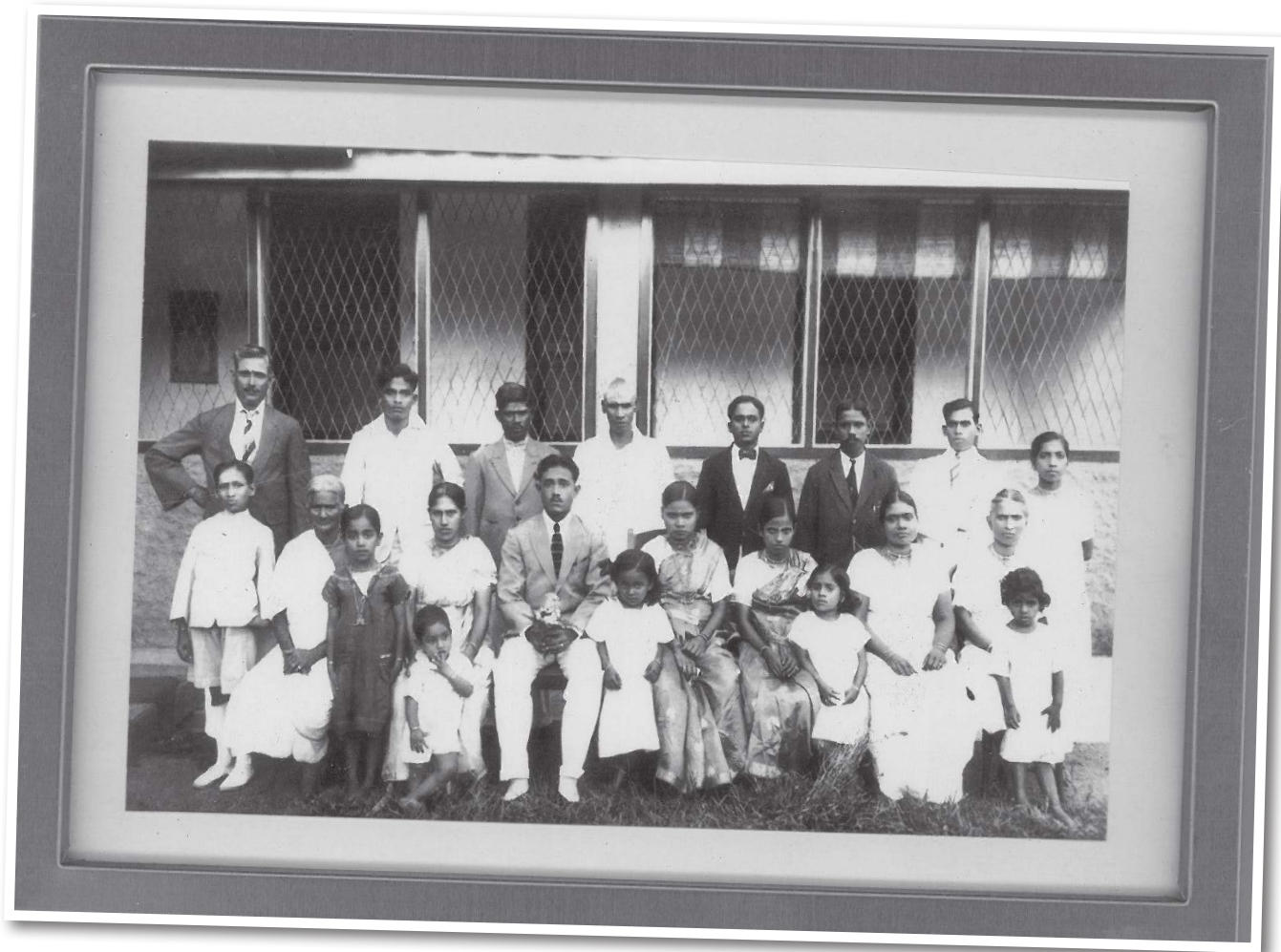
to further their education in the UK and join the medical profession. Those were the Westerners.

The other course trained hospital assistants, known as 'dressers'. These were male nurses who would go on to effectively become administrators of hospitals all over Malaya. There was a shortage of doctors in the region so the dressers would rotate their duties between several hospitals. As a result, it was left to the dressers to manage and run the hospitals left in their care, and in the absence of doctors."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

After successfully completing his course, Arumugam was posted to the north-west of Malaya, in Perak. He spent several years managing various hospitals in the area. He later married Nallamah, also of Sri Lankan descent, whose family had settled in Perak for some time.

Vijiaratnam, their eldest child, was born in 1921 in Ipoh. They had five more children during Arumugam's tenure in Perak.



Nallamah (seated second from left) on a visit to Sri Lanka prior to her marriage



Nallamah

Influences

Vijiaratnam grew up in the Malayan countryside, enjoying the carefree existence of most children in his era. He was better off than many of his peers, as his father was holding a good job. He attended the Anglo-Chinese School in Kampar and performed well academically.

Then one event became a turning point in eleven year-old Vijiaratnam's life.

"It was in 1932, and Perak won the Malaysia Cup. There was a big celebration in Perak. Everyone was so excited. There was jubilation. The players were elated.

When I saw all that, I said to myself, 'I must pick up soccer!' "

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Young Vijiaratnam developed the ambition to become a soccer player and to excel in it.

"Soccer was the cheapest game to play. You just get a ball and play.

But you have to pick up soccer when you are young. Start when your body is still flexible, not when you are old; you can do that with other games, like tennis or squash. But I have never known anyone who started soccer late and became successful."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

But it would seem that fate had other plans. Vijiaratnam's dream to one day bring glory again to Perak would have to remain a dream.

After 22 years of service, Arumugam suddenly found himself out of a job. The British government was facing a slump. It offered voluntary retirement to dressers like Arumugam, adding five more years to their pension scheme as a deal sweetener. Arumugam could do a lot worse than to accept the offer.

So he opted for early retirement and the family packed up to head for Sri Lanka. Singapore was their transit point. They would board the ship for Sri Lanka there.

Singapore

In Singapore, the family stayed in the quarters for Malayan Railways' staff. The one-room accommodation belonged to Nallamah's sister and her husband, who worked for the Railway. They opened their home to Arumugam's family and the two families were squeezed into the single room. In those days families helped each other even when they did not have much to share.

But none of that concerned Vijiaratnam. He was pursuing his passion.

The Railway quarters included a playing field. He could play his beloved soccer with the other children in the neighbourhood. He could not have asked for anything more.

But it was a different thing for Arumugam. His family's future fortunes rested heavily on his shoulders during that transit in Singapore.

As fate would have it, Arumugam managed to meet a former classmate, Mr Ponnambalam, from his days at King Edward VII College in 1906. That meeting changed everything.

"He was Chief Hospital Assistant at the Singapore General Hospital. He informed my father that there were plenty of vacancies in the British military hospitals in Singapore, for example, the one in Changi. So he convinced my father to try his chances for a job. He reminded him that with six children and my mother expecting another, starting life in Sri Lanka would be hard."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Arumugam applied for and obtained a job in Changi Hospital. His 22-year experience managing hospitals in Ipoh, Kampar, Gopeng and Taiping held him in good stead.



A. VIJIARATNAM

Viji started at the age of 10

By KEN JALLEH

IN 1937, on a playing field beside the railway track in Kampong Bahru Road, a boy of ten, sturdy and energetic, made himself the star player of a team of lads older than he and nearly twice his size. The team was the Railway Juniors, and the boy was A. Vijiaratnam, Singapore's centre-forward this season.

From the Railway Juniors to the Singapore Colony side is a long way, but Viji made it—the hard way: playing, improving and learning by stages the finer points of the game.

He started on the road to fame in 1940. Previously he had turned out for Victoria School and he counted among his school-mates many who are well known in Singapore soccer today.

At the Technical College Kuala Lumpur, he played regularly for the second team of the Tamilians' Physical Culture Association.

He came to the notice of A. L. Henry, the Selangor captain and one of the finest forwards Malaya has produced. Under his able guidance he made rapid progress and in 1943 Henry gave him his first chance of representing the T.P.C.A. senior team, then the strongest in Selangor, including in their ranks not only Henry but also Ismail, Govindasamy and other State players.

Viji was tried out in a charity game against the Malays. His performance was outstanding, and from that day Viji went from success to success.

During the Japanese occupation he was chosen for the Selangor XI and he led the attack to victory over Penang and Negri Sembilan in inter-State friendlies.

SOCCER STARS...7

When the Malaya Cup competition was revived after the liberation he became Selangor's star forward and No. 1 goalgetter. His bag last season was ten out of the 21 which Selangor registered. They comprise two each against the Combined Services, Perak and Kedah, one against Penang, one in the replay against Kedah, one in the Cup final against Negri Sembilan and the other in the Cup final replay.

Viji returned to Singapore this year and straightaway walked in to the Colony Cup side. He has scored the most goals among the civilian forwards in the S.A.F.A. Senior League and is one of the key men in Singapore's bid to recapture the Malaya Cup.

He is easily the outstanding centre-forward in the Colony today. He is brainy, speedy and has a strong kick. He is a rare opportunist, but never hesitates to pass to his colleagues if he feels they have better chances of scoring.

Twenty-six years of age and still a bachelor Viji is an all-round sportsman, excelling also in cricket, hockey and rugby, in all of which he has represented Singapore and Selangor at one time or

The beginnings of Vijiaratnam's sporting career have been well documented in various media, such as this one

Thanks to his father's new posting, Vijiaratnam and his family were able to move into their own home, a one-room flat in Kampong Bahru, specifically, Everton Park. He settled into a normal school life in Singapore. Although he had been a student at the Anglo-Chinese School in Kampar, Perak, he did not continue his education in Singapore's Anglo-Chinese School.

"Anglo-Chinese School was pretty far away from where we lived and my father didn't like the idea of my travelling so far to school every day. The closest school was Outram, so I completed my Primary Six education in Outram School."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

In 1933, Vijiaratnam topped his standard in Outram School and won a place at Raffles Institution, the premier school in Singapore, for his secondary school education. With that exciting prospect ahead of him, the family left for Changi to spend the year-end school holidays.

Changi

In the 1930s, many parts of Singapore were considered far-flung and rural, particularly because transportation to these places was not ideal. The city centre was referred to as 'Singapore' while the remote towns went by their own names. Changi, a coastal town, was one of them.

"Changi seemed miles away. There were minibuses to take us there, departing every two hours. We called them 'mosquito buses'. They were bone-shakers and it took two hours to arrive at Changi. And once you got there, you didn't feel like going back to 'Singapore'."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam's father had his own staff lodgings in Changi, very comfortable by any standards. It was a bungalow, with lush greenery and foliage all around, and not to mention the sea nearby.

“Changi Village was beautiful, like a resort. There were beaches. There were farms, where we bought everything we needed. My father’s bungalow was at Changi Point, at the water’s edge.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam and his siblings enjoyed their idyllic retreat in Changi.

Particularly significant was the fact that the family was together again. They had been apart from their father for months, as he was stationed in Changi and could not go to ‘Singapore’ to visit them, much less live with them.

Best of all, Vijiaratnam had Raffles Institution to look forward to at the end of the holidays.

Little did he know that fate had a twist for him.

CHAPTER 2
COMING OF AGE

Admission Barred

The school holidays were over, and the new school year was starting on Monday. Vijiaratnam, his siblings and mother bade farewell to his father on Sunday as they left Changi for 'Singapore'. It would be months before they were to see him again.

Vijiaratnam's consolation was the fact that he would be enrolling in Raffles Institution, which he had very much anticipated, the next day.

There was a letter waiting for him when he arrived home that evening. He opened it to find a note from Raffles Institution, requiring his presence for the school's orientation programme. However, he had missed the date; the orientation had taken place the day before, on Saturday.

The next day, he reported to Raffles Institution to begin his school year. But instead of being shown to his class, he was taken to see Mr D W McLeod, the school Principal.

"The Principal said there was no place in the school for me, because I had not reported for the orientation."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

In one fell swoop, Vijiaratnam had lost his place in Singapore's premier educational institution. It was through no fault of his. Fate had dealt him an unkind blow.

Silver Linings

Who could Vijiaratnam turn to for help? The doors of Raffles Institution were now closed to him, but he still needed to continue his education.

"In those days, parents left you pretty much to your own devices. We did our own things. So I had to find some way myself, and think what to do about my education."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam resorted to the people he knew. His maternal aunt's son, Mr Nalliah, was working as a clerical officer for the government and knew the Senior Master in Victoria School. He helped to set up an appointment for Vijiaratnam to meet the gentleman, Mr Paramjothy.

"When Mr Paramjothy looked at my report book, he saw that I had topped Outram School in primary level. He took me into Victoria immediately."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam threw himself into an active school life in Victoria School. As Raffles Institution was the only school that taught science subjects at the time, he felt disadvantaged by the absence of science subjects in his syllabus at Victoria School. Nevertheless, he worked to excel in whatever subjects he was doing.



Victoria School in the 1940s

Sportsman in the Making

Vijiaratnam's school days fell into an enjoyable pattern.

"We had single session schools in those days. So we studied from 7.30 am until 1 pm, then we'd have lunch in the tuckshop, do our homework after that, and then we'd play games from about 4 pm to 6 pm."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

It was on the playing fields that Vijiaratnam truly came into his own. He excelled at soccer, and one thing led to another.

"Whenever I played, I always said 'I must do the best I can'. I would go to the ultimate, to reach the pinnacle in whatever I was doing. It's the same for my studies too. So I played hard."

When you're a sportsman, the teachers would be watching you as you play. If you're good, they would suggest that you play other games as well."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

So Vijiaratnam ended up playing for Victoria School's hockey, rugby and cricket teams as well. The matches took place according to their respective seasons and Vijiaratnam was fully immersed in all of them throughout the year, representing his school against the other schools.

"St Andrews School was good in rugby, and Raffles Institution was good in soccer. So they were the schools we all wanted to beat in those games."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

But it was not always competition between the schools. There were moments of camaraderie too. Cricket would bring the schools together; St Andrews, St Josephs, Victoria School and Raffles Institution would combine

to form a team and play against the Clubs. It was the only game where the schoolboys would play against Club members, whereas all other games were strictly played between schools only.

Training for four sports ought to have been tough, but not for Vijiaratnam.

"It's not hard when you have passion. Whenever I had a chance, I played sports. And soccer was my favourite. I love soccer the most because it's popular with the people – everyone understands it".

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam graduated from Victoria School in 1939 at age 18.

"My father could not afford to send me to the University, so I needed to get a job."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

So gone were the structured days and predictable patterns. He had to make a living now.

Pivotal Event

Vijiaratnam already had a career in mind. He had his heart set on being an engineer. He had been harbouring that ambition for a few years.

"I used to visit my cousin, Mr Nalliah who was working in the Public Works Department (PWD). There, I would see many Westerners buzzing about all over the place. 'Who are these chaps?' I asked my cousin one day. 'They are engineers,' he told me. All the engineers were Caucasians, expatriates who had qualified either in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. There was not a single Asian engineer in those days.

'Why aren't there Asian engineers?' I asked. My cousin told me it would be very expensive to acquire the qualification in any of those countries.

'Why can't an Asian be an engineer?' I said to myself. Then and there I decided to become an engineer, the first Asian engineer in Singapore."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam would need a lot of money to study engineering, and especially to go overseas. He could only afford the education through a scholarship. On top of that, he needed to make up for the gaps in his education; he would have to study Physics and other science subjects that Victoria School had not provided him.

At this rate, how would he ever achieve his ambition?

CHAPTER 3

FOCUS

First Step

Vijiaratnam's cousin, Mr Nalliah, informed him that the Public Works Department awarded scholarships to study at the Kuala Lumpur Technical College (KLTC), a training ground for technical staff and land surveyors. It was a possible stepping stone to becoming an engineer. But competition was tough; there would be only two scholarship recipients a year.

Vijiaratnam was undaunted, he was determined to shoot for the scholarship. He had to be patient though, and wait for the next round of applications in a year's time.

But waiting was not going to be easy. He could not even attempt to work for the well-paying civil service in the meantime.

"Back then, if you were to resign from the civil service, they would never hire you again. So if I wanted to get a Public Works Department scholarship and work for them after that, I couldn't take up a civil service job first and then resign to do my engineering course. I could never go back and work for them after that."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Not one to while his time away, Vijiaratnam enrolled in Raffles Institution's commercial classes to learn typewriting, bookkeeping and shorthand. After six months, he managed to get a job as temporary clerk with the Commissioner of Estate Duties. But this full time job did not allow him to attend the whole-day commercial classes in Raffles Institution. The YMCA, however, was conducting part-time commercial classes at night. Vijiaratnam's only option was to drop out of Raffles Institution and switch to the YMCA's commercial course. He did so and eventually sat for and passed the London Chamber of Commerce examinations.

Thus, by keeping himself busy, the one year sped by and the time to apply for the scholarship to KLTC came around. With high hopes and full confidence, Vijiaratnam applied.

His feelings were not misplaced. He clinched one out of the two available places. Ironically, the other spot went to a graduate from Raffles Institution.

"My academic qualifications could not match the Raffles Institution student. He was much more accomplished in studies. But fortunately, I had my games record, and the British favoured that kind of thing."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

It would seem that the stars were finally shining for Vijiaratnam. He made tracks for KLTC. He was returning to the familiar Malayan countryside that had nurtured and moulded his childhood.

But even as Vijiaratnam threw himself into the course that he had pursued with such determination, winds of change were blowing his way.

They had the potential to blow him off course.

World War 2

During Vijiaratnam's first year in the KLTC, the Japanese invaded Malaya. World War 2 had come to Malayan shores. The British government was ousted by the Japanese.



Archive photo of the Japanese invasion of Singapore, in their famous stealth mode on bicycles

Initially, the local people looked forward to working shoulder to shoulder with their 'Asian emancipators', as the Japanese had styled themselves.

"Before the War, I used to see Japanese people in Singapore. They were mostly dentists, and some of them also worked in or ran department stores. My family dentist was a Japanese gentleman. They were well-dressed and well-mannered people. So when the Japanese soldiers came in, we welcomed them with open arms, saying they were wonderful chaps, thinking they shared the same character as the Japanese people we knew.

We were in for a shock. The leading contingent – the fighting contingent – were rough and tough men. They were completely different. They rounded up many Chinese, chopped off their heads and displayed them on poles at roundabouts.

As it turned out, the Japanese who had worked in the department stores and elsewhere previously were actually spies – Majors and Lieutenants in plainclothes. After the invasion, they donned their uniforms and showed their true colours.

We were terrorised, because if anyone hit out at the Japanese, they would collect everyone in the area and punish all the innocent people – because the culprit would likely have run off long before that.

But one thing's for sure, people were so afraid that there were no robberies or murder.

So instead of being our saviours, they were worse than the British. The British were angels by comparison. "

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

KLTC was closed down. Vijiaratnam returned to Singapore and the PWD. However, the Japanese took over the PWD and reopened the KLTC. So Vijiaratnam ended up retracing his steps to Kuala Lumpur to pick up where he had left off. He found that nothing much had changed at the KLTC. The same teachers were teaching the same courses, as before. Only the Principal had been replaced by a Japanese.

He finished his course in 1944, and was one of four students who obtained First Class distinctions. He was ready to start work with the PWD under the Japanese. But he had a handicap.

"They found that my Japanese was not good at all. I only knew a few words. So they sent me for training in Malacca, along with the other Singaporean scholars."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The training was hardly an academic course. It was more akin to military training. Conducted only in Japanese or Malay – English was not allowed to be spoken – the sessions comprised Kendo, Sumo, artillery and other physical exercises, such as, cross-country runs. Thanks to his physical conditioning from sports, Vijiaratnam did not do too badly under the strenuous regime. He won one of the top three prizes at the end of the course.

But initially, he was taken aback when the Japanese shaved his head at the start of the course.

"We asked them why we needed to be shaved bald. They said, 'As the hair grows, your Japanese proficiency will also grow!'"

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam learnt that he and his course mates would be used to teach other civil servants Japanese. They were to do it in the course of their work. He was assigned to the PWD in Taiping for the construction of roads and maintenance of old buildings, etc. But it was hardly a hardship tour.

"Taiping was like a holiday. No strain at all. We were all young bachelors, staying together in one long house with many rooms. Our salary was not much but we capitalised on the black market for cigarettes. We would queue up for a carton, and could sell it for double the salary we received as technical officers."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

It would appear that lady luck was finally smiling down on Vijiaratnam at what could have been a time of great suffering and privation, as it had been for countless others in Malaya and Singapore.

But where was it all going to lead to? Would the war end?



Vijiartnam (back, third from right) with his KLTC course mates

CHAPTER 4
BACK ON TRACK

Pax Britannica

On 12 September 1945, the Japanese surrendered to the British in Singapore. The war was over and the Japanese were marched out of Singapore.

In many ways, things went back to as they had been before; maybe too much like before.

Vijiaratnam found that his entire course work at the KLTC under the Japanese amounted to nothing. He learnt that at age 24, he was no better off than he had been at 18.

"The British did not recognise our KLTC qualifications given by the Japanese. We argued that the course had run the same way the British would have done it. But they said that since the Principal had been Japanese, it didn't count. So we had to do the course all over again."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

He was back at square one.

Determined to become an engineer at all costs, Vijiaratnam made tracks for KLTC for the third time. The road was smoothened by one concession the British had made. Although his class would graduate in 1948, they received three years' worth of back pay from the

British, as though they had graduated under the British in 1944. Vijiaratnam received \$4 000 in all. It was sweet consolation, indeed, and he invested the money wisely.

"I thought there was no point in putting the money in a bank. So I bought some land in Lorong H, Telok Kurau, Singapore. The land cost fifty cents per square foot. I was able to sell it years later to educate my youngest brother, Nadarajah (Appu), when he went to study engineering in Australia and then moved to study in the United Kingdom within a year."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Events that transpired during the Japanese Occupation had taught Vijiaratnam something about the value of investing in property.



Nadarajah Arumugam (front), Vijiaratnam's youngest brother

"During the Japanese Occupation, they had allowed us to withdraw no more than \$100 from the bank each month. As a result, we hardly touched our money and did not end up exchanging it for Japanese currency, which became worthless after the war. A lot of people lost their fortunes because they withdrew money and exchanged it for Japanese currency, which the British didn't recognise after the war. But people who benefitted were those who bought land during the Occupation with whatever money they had, British or Japanese currency. The British recognised land titles given by the Japanese."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

In 1948, Vijiaratnam graduated with a Class 1 Diploma from KLTC.

But that was not all. In his final year at KLTC, he had also concurrently sat for external examinations by Britain's esteemed Institution of Structural Engineers (ISE). It was either that, or clear examinations by another equally distinguished British establishment, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). He had chosen to do the former.

Qualifying for the ISE examinations had its share of challenges. But he managed to overcome them, yet again, in his signature fashion.



In due course, Vijiaratnam established a long and distinguished association with the Institution of Structural Engineers

The Institution of Structural Engineers

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40/CORP/0134941

22 January 1996

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Dear Dr Vijiaratnam,

On behalf of the Council and personally, I write to congratulate you on the completion of forty years' corporate membership of this Institution, during 1995.

The completion of forty years' association with any organisation is something worth recalling. It is therefore with pleasure that I take this opportunity to write to you to congratulate you as well as to wish you many more years of association with this Institution.

In writing this letter to you, I have to advise you that you are one of only 120 members who achieved this milestone in 1995. No doubt you will be able to recall a number of memorable events during your long career and in the profession, all of which I trust are brought back happily to you in receiving this letter.

With all best wishes for 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Simpson

Brian Simpson
President



Vijiaratnam playing host as President of ISE

*The Institution of Structural Engineers' recognition of Vijiaratnam's
dedicated membership for forty years*

“When applying to sit for the external examinations, I had to put forward two sponsors. I had none, so I asked the ISE if they could provide me with the two sponsors. As it turned out, they actually got two British chaps who did it willingly, simply on the basis that I was studying at the KLTC at the time”.

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Needless to say, Vijiaratnam sailed through his examinations.

Budding Sports Star

In pursuing his burning ambition to become an engineer, Vijiaratnam’s passion for sports never waned.

As it had done in his childhood, Malaya once again fed and nurtured his love for soccer. He played for the Tamil Physical Cultural Association (TPCA) in Kuala Lumpur. Vijiaratnam was pleased to share colours with A L Henry, arguably Malaya’s best soccer player of the time, who was also playing for the club. It was an exhilarating experience for Vijiaratnam.

“We played together and won most of the championship cups for that season; the League Cup, the Football Association Cup, you name it. That is my fondest memory, winning three major championships in the same year. And soccer is my favourite game.

I also played hockey and rugger when I was in KLTC. I couldn’t afford to play cricket because it’s such a long game and would take up too much of my time, then I wouldn’t have been able to study.

There were no coaches in those days, people like the legendary Choo Seng Quee were not around – in fact, he was just starting out. We trained among ourselves and decided on the game strategies ourselves. We worked together as a team, so we knew what to do. There was no one leading you from the sidelines. You just went in and did what you do best, to the best that you could. All the shouting from the sidelines came from the crowd. And the crowds always came. Every game I played was to full stadiums.

There was no money involved. We played because we really loved the game. Everyone played for love, not for money.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Saturday, Sept. 11, 19 48



S. MUSTAPHA

MALAYA CUP SOCCER FINAL TODAY

NEGRI SEMBILAN ARE FAVOURITES TO WIN TROPHY FOR 1st TIME

(From Our Own Correspondent)

SEREMBAN.—All roads lead to Seremban today where the first post-war Malaya Cup soccer final will be played for the first time in the history of the competition started 27 years ago. The finalists are Negri Sembilan and Selangor. The venue is the Stadion Padang — a ground which has been praised by the Islington Corinthians who played here before the war and other visiting teams.

For Negri this is the first final and for Selangor it is beyond recall. Before commenting on their chances here are their records this season:

Negri beat Malacca 2-1, Johore 3-2, Singapore 2-1, R.A.F. 3-1 and Army/RN 4-2.

Selangor beat Perak 4-2, Pahang 2-0, Kedah 5-2, Kedah (replay) 2-1, draw with Combined Services 3-3 and lost to Penang 2-3.

From the above and from the table below Negri has therefore the more impressive record of the two. One must also remember the fact that the Southern opposition is undoubtedly stronger than the North.

Negri has so far maintained an unbeaten record in the Selangor even since the final only after a replay with Ipoh.

Both teams have gone into the final (training for the past month) and the coaches of both teams expect their units — men have never been better.

A thrilling game is anticipated with the odds favouring the home side because they are playing on their home ground and because they are determined to maintain their 100 per cent record.

The wisdom of the local crowd will be with them. They and his men who will go all out to achieve what their predecessors have been vainly attempting to do for the past 27 years—the winning of the coveted Malaya Cup.

Today's game will be broadcast by Radio Malaya. Kuala Lumpur, starting at 4.40 pm, the commentary may be heard on the 49 and 106 metres.

Malaya Cup Tables

NORTH

	P	W	D	L	P	A	Pts
Selangor	5	3	1	1	16	10	7
Kedah	5	3	1	1	7	5	7
Perak	5	2	2	1	7	6	6
Penang	5	2	0	3	8	10	6
Perak	5	2	0	3	8	7	4
Pahang	5	0	3	2	1	9	6

SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	P	A	Pts
Negri Sembilan	5	3	0	2	14	7	10
Singapore	5	2	2	1	11	6	6
Johore	5	2	2	1	9	6	6
R.A.F.	5	1	2	2	15	14	4
Malacca	5	1	1	3	8	14	2
Zulu/RN	5	0	1	4	8	10	2

REPLAY

Selangor beat Kelantan 2-1.



COUNTERVAIL



KIM HOI



MITCHELL



KIM SENG



HONG CHEANG



DUTTON



SHARIFF



ISMAL



YHERATNAM



BIN KING

Who's Who In The Selangor Team



HENRY

G. CORINTHIANS (Challenger)

A well known club from the main town. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

KAM HOI (right back)—A veteran

player, secured from centre-half position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back.

MITCHELL (left back)—Companionship

in defence. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

KIM SENG (right half)—A veteran

player. Has travelled extensively with the team. Has acquired position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back.

HONG CHEANG (centre half)—A

player. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

DUTTON (left half)—A player of the

team. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

HENRY (left inside)—Has played

for Selangor for more than 10 years. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

BIN KING (right wing)—A trickster

and makes excellent centre. Is also a state cricketer.

Who's Who In The Negri Team



SOON TECK

SHEIKH MUSTAPHA (goalkeeper)—

Has played for Negri for more than 10 years. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

TAN KEE FAH (right half)—A

player. Has travelled extensively with the team. Has acquired position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back.

CHONG KOK HING (left back)—

A player of the team. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

NG KOK THONG (right half)—A

player. Has travelled extensively with the team. Has acquired position to full-back. Has acquired position to full-back.

CHONG YONG CHONG (centre

half)—Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.

LT. WHITEHEAD (left half)—

A player of the team. Has proved an outstanding success. Has good anticipation and handles well. Very cool under pressure.



K. L. DIV. I SOCCER

Vijeratnam Scores Twice For Tamilians

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept. 2.—After holding the T.P.C.A. to a goalless draw in the first half, the Selangor Indians were unlucky to lose by two goals to nil, in a first division League soccer match on the Princes Road ground this evening.

The game on the whole was exciting, despite the Indians missing many fine opportunities to score because of too much dribbling by their forwards.

Outstanding on the field were the goalkeepers of both sides, especially Paul of the T.P.C.A. who made many fine saves and was in fact responsible for his side winning the game. Another prominent player on the field was the T.P.C.A. left-winger, Dassa, who fed his forwards splendidly, and his passes were accurate.

The Indians, on the other hand, played quite well too, but they mis-

sed many fine opportunities to score right in front of their opponents' goal.

The game in the first half was even, both sides having equal amount of the exchanges. Soon after the start, Vijeratnam, the T.P.C.A. centre-forward, off a pass from Ismail, sent in a powerful shot, but the ball missed the goal and went over the bar. Soon after this, the Indian right wing, Eric, missed a sitter right in front of the T.P.C.A. goal, off a pass from the right wing. The Indians made many more attacks, but found Paul in the goal impenetrable.

Half-way in the second half, Vijeratnam the T.P.C.A. centre-forward, off a pass from Dassa, netted the first goal. He, in fact, tipped the ball into goal from an angle a few yards from the goal. Few minutes before the end, Vijeratnam again off a pass from Dassa scored the second and last goal.

The teams were:—T.P.C.A.:—Paul, Mitchell, Kanagaratnam, Muniandy, Venupillai, Vijendram, Dassa, Henry, Vijeratnam, Ismail, Benjamin.

INDIANS:—Albert, Xavier, Alaga Sundram, Santhanasamy, Ramasamy, Seladurai, Eric Louis, Nathan, Nadarajah, Jerome, Venugopal.



VIJERATNAM SCORES 4 GOALS IN A ROW

EU LEES TROUNCED BY TPCA

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12.—Playing on a slippery ground this evening, after a shower in the afternoon, Eu Lee XI suffered defeat at the hands of the T.P.C.A. when they lost by six goals to none on the latter's ground. Both teams were making their debut in this season's first division league.

Dull and disappointing, the game was not even interspersed with bright patches of individual efforts, though Vijeratnam, the Tamilian centre-forward, was responsible for four of the six goals, including a hat-trick.

The Tamilians had extremely easy passage over their opponents and could have won by a bigger margin had they wanted to. But they too played a listless game, missing several pot shots as a result of taking it easy.

The Eu Lees were overwhelmed right from the start though they put up a good fight initially. However, as soon as the Tamilians scored their first goal their confidence simply ebbed away and they allowed their opponents to play havoc all over their territory.

Displaying superior tactics the Tamilians opened accounts through Vijeratnam following a header. Maintaining their pressure, Henry soon followed down the field and cut through the defence to pass to Vijeratnam who took his time to score the second goal. Quick on the move again the Tamilians increased their score through Vijeratnam thereby enabling him to complete his hat-trick.

When the game was resumed the Eu Lees seemed never able to recover from the effects of the first half. Their passing was erratic, ball control poor and their general play was again never impressive so much so that Vijeratnam once more took the initiative and scored the fourth goal for his side.

The Eu Lees made several efforts to score but poor finishing and dribbling robbed them of their chances.

Henry soon converted the fifth goal, and Ismail, following a miss by the goalie Tuan Tye in handling a hard-angled drive from Benjamin, outside-left, tapped in the sixth goal.

Last minute attempts by the Eu Lees to reduce the deficit proved fruitless.

Mr. Bonnie de Souza refereed the game and the teams were:

T.P.C.A.:—V. Munianandy; Maniam, Mitchell, Durairaj, Velupillai, Dutton, Nadarajah, Ismail, Vijeratnam, Henry and Benjamin.

EU LEE:—Tuan Tye; Eyon Choy, Syed, Mat, Tock Soon, Maniandy; Ismail, Razali, Jahn Mohamed, Aziz and Narayanan.

Selangor Win By Only Goal

From Our Staff Correspondent

KUALA LUMPUR, Monday. VIJERATNAM, leading the attack, scored the winning goal for the Selangor hockey team against Johore this evening, the match producing a high standard despite slippery, difficult conditions. Johore gave Selangor one of their toughest fights of the week-end series, scoring chiefly in defence which, helped a little by the ground conditions, nevertheless was steady and always ready.

Vijeratnam, given few of his through passes that are offside, scored his goal ten minutes after the resumption. He burst away suddenly by bursting away suddenly with a pass from Tajuddin. Dr. Hu, the Johore goalkeeper, stopped Vijeratnam's first hit, but the ball spun away and the centre-forward was on to it again in a flash for a sure goal. In the second half Selangor enjoyed territorial superiority but slipped up in front of goal. Vijeratnam's goal, but spilt into Johore's attack but spilt determined were the Selangor attackers and slowly but surely Johore were forced back on to the defensive.

The first half saw Selangor doing most of the attacking. Razali and Tajuddin, distributing passes beautifully without getting them past the Johore backs, Retnasingam and Moore.

On too many occasions also, the Selangor forwards ran attacking strongly.

The game ended with Selangor attacking strongly. Messrs Morrison and R. van Schoonebeck umpired. Teams were: Selangor: Kam Thong, A. Kori-meyer, Vias, Dollah, Velupillai, Sing Chuan, M. Danker, Tajuddin, Vijeratnam, Razali, Xzel-man.

Johore: Dr. Hu; Retnasingam, Moore, Holt, Dr. D'Drus, P. Carvalho, Mahmud bin Mahat, Abdul Razak, Stanley, Carson, George Komatt.

Vijeratnam Scores Three Goals In A Row vs Malays

KUALA LUMPUR, June 11.— After holding the T.P.C.A. to a goalless draw in the first half, the Selangor Malays went down badly in the second half to lose 3—0 in the first division League soccer match on the Princes Road ground, this evening.

Vijeratnam, the season's goal-getter, was in top form this evening, performing a hat-trick.

By virtue of this evening's win, the Tamilians have gone up to the top of the League table, having won six games in succession.

The Tamilians were in control of the play for the major part of the game. Ghani, the Malay custodian, played a brilliant game, and was in fact responsible for preventing his side from a bigger defeat.

The defenders of both teams were outstanding, especially Mitchell, Dorairaj, Othman and Dollah. Nadarajah played well today and it was he who gave Vijeratnam the openings to score the three goals in a row.

During the early stages of the game, the Tamilian forwards gave a good display of short passing, but they found Othman and Dollah in the defence hard to beat. The Malays, in fact, should have opened the score in the 15th minute of the game, but Yusof

failed to convert a sitter off a fine pass from Sharif. Except for a few occasions when the Tamilians came near scoring, the first session ended in a goalless draw.

Five minutes after the resumption the Tamilians opened the score through Vijeratnam off a pass from Nadarajah. After this goal, Ghani, the Malay custodian, was tested on several occasions, before two more goals were scored.

Midway in this half Vijeratnam increased the score for the Tamilians with a fine header off a pass from Nadarajah again.

Three minutes before the final whistle, Vijeratnam completed the hat-trick when Nadarajah lobbed the ball to him, and he in turn put in an easy goal.

Mr. Bonnie D'Souza, refereed the game and the teams lined out as follows:—

T.P.C.A.: Muniandy, Amin, Mitchell, Perumal, Velupillai, Dorairaj, Nadarajah, Ismail, Vijeratnam, Henry and Balasingam.

Malays: Ghani, Majid, Othman, Tajuddin, Sukor, Dollah, Sharif, Mohd Tasman, Mansor, Yusof and Yunus.

These were not mere part-time pursuits for Vijiaratnam. He represented Selangor in 1947 and 1948 for soccer, and wore Selangor colours for hockey as well. There were also international games, for example, he represented Selangor against Shanghai. He even played against a team from India. As always, the spectators were unreserved in their support for the local team.

"The Indian players were barefoot. So the Malayan crowds started throwing glass on the field!"

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

National Colours

Vijiaratnam returned to Singapore in 1948 after his course in KLTC and continued his sporting streak. So what had been Selangor's loss became Singapore's gain.

"A lot of teams in Singapore invited me to play for them, because I had been the highest scorer for my games in northern Malaya. That's not because I was wonderful, it was simply that we didn't have roaming centre-fields in those days. So you stayed where you were, and were fed the ball, and you scored."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

He first played soccer for an Indian team after his return to Singapore.

"Soccer teams of the time were mostly formed along racial lines. So it would be churlish, even unpatriotic, of me to refuse when the Indian team invited me to join them (even though I was of Sri Lankan descent). Even Choo Seng Quee had started out with the Singapore Chinese Football Association and later started the Chinese Athletic Association. But the Indian team didn't do too well, and after it folded, the Rovers grabbed me. That was a very good team, and I enjoyed playing for them."

As you played for the Clubs, people from the Football Association of Singapore would watch you. If they liked what they saw, they will invite you to a meeting. That's how I received an invitation from them one day and when I turned up, they said, 'You're chosen to play for Singapore.' You felt very proud when they told you that. That's how you're chosen for the national team."

And I was the first Indian picked to play for the Singapore team. It was only after me that there were Indians in the team."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

CHANCES BRIGHTER, SAY ROVERS



A VIJIARATNAM
Selangor's loss, Singapore's gain.

Vijiaratnam a great asset

By CRUSADER
ROVERS Sports Club, last season's First Division champions in the Singapore Amateur Football Association League, are confident of again doing well this year.

"We have a stronger team than last year," said an official of the Club yesterday, "and it is gratifying to note that they are settling down satisfactorily and are combining better with each game."

He added: "We think our prospects of repeating last year's success are very bright."

Biggest asset to the Rovers and the best acquisition for Singapore soccer this season is without question A. Vijiaratnam, the former Selangor centre-forward.

He is a great opportunist. In the Malaya Cup final last year he scored one of the two goals which forced a replay with Negri Sembilan. He was responsible for Selangor's solitary goal in the replay, which Negri won 2-1.

On Monday Vijiaratnam struck his best form. Although tenaciously marked, he managed to elude the Tamils' defence many times. He struck up an effective combination with Chia Boon Leong in the second half which produced a goal. He himself scored twice in characteristic style.

Other Acquisitions

If he maintains his form Vijiaratnam will be the leading contender for the centre-forward position in the Singapore team. It is not every day we get a front-line man with such opportunism and shooting ability as he possesses.

Vijiaratnam is an old member of Rovers for whom he played before going unopposed. Another acquisition for the Div. 1 champions this season is Lian Sin, who played last year for the Amicable Athletic Association.

The three A's are not finding it easy and their players are turning out for other clubs, most of them for Chinese Clubs.

On Monday Rovers tried out a new right-half, Morton.

He is the first European to represent the Club.

Last year Morton was with the Singapore Harbour Board Police team. He played for the Scottish A.F.C. in Glasgow before coming out shortly after the liberation.

Morton gave quite an impressive display against Tamil Brotherhood Association and will probably be retained for future games.

Promotion Justified

The other members of the Rovers side need no introduction. Teow Keng was with the Club's second team last season. He is a promising winger and fully justified his promotion in the two League matches in which Rovers have figured.

He takes the place of Gan Koo Seng, a Malaya Cup veteran and one of the best left-wingers the Colony has ever had.

"I'm standing by in order to give younger players a chance," Koo Seng told me yesterday. He has not actually retired, but will be available if his services are required.

Great things are expected of Chia Boon Leong this season. He has not been quite his old self ever since his return from the Olympic Games, but appears to be gradually regaining his former form.

A tricky player, Boon Leong is inclined to over-drive. If he keeps up the game and works up combination with his colleagues

Rovers checked for 20 minutes

By CRUSADER.
ROVERS Sports Club.....4; Tamils.....0.
Association in their S.A.F.A. Senior League fixture yesterday yesterday pleased their supporters immensely, but for more than 20 minutes their effort failed.

Although they have now piled up eight goals in two matches, the 1948 Div. 1 champions must show further improvement if they are to repeat their feat of last season.

The opposition yesterday was poor, and against the stronger teams Rovers cannot hope to be as successful as they have been so far.

Most pleasing feature of their play yesterday, however, was the excellent showing of A. Vijiaratnam, the former Selangor State centre-forward.

He was carefully marked but managed to notch two goals in the last eight minutes of the first half to give his side the inspiration it needed.

The Rovers broke through at regular intervals in the first half. The Tamils were unable to stop the Rovers' attack on the right flank and in the last five minutes of the first half to give his side the inspiration it needed.

Except for a dangerous free-kick taken by Voo, the Tamils never looked like being able to score.

Vijiaratnam first ran wide then struck at the goalkeeper, and was again off the mark, but in the 22nd minute a fine cross passing between him and Lene Joo resulted in the Rovers' centre-forward getting the first goal with a rising shot.

Vijiaratnam nearly increased the lead four minutes later, when a tricky grounder was passed on for a corner by Supplah. Sin then headed wide, but a minute before the interval Vijiaratnam went up to a through pass by Boon Leong to beat Supplah with a left-foot drive.

The pace slackened noticeably in the second half. Boon Leong, who was playing better at this stage than he did in the first, seemed combined nicely with Vijiaratnam.



A. Vijiaratnam, former Selangor centre-forward, gave yesterday's S.A.F.A. Senior League match between Rovers and Tamil Brotherhood Association. Picture shows him taking a shot at the goal by inches. Rovers won easily by four goals to nil.—Free Press picture.

A pretty movement between them ended in Boon Leong putting the Rovers three up in the second minute after the resumption.

Quite justifiably, the League champions thought the points were safe in their possession, on they took advantage of this to launch a strong raid, but Ponnusamy lost a fine chance when he shot wide from close range.

Boon Leong next had the mortifying post and rebound against the Rovers' upright, but the ball did not enter the net.

Last Goal

In the 18th minute Teow Keng ran up to one of Boon Leong's through passes and cross-kicked with his left foot to notch the fourth and last goal for the Rovers.

Towards the end Boon Leong looked like scoring again, but Supplah, who worked very hard all times, managed to have a certain-ty goal by deflecting the ball out-wards.

Mr. J. G. Cameron referred. Rovers: Eng Hoe; Sabapathy; John Hon; Mervin K. Lenn; Leugen; Kwang Leong; Lian Sin; Leng Hoo; A. Vijiaratnam; Chia Boon Leong; Teow Keng.

Tamils: K. Supplah; S. R. S. Naidu; K. Thambiraj; S. Mohandee; Manganu; S. Veni; A. Ponnusamy; A. K. Karupiah; Parakkasam; Nadarajah; K. J. Omenan.

Vijiaratnam Hurt, To Miss Key Game

From Our Own Correspondent

JOHORE BAHRU, Thursday.

STAR Singapore civilian centre-forward, A. Vijiaratnam, was injured in a Malayan inter-P.W.D. soccer competition tie here today and will be out of the game for at least one week.

This means that he will have to miss the key S.A.F.A. Senior League tie between his club, Rovers, and Kota Raja, on Apr. 6.

Vijiaratnam was playing yesterday for the Singapore P.W.D. and scored the first goal of the game after working his way neatly through a crowded defence.

Minutes later Vijiaratnam was going through again when he was charged heavily and received a painful injury just above the knee.

Vijiaratnam had to retire. He returned after half-time but was a passenger as he was unable to run.

Fell To Pieces

After the mishap to Vijiaratnam, the Singapore P.W.D., who had started in a manner which suggested they would run away with the game, fell to pieces and Johore ran out winners by three goals to one.

Abu Bakar, heading through a fine centre from Hassan, got the equaliser.

Hassan also provided the background to the second goal. Rangayah, the Singapore P.W.D. goalkeeper, failed to punch clear a cross pass from Hassan and Sallehudin stepped in to score.

The final goal came off the boot of veteran Johnson, who capped a fine afternoon's work by lobbing the ball from far out beyond the goalkeeper's reach.

ROVERS ROUT REME, SET UP RECORDS

Quickest Goal & Highest Score



VIJARATNAM, Rovers' crack centre-forward, clashes with a R.E.M.E. defender during yesterday's S.A.F.A. Senior league game at Jalan Besar. Viyaratnam scored three goals.—Straits Times picture.



A ROVERS' forward shoots for goal during yesterday's S.A.F.A. Senior league game in which Rovers beat R.E. seven-to-one to register the biggest score of the season.—Straits Times picture.

Rovers Sports Club.....7 R.E.M.E.....0.
TWO records for the season were created at Jalan Besar Stadium yesterday. Opposed to R.E.M.E. in a S.A.F.A. Senior League fixture, Rovers Sports Club notched the first goal within eight seconds of the kick-off and then went on to add six more. This is the highest score and the quickest goal so far. R.E.M.E. were unable to score.

Rovers are in the lead with full points from three games and a fine goal average of 15 against one Viyaratnam, who is steadily reaching top form, scored three goals to bring his tally in three games to six.

Chuan, Seia's opportunist, is a close second with five goals from only two outings. Viyaratnam looks a bit on the slow side but actually it is his coolness that makes him so good. He is one of the most, if not the most, of the forwards among the civilian teams today. He disposes the ball without a thought for personal achievement.

Boon Leong is a long way behind his best form. Although he scored twice—one of the best of the shot being the best of the seven—he had opportunities to score more goals. Turning out for Rovers for the first time, Peng Chuan was impressive. Lian Sin was right off form.

Lamduzen is definitely an asset to the Rovers defence. His fine work as a defensive centre-half was the main reason why R.E.M.E. were unable to score.

Morton, a new member of the Club, shows promise of developing into a first-class right-half. Morton has speed and good height for heading.

Altogether, Rovers are a very well balanced team. Straight from the kick-off, Peng Chuan opened accounts on receiving from Viyaratnam. R.E.M.E. attacked, but were unable to do anything definite. A good effort by Seia-head ended in a hard shot from an angle going over the top.

In the 15th minute, Morton sent Viyaratnam away with a pretty pass for the latter to dash through and place a goal, which gave Seia a good chance to score.

Rovers continued to dominate play. Hard drive from Lian Sin and Viyaratnam moved the ball for Seia to have a shot.

Second Goal

Continuing to force R.E.M.E. on the defensive, Rovers scored on the defensive. Rovers scored their third goal ten seconds from the interval pretty work between Viyaratnam and Peng Chuan ending in the latter setting from close range.

R.E.M.E. had a spot of bad luck shortly after the change over. Kiat Sio had got down to a close shot but had not yet recovered when he should get his box to the ball. Lamduzen dashed to the way to the right of the box.

When Rovers took over, Boon Leong made the score four-to-one with a rare drive from a difficult angle. Seia being completely beaten. It was the best goal of the match.

R.E.M.E. refused to give up. They were always trying but the situation became hopeless when Morton was carried off the field with a badly treated right ankle which kept him out of play for the rest of the game.

For the second time, Peng Chuan narrowly escaped being beaten when the opposing centre-forward, Merry, got into the goal box with the ball at his feet. But Peng Sio was a fraction of a second quicker. Towards the closing stages, Viyaratnam netted three more goals. Rovers scored three more goals. Viyaratnam netted the fifth and sixth goal. Boon Leong got the seventh goal.

Rovers Sports Club: Mr. Har- Yee Ling, John Mac, Morton, Lamduzen, Peng Chuan, Lian Sin, Peng Chuan, Peng Chuan, Boon Leong, Peng Chuan, Seia, R.E.M.E.: Seia, Seia, Seia, Young, Burton, Mook, Berry, Sio, Seiahead. Referee: Mr. R. J. Penabaz.

The Sunday Times October 13, 1957

Disputed goal, two penalty bullies of no avail

VIJI HAT-TRICK BEATS NEGRI

Singapore
start
with 4-3
victory

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat.
— A disputed goal and two penalty bullies failed to bring victory to Negri Sembilan when they met Singapore in the triangular hockey tournament at Riffe Range Road this evening.

The game ended in a 4-3 victory for Singapore although Negri were the better side and dominated play for most of the game.

Vijaratnam was Singapore's hero, scoring a hat-trick while Coutts got the other goal.

Negri started promisingly and in the third minute opened scoring when Vias converted a short corner.

Equaliser

Five minutes later, Coutts followed up a rebound to put Singapore on terms.

Encouraged by this goal Singapore pressed strongly and in next minute Vijaratnam gave them the lead off a pass from Hon Yam.

After Devindran missed a penalty bully with Mosbergen Negri equalised with a disputed goal. Devindran came from the right and from outside the circle the ball was deflected into goal by one of the Singapore defenders but umpire Kanagaretnam awarded a goal.

The interval arrived with Singapore leading 3-2 after Vijaratnam had scored in the 20th minute off a pass from Coutts.

Winner on time

Soon after the resumption Negri dominated play and Sheikh Ali equalised in the 18th minute during a melee.

Vijaratnam then came to Singapore's rescue with a last-minute winning goal off a pass from Coutts after Noordin had missed a penalty bully for Negri.

V. Ramalingam and J. Kanagaretnam umpired.

Singapore: Dollah Hamid; Mosbergen, Bakirsj Singh, Hay, Velupillai, Kirpal Singh; Nonsi, Hon Yam, Vijaratnam, Coutts, Jasbir Singh.

Negri: P. van Hulzen, Vias, Joseph Sij, Gurubachar Singh, Keng Hong, L. van Hula n, Marampillai, Devindran, Noordin, Zaina, Sheikh Ali.

ARD

Vijiaratnam Hat-trick Puts Singapore On Top

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Singapore survived late penalty bully to gain a narrow 4-3 victory over Negri Sembilan in their opening match in the hockey triangular held on the Armed Forces ground today.

For this victory Singapore have to thank the right half Douglas Hay who completely out-witted Nordin to save Singapore from dropping a point.

However Hay is not the only player to whom credit must go for the Colony victory. Olympic player Vijiaratnam crowned his grand performance with a fine hat-trick to steal the limelight. Then there was B. Coutts, another Colony Olympian, who not only bagged a goal himself but paved the way to at least two others. This veteran on the left flank was the brain behind the Colony attacks.

As for Negri, who were beaten 4-0 by Selangor, it was just tough luck. They put up a gallant fight but the tables turned against them in the crucial minutes

of the game when they missed a grand chance drawing level. They missed another penalty bull earlier on. This time Rudy Mosbergen out-bullied Devindran.

They made a whirlwind start and shocked the Colony with a 6th minute goal. Vias making no mistake was a short corner shot.

However the Colony forwards were soon on their feet with Coutts breaking through twice with his lightning stick work. On his third attempt he beat the defenders to net with a flick to put Singapore level terms.

Inspired by this goal Singapore kept up the pressure. A free hit taken by inside-right Hon Yam, ended in Vijiaratnam netting his first goal to give the Colony a 2-1 lead.

Negri had a glorious chance of equalising when they awarded a penalty bully. Singapore's full-back Rudy Mosbergen won the duel against Devindran.

However in the 18th minute Negri managed to equalise with Devindran's hard hit from the circle deflected off the back Mosbergen's sticks into the Colony goal.

Singapore snatched the three minutes later when Coutts made a fine opening for Vijiaratnam to net.

Midway in the second half left-winger Sheik Ali scored a short corner to equalise. Negri, but ten minutes before the end Vijiaratnam won the match for Singapore with his last timer.

Negri were awarded the second penalty bully during closing stages of the game but centreforward Nordin lost the tussle with Singapore's right-half Hay.

Negri Sembilan: Peter Huizen; Freddie Vias, Joseph Gurbachan Singh, Lim Hong, Lawrence van Huizen; Joseph S. Devindran, Nor Zainal and Sheik Ali.

Singapore: Dollah Has D Hay, S. Velupillai, R. Singh, Nonis, Hon Yam, Vijiaratnam, B. Coutts and Ja Singh.

He's a star for all seasons

Vijiaratnam commits his time to sports all the year round

TO EXCEL in one sport as a national star was already an achievement in the days long before Singapore achieved nationhood 25 years ago. A Vijiaratnam, in his twenties, was not only a national soccer star, he was also a national cap in hockey, rugby and cricket.

The man of all seasons - he played four games all the year round - is today, at the age of 62, president of the ex-National Soccer Players Club.

Though he represented his country in hockey at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, soccer is still his main interest, outside his work as one of the Republic's leading engineering consultants.

A typical weekend for young Vijiaratnam in the Fifties was a hockey or rugby match on the padang in the evening, and a soccer league match or Malaysia Cup tie later at night.

Around mid-year when cricket was in full swing, he had to juggle his time around to include a football match at the Jalan Besar stadium.

"Sport was as hectic for me as it was exciting," Vijiaratnam, or Viji, as he is popularly known.

He was a goalscoring centreforward for Singapore in the then Malaya Cup competition, an automatic choice for the Republic after having played for Selangor for several years before coming to



Top: Vijiaratnam, right, at 22, a goal-scoring centreforward for Singapore.



Left: Singapore Ex-National Soccer Club president Dr A Vijiaratnam, at 62 years today.

Singapore. Viji recalls the international match he played for Selangor against Shanghai as among his best.

While at Brighton College in Sussex, England, he captained Brighton Students Association teams at cricket and hockey.

The teams comprised young Singaporeans formidable enough to surprise opposing English teams.

Speaking about national footballers, or for any national representative in any sport, Vijiaratnam said each generation of players achieve great things for the sport, and their services should not be forgotten just because they are no longer able to wear the national colours.

Vijiaratnam said that for the present generation to breed national stars, they have to look for guidance and inspiration from the old stars.

"The ex-National Soccer Players Club hopes to function as a fountain of hope for all footballers, past and present.

Anyone who has served the nation, anyone who still believes he has a few more years of soccer in him, is welcome in our ranks," he said.

So that the spirit of competition can be kept alive, he hopes to see an ex-Nationals competition on the lines of the Malaysia Cup, "bringing together the old stars, who like old soldiers do not die but merely fade away."

So Vijiaratnam played for Singapore as Centre Forward. The most memorable and exciting games were when he played for Singapore in the Malaysia Cup. The crowds in those days were effusive, and sometimes boisterous, all stemming from their passion for the game.

“Stadiums used to be packed. There was one time when Singapore’s Jalan Besar Stadium was so crowded that the players could not get in. They had to get ladders for us to climb over the railings so that we could enter.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam is among very few to claim the exceptional distinction of having represented Singapore in four team sports – soccer, hockey, rugby, cricket – at international level. Contrary to the oft-said ‘Jack of all trades, master of none’, he was a consummate player in all four games, excelling in all of them and winning honours for Singapore every time. This feat has been recorded in the ***Book on Singapore Olympians, The Complete Who’s Who (1936-2004)***.

Then, in one of his soccer games, Vijiaratnam’s ankle was injured in a nasty tackle.

Would that be the end of the road for him? Would he have to give up his first love and lifelong passion?

CHAPTER 5
BRITAIN BECKONS

Little Ironies

In 1949, Vijiaratnam applied for a scholarship to attend a civil engineering course in the United Kingdom and become a full-fledged engineer.

He knew that he would be up against stiff competition. The interview might not be such a breeze. It was one of the few times he almost lost his nerve.

“When I arrived for the interview, I saw all the bright chaps sitting around and waiting for their turn. I thought my chances would be very slim, especially since my name started with ‘V’ and was at the bottom of the list. I was sure the board would pick someone else before they got to me.

I decided that I was wasting my time and was just about to leave when the clerk called out ‘Arumugam’! They had turned my name around and called me by my father’s name! So I ended up being the first person to be interviewed, thanks to the letter ‘A’.

When I entered the room, the first thing they asked me was not about my grades. They said, ‘Weren’t you the chap who played cricket yesterday at the Padang and scored the highest?’

“Yes,” I said.

So I actually got the scholarship to study in UK on the strength of my games record! And my Institution of Structural Engineers qualification, of course.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Cast Off

Scholarship in hand, Vijiaratnam set sail for England in July 1951, but not before one important development.

“My mother was afraid I might return with a Western wife, so she insisted that I got married before I sailed. I couldn’t protest, as she’d threaten to jump into the sea if I didn’t do as she said. My father was very good about it. He’d said, ‘Tell me if



Yoga Soundary Subramaniam at age 26

111

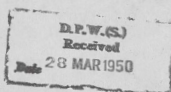
It is requested that the following
number be quoted in the reply to this
letter.

No. SEO. 1215/49.

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Postal District 6,

Singapore. 14th March, 1950.



Mr. A. Vijiaratnam,
Through:
The Director of Public Works,
P. O. Box 3009,
SINGAPORE.

Sir,

I am directed to inform you that you have been
awarded a Scholarship to proceed on a course of study in
Engineering in the United Kingdom.

2. The course of study begins in October, 1950 and it
will be necessary for you to leave Singapore by ship in
September, 1950. Provisional booking has been made for you
on the "S.S. CORFU" due to sail from Singapore in that month.

3. The course of study will be for approximately 4 years.
As you are not eligible for sufficient vacation leave to
cover this period you will be granted no pay leave not consti-
tuting a break in your service for the full period of your
absence from Singapore and all the leave for which you may be
eligible at the time of your departure will be deemed to have
been consumed during the period of your absence.

4. During your absence from Singapore you will be granted
allowances at the following rates -

(i) Outfit: £35 (£300) for which you must account in
detail to the Director of Education.

(ii) Subsistence -

(a) for the period of the voyages out and home
at the rate of \$4.25 cts per night.

(b) for the period of your study in the United
Kingdom, maintenance allowance of a sum of
not less than £305 per annum depending on the
situation of your place of study will be
paid to you.

(iii) Dependants: as may be required to maintain relatives
for whom you may be responsible. You will
be informed of the size of this allowance
on submission of proof of your responsibilities
in this regard and of the expenditure now in-
curred by you in this respect.

(iv) Inescapable commitments: any commitments, such as
Income Tax or Insurance, which must be met
during your absence on proof thereof.

A Committee under the Chairmanship of the
Director of Education has been established to
decide all claims for dependants' allowance
and for inescapable commitments and you are
requested to complete and submit to the Head
of your Department the attached form to enable
your case to be adjudicated.

(2)

Outfit allowance and subsistence allowance
for the period of the voyage to the United
Kingdom will be paid to you by the Director
of Education immediately before your departure.

5. If you accept this Scholarship you will be required
to enter into an agreement to remain in the Government Service
for 5 years after your return. The necessary forms in this
regard are attached, for completion and return to this office.
I am to enquire whether you wish to accept this Scholarship
on the terms stated above. If so I am to request you to reply
in writing through the Head of your Department to that effect
within 14 days from the date of this letter; to present
yourself for medical examination, the required form for which
is attached; and to supply me with all necessary proof and
information for the calculation of the allowances mentioned
in paragraph 4 above and the agreement mentioned in this
paragraph duly completed in triplicate.

6. With reference to paragraph 5 of the Agreement I am
to inform you that the cost of the scholarship in your case
works out at a figure not less than \$17,600 and you are there-
fore required to find a guarantor to undertake the Bond for
this amount.

7. If you wish to obtain any further information with
regard to passages or other conditions of the Scholarship
you should call at the office of the Director of Education on
any Saturday morning between 9 a.m. and 12 noon.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Mut
Acting Colonial Secretary,
Singapore.

you don't want to get married, I'll cancel everything.' But to my mind, 'Mother is always right,' so I went ahead with it."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam



Such was Vijiaratnam's fame as a sportsman that even his marriage made the news

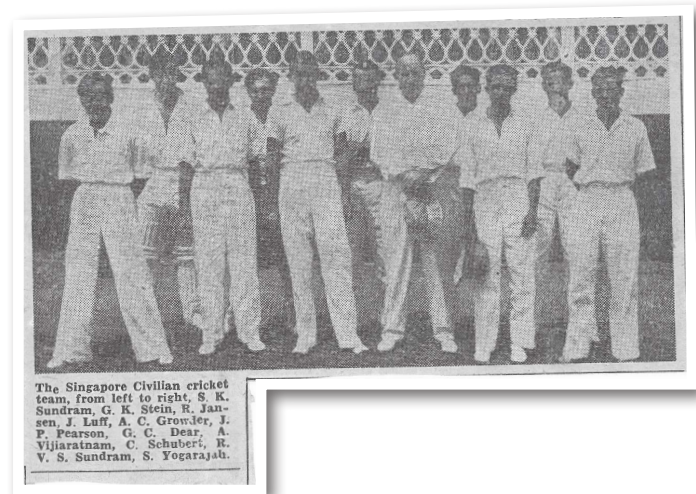


Yogarajah

His mother arranged his marriage to Yoga Soundary Subramaniam, a young lady, also of Ceylonese descent. She was no stranger to Vijiaratnam, as her family lived close by and her brother, Yogarajah, was one of his best friends.

"I've only seen my father cry three times, and one of them was when Periamamma (Yogarajah), my mother's brother, passed away. They had been very close."

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

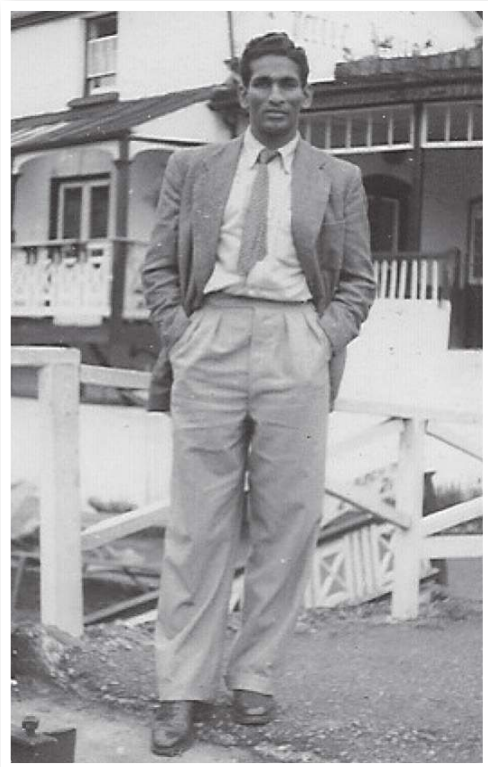


Yogarajah (extreme right) was Vijiaratnam's brother-in-law and one of his best friends

After three months of marriage, the time came for Vijiaratnam to set sail. It was his first time leaving Malaya's shores, and he would not be seeing it again for five years. He would not just be leaving his wife, but also his unborn child, as Yoga Soundary was pregnant then.

Brighton College

Vijiaratnam was glad to end up in Brighton, where the weather was pleasant, unlike some scholars who went to cold Glasgow. Furthermore, qualifications from Brighton College (University of Brighton today) were recognised by both the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Institution of Civil Engineers.



Vijiaratnam in England

Vijiaratnam enjoyed the teaching and learning atmosphere and culture in Brighton College.

“You could challenge the lecturers. They were open and friendly. If we needed to work on a problem, we could always go and stand outside their door and wait for them. They also acknowledged our work ethic; ‘You Asian students are very hardworking blokes’ they used to say.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Indeed, Vijiaratnam was a prime example. He not only worked at his course in the College, he also attended evening classes in Physics, Chemistry, Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics in order to sit for ‘A’ Level examinations, which were not yet offered in Singapore at the time.

He sat for the examinations within six months of starting the ‘A’ level course and did well enough to secure a place in Kings College, one of the oldest, most respected and distinguished colleges in the United Kingdom.

However, he did not enrol in Kings College. Instead, he stayed on to complete his course at Brighton, honouring his scholarship obligation to the Singapore government, specifically PWD.

FIRST ELEVEN					SECOND ELEVEN				
DATE	V	GD.	FOR.	AGT.	DATE	V	GD.	FOR.	AGT.
1953					1953				
Sept. 26	Shoreham	"	A		Sept. 26	Eastbourne II	"	H	
Oct. 3	Eastbourne	"	A		Oct. 3	Bognor Regis II	"	A	
" 7	Steyning *	"	H		" 17	Rye II	"	A	
" 10	Penguins	"	H		" 24	Worthing III	"	A	
" 17	Hailsham	"	H		" 31	Littlehampton II	"	A	
" 24	Southwick	"	A		Nov. 7	R.N.S.A. Ford	"	A	
" 31	Newhaven	"	A		" 14	Newhaven	"	A	
Nov. 7	Eastbourne	"	A		" 28	Bognor Regis II	"	A	
" 14	Middleton	"	A		" 12	Lewes III	"	A	
" 21	Brighton	"	H		" 19	Vacation	"		
Dec. 5	Bognor Regis	"	H		Jan. 2	Rye II	"	H	
" 12	Southwick	"	H		" 16	Lewes II	"	A	
" 19	Seaford	"	A		" 23	Chichester II	"	A	
" 26	East Grinstead	"	A		" 0	Bognor Regis II	"	H	
1954.					1954.				
Jan. 2	Newhaven	"	A		Feb. 3	Chichester II	"	H	
" 9	South Savons	"	A		" 13	East Grinstead II	"	A	
" 16	Lewes	"	A		" 20	South Saxons II	"	H	
" 23	Chichester	"	H		Mar. 3	Steyning C.B. *	"	A	
" 30	Bognor Regis	"	A		" 6	Lewes II	"	H	
Feb. 3	Varndean	"	H		" 13	Littlehampton II	"	H	
" 6	Chelsea Poly	"	A		" 20	Worthing III	"	H	
" 13	East Grinstead	"	H		" 27	Brighton II	"	H	
" 20	Middleton	"	H		" 10	Eastbourne II	"	A	
" 27	R.N.A.S. Ford	"	A		" 17		"		
Mar. 6	Shoreham	"	H		" 24		"		
" 13	Hailsham	"	A						
" 20	Seaford	"	H						
" 27	Lewes	"	A						
Apl. 3	Worthing	"	A						
" 10	Penguins	"	A						
" 17	SHOREHAM.	"	H						
" 24	Burgess Hill	"	H						

* "A" Eleven Matches

Hon. Secretary.

N. G. ALLEN

Address : Mens Hockey Secretary,
Brighton Technical College,
Brighton 7.

Telephone :

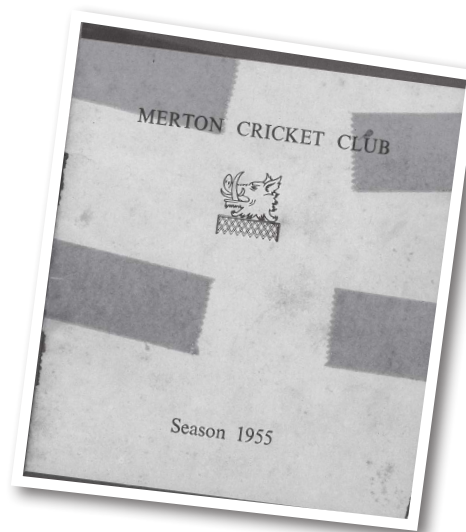
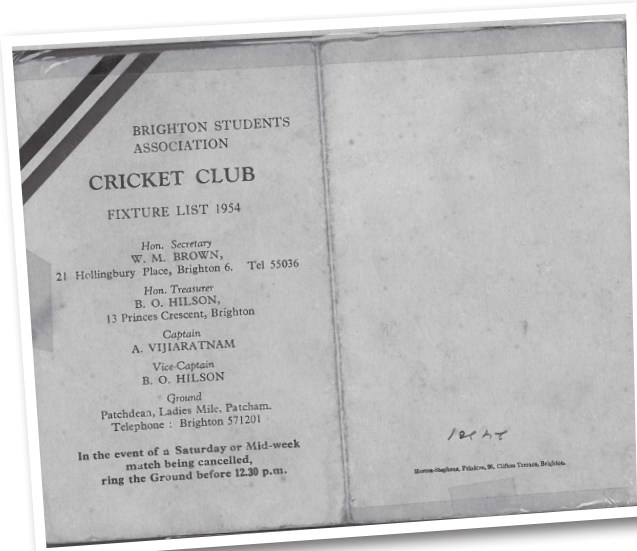
Brighton 226201 (Mon-Fri)
9.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m. 2—5 p.m.

COLOURS ;

1st XI—Green & White Shirts.
2 XI— " " "

Captain :

A. VIJARATNAM



Memorabilia of Brighton sporting days

Still Unbeaten

Seaford 0 Brighton Students' Association 4

The Students maintained their unbeaten record by beating Seaford for the second time this season. They attacked from the start and scored through Macklen just before the interval.

During the second half the Students played good hockey though right-winger Hooper was virtually a passenger with a muscle injury. During this period two more goals were scored through Macklen and Fox. The visitors' defence loosened up and the Seaford forwards got through on several occasions and were unlucky not to score. Outstanding during this period was right-half Ali whose speed and ability to stop the ball almost infallibly did much to cause a recovery. Vijaratnam scored to bring his total for the season to 34.

The scorers were Macklen (2), Fox and Vijaratnam.

3 Goals a Match

South Saxons 5 Brighton Students' Association 5

In a game packed with thrills, Saxons were two goals up within ten minutes, but the Students fought back to draw level. The Saxons, however, again took the lead but the Students again drew level, through a short corner, well taken by Barker. The home team scored again and the Students

replied with another goal, making the interval score 4-4.

Soon after the changeover the Students took the lead for the first time through Vijaratnam and held it until the last ten minutes. Then, the Saxons' centre-forward broke through and scored a fine equaliser.

Scorers for the Students were: Vijaratnam 3, Barker and Lind. Vijaratnam has now scored 27 goals in nine matches this season.

STUDENTS MISSED TOP SCORER

Shoreham 1 Brighton Students' Association 3

SHOREHAM started down the hill and were soon attacking. The Students, however, fought back and held their own territorially. Play swung from end to end but both defences played well and there was no score at half-time. The Students missed Vijaratnam, their regular centre-forward, and leading goal scorer.

During the second half the Students had most of the play. Fox, centre-forward hit the back boards, but the goal was disallowed. Barker, the Students' inside-right, then scored by following up a shot from Selbie. Fox then had two more tries, both of

which went wide, before he eventually scored with a good shot.

Shoreham fought back and came near to scoring, but the visitors attacked again and Macklen, left-wing, scored, but the goal was disallowed for off-side. The Students scored again through Selbie, who followed up a shot from Fox, but Shoreham eventually scored with a shot that rebounded off goalkeeper Dias' pads on to the inside of a post and over the line.

Scorers for the Students were Barker, Fox and Selbie.

Vijaratnam's sporting prowess was equally noted and documented in Brighton as it had been back home

Brighton days . . .





True to Form

For the first time, Vijiaratnam was totally focused on his studies. He did not play any games at all in his first year at Brighton College.

But at the end of the term, as the students left for their holidays, Brighton College's much dissipated cricket team needed reinforcements. College mates and friends who were familiar with his track record back home put Vijiaratnam's name forward as a replacement player. He could not resist being roped in and emerged as the highest scorer in his first game for the team. Naturally, that earned him a permanent place in the College cricket team.

Following that, the College hockey team also roped him in. Vijiaratnam eventually went on to captain both the hockey and cricket teams for Brighton College throughout the rest of his stint there.

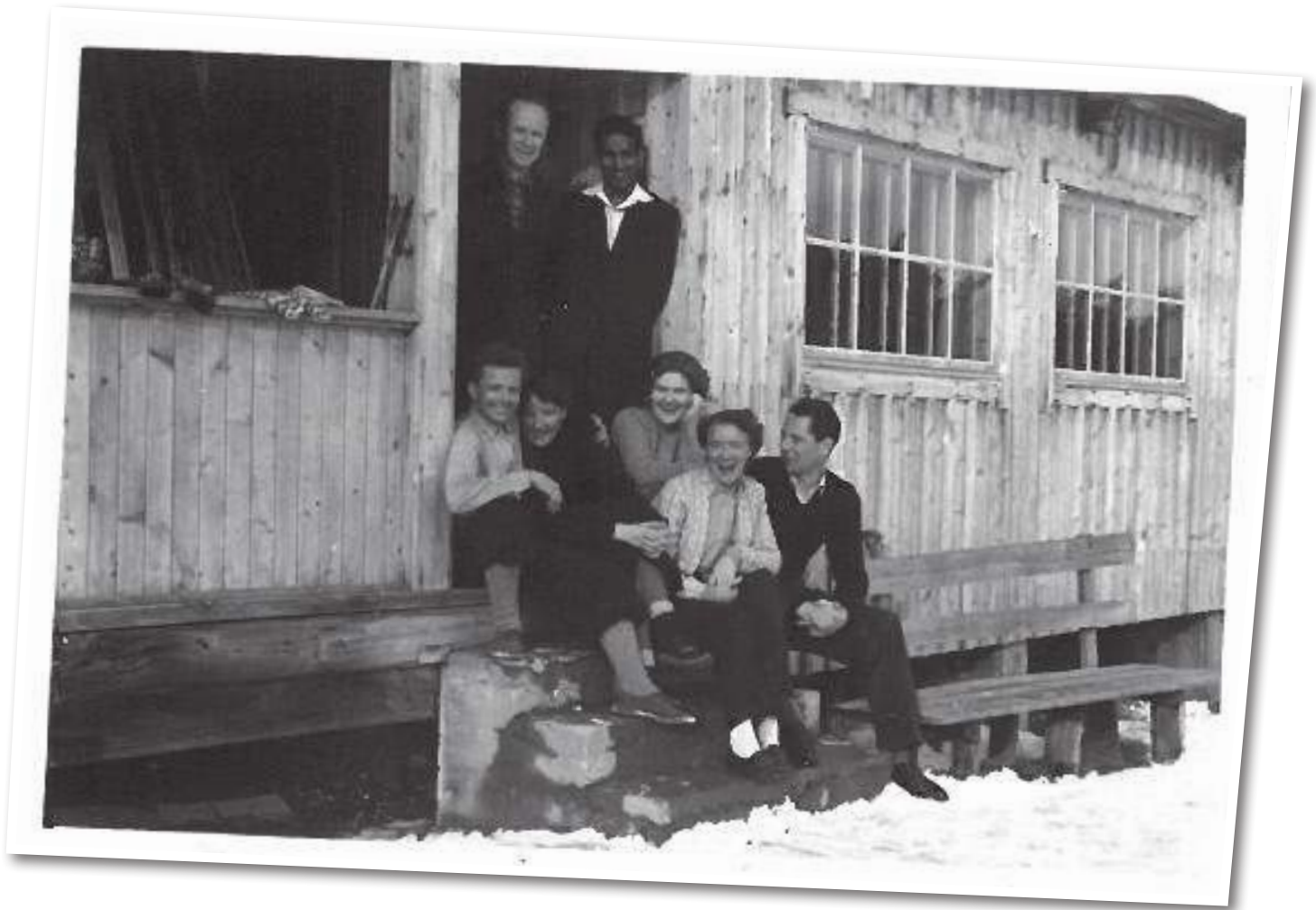
Chief Cook

His time in Brighton led Vijiaratnam to hone a new skill, in the kitchen, as a cook. In those days, men from traditional Asian households were never required, even forbidden, to perform work reserved for women, especially cooking. But Vijiaratnam picked up the wok and ladle for his family.

"My youngest brother, Nadarajah (Appu) had joined me in Brighton. Enrolment in educational institutions in those days were often based on relationships and when Appu, who was studying engineering in Australia, said he wanted to join me in the United Kingdom, I spoke to Brighton College's principal about him. He said, 'OK, bring him in'. So Appu joined me in Brighton. We stayed in the same house. Later, another brother, Neysadurai, also



Forging friendships



Bonding abroad

joined us to study engineering. So I cooked for all of us. Eventually both my brothers furthered their studies at Imperial College.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

So although far from home, Vijiaratnam did not lack family closeness, friendships and their conviviality and warmth.

“The British was sending batches of engineering students from Asia to study in Brighton. Some rented apartments and cooked their own meals. Some stayed with English families. Quite a few of the married ones brought their wives along. So we were always visiting one another. It felt like we were all family. We were never bored; there was never a dull moment. We got to know one another very well. That’s why we never felt homesick.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The bonds forged during these years of ‘exile’ studying in a foreign land, where they had no contact with home and no prospect of returning for many years until their studies were completed, remained strong long into the careers of these scholars.

“Over the years, all these Brighton graduates became the top engineers in Singapore and Malaysia. So when we came back to work in Asia, we could easily call each other on the phone and talk or discuss anything about our work. If there’s any problem with any project, we’d just make a phone call to each other, whether in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, etc., and between us we’d solve the problem immediately.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The years rolled by and before he knew it, Vijiaratnam had spent four years at Brighton College and completed his course.

At last, after more than fifteen years of harbouring his hopes and ambition, Vijiaratnam had become a full-fledged engineer.

CHAPTER 6
THE ENGINEER

Scholar's Obligations

Vijiaratnam had been away from home for four long years, from 1951 to 1954. He had only known three short months with his wife, Yoga Soundary, before departing for England. The life he had left behind seemed almost unreal, and was threatening to become a distant memory. So he looked forward to going home after graduating from Brighton College.

Furthermore, his wife had borne him a child. Rajini was growing up without a father; he was virtually a stranger to his own daughter.

"Once in a while I would get a photograph of Rajini; they would go to the studio and take it to send to me. That was all I had ever seen of her from the time she was born."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam was keen to put things right at home and restore his family to normalcy.

But fate and the government had other plans for him.

"The government said I must stay and work in England for one year. So I ended up working with Sir Bruce White's company. It was a famous firm of building consultants for seaports and harbours."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The firm of Sir Bruce White, Woolfe Barry and Partners was one of the foremost engineering companies in England, with an excellent and established reputation. They were known for groundbreaking work and innovative designs for ports and terminals in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world, including Singapore's first container berth.

So while he did not relish extending the separation from his family, Vijiaratnam's work experience in England for that additional year proved to be invaluable.

"I did a lot of designing work, and learnt how to solve design problems through the many projects. For example, in the normal workflow, you complete your design and then go out to get the materials to suit your design. But I worked on a project for Nigeria, which had already had a supply of steel available and my job was to come up with a design that would use up their steel. To add to the challenge, their steel bars were half-inch thick, whereas typically, steel bars were one-inch thick. I had to work according to those conditions and my design had to meet those requirements. But I managed to find a way around the situation."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

So Vijiaratnam was on a steep learning curve and working with some of the best people in his chosen profession. He met every challenge that came his way, gaining expertise, knowledge and skills that would stand him in good stead throughout his career.

With the exhilaration of the work he was immersed in, time passed quickly and Vijiaratnam concluded his one-year work term in England before he knew it. The government gave him passage back to Singapore. After five long years, he was finally headed for home.

Singapore's First Asian Engineer

Vijiaratnam returned to Singapore to become the first Asian engineer in the country. With tenacity and single minded pursuit, he had fulfilled his ambition to break the Westerners' stronghold on the post of engineers. It had required much sacrifice, hard work and ingenuity, and a dose of good luck as well, but he had done what he had set out to do.

But there was a lot more brewing on the horizon. Vijiaratnam would soon have to put all his skills to the test as Singapore surged towards modernisation and urbanisation.

Malayanisation of the Civil Service

In 1946, the Colonial Office had released its White Paper 'Organisation of the Colonial Service', stating that progress towards self-government in Singapore would take place only if the civil service was mostly staffed by locals. Thus, began the movement to train local talent to take up senior posts in the civil service. They would, in turn, train others who will come after them and their subordinates.

By 1955, the PWD already had its first Asian engineer in Vijiaratnam. Little did he expect the instrumental role he would play in the Malayanisation drive.

"As an engineer in PWD, I became the boss of the Western men. It was uncomfortable at first. And as their contracts came to an end, it was my job to send them home and replace them with Asians. That way, I built up local expertise in engineering."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The Malayanisation of the civil service marched on and by 1958 the Public Service Commission's Annual Report showed only 182 expatriate officers in service. The ranks were being filled by Asian scholars like Vijiaratnam and his peers, and their subordinates.

Nation Building

Singapore was undergoing a lot of changes in the mid 1950s. The nationalist movement was sweeping across Singapore, as it did in Malaya and several other South East Asian countries. Singapore entered its first phase of self-government in 1955, voting in its first Chief Minister, David Marshall. In 1956, Lim Yew Hock replaced David Marshall as Chief Minister.

All these were leading to vigorous national development and nation building, in preparation for independence. Singapore would have to play its role in the world arena on its own terms and no longer as a British colony. The local-bred engineers like Vijiaratnam had their work cut out for them to create the infrastructure and facilities to take Singapore from third-world to first-world standards.

"The Lim Yew Hock government had divided Singapore into four sectors; one of them stretched from Katong to Changi Point and I was put in charge of that. So all building, construction and development plans in the area had to go through me for approval. Even architects planning to build anything in that area had to submit their plans to me."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Such meticulous planning ensured that the discipline of designing well-ordered roads, buildings and infrastructure initiated by the British colonials continued to drive the development of post-independence Singapore.

Containerisation of Singapore's Port

Singapore had a well-established port at Keppel Harbour, built by the British to leverage on its advantageous geographical location at the cross roads of East and West and as the gateway to South East Asia.

The port had been administered by the Singapore Harbour Board. In 1964, the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) was formed to take over the function of the Singapore Harbour Board. This also initiated the mission to upgrade the port into one of world class standards. The decision was to make Tanjong Pagar harbour a container port.

Container berths, let alone container ports, were rare even in Europe and the United States of America at the time. Thus, the PSA's move to build its first container terminal was greeted with much scepticism, even criticism.

Vijiaratnam's experience in London designing ports and terminals had effectively made him a harbour

engineer, and a specialist in that field. As a result, he was very much in demand when the PSA was building the container port.

“When PSA was building the container port, no one else in Singapore was a harbour engineer, so I did the job.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam was seconded to the PSA in 1964, for what was originally intended to be a two-year term.

As though the plans for a container port were not radical enough, Vijiaratnam introduced ground-breaking ideas in his design, due to Singapore’s land constraints.

“Ports traditionally have a warehouse at the front, as the ships docked. That’s alright if you have plenty of space to work with. But to suit our tight space, I designed the warehouses to be at the back, to keep the front free for cargo to be easily and quickly cleared out of the ships.

Also, the original design was for the port to be one container high. Again, that would take up a lot of land. So I designed it to be five containers high and save space that way.

And instead of building a wharf that was 2 700 feet long, we decided to build a wharf that was 3 000 feet long, because we knew that ships were being built bigger and bigger and we wanted to accommodate that in the future. We can put three ships in the bigger wharf I had proposed.

The only trouble was that the World Bank didn’t want to pay for the bigger wharf.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The World Bank was financing the project, but in this case, the PSA stuck to its decision and offered to pay for the wharf, knowing the returns it would reap down the road would be well worth the extra money, time and effort.

Vijiaratnam was fortunate in having the support of his superiors to carry his ideas and recommendations through.

“Because I was the pioneering harbour engineer at the time, they didn’t challenge my ideas. And we had a very good contractor, Taylor Woodrow (present day Taylor Wimpey), to build the port.

Building the container port gave me great satisfaction. Nothing like that had been done here

before. And I had designed it myself to suit our unique conditions.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Beyond his revolutionary design and construction of the container port, Vijiaratnam also streamlined port operations so that the port quickly became one of the most efficient in the world.

“We worked on how to stack the containers quickly, how to make the pallets last longer, how to load and unload containers faster. We had to work effectively so that we could turn the ships around quickly. We changed our truck drivers regularly on their shifts so they didn’t get tired. And we worked closely with the operators, taking their views into consideration instead of going against them. It was trial and error at first but we saw results. And we began to break records. Where other countries took two or three days to complete the job, we took eleven or twelve hours only.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

As a result of his innovative ideas and the ability to see them successfully executed, Vijiaratnam’s secondment to the PSA became a long-term tenure. He never returned to the PWD. Instead, he remained in the PSA and retired from there in 1981, after 17 years of service.

Even after retirement, he was appointed the Chairman of SPECS Pte Ltd, a fully-owned subsidiary of PSA involved in engineering consultancy both locally and overseas. Being the trailblazer that he was, Vijiaratnam led projects to build ports in Chinese cities in the 1980s long before China projects became the buzzword in Singapore and the world. Despite the language barrier and ethnic differences, his projects were successful. He had proven, again, that anything is possible if you set your mind to it.

Early Arbiter

Vijiaratnam was also a pioneer in Singapore’s drive to establish a sound and rigorous mechanism for arbitration. Competent arbitrators for civil engineering cases were rare then and he was very much in demand. An arbitrator’s decision was final and legally binding, leaving no recourse to the courts even. Therefore, the opposing parties would often only opt for an arbiter whom both sides trusted and viewed as fair and objective. Vijiaratnam’s name would be the one that came up most often.

“He was so busy being an arbitrator; he worked harder than even someone in their thirties in a full-time job, whereas he was already retired and working from home. He had to turn away so many cases. People kept raising his fee, thinking that was the reason he turned them down, but he was simply too busy with the cases he already had. Each case

Port Development

SPECS wins first Chinese contract



IT WAS a moment of jubilation for Mr A Vijiaratnam, Executive Chairman, SPECS Consultants Pte Ltd and Mr Liu Kang, Project Manager, Tianjin Port Authority, People's Republic of China. They had recently concluded a contract for the provision of consultancy services for Tianjin Port Authority's East Pier Project (Phase I) on 27 Jul 85.

The project is the first that SPECS Consultants has clinched with a Chinese port. The project, worth about S\$480 million, is financed by the Chinese Government and a World Bank loan of US\$170 million.

Under Phase I of the project, SPECS

Consultants Pte Ltd, our wholly-owned subsidiary which is formerly known as Singapore Engineering & Consultancy Services Pte Ltd, will provide consultancy services for the development of five berths — four for handling timber and one for construction materials. It will also be involved in the computerisation of port management and operations, and the treatment of slop discharged by vessels.

The consultancy services will be provided over a period of about two years. Work on the project will be commencing this month.

Port View, August 1985

In retirement, between ages 60 and 75, Vijiaratnam still kept up the pace at SPECS, which he established and ran as Executive Chairman, procuring numerous overseas contracts for the company

would take up to nine months. And he was doing that for ten years after retirement.”

Vijendran Vijiaratnam

“Lawyers from renowned firms would come to our house lugging huge and heavy briefcases with the case files. Our mother was like his secretary, taking all the phone calls and making all the appointments for him. He had to research the cases, and write long, thick reports.”

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

But the defining project of Vijiaratnam’s career was the building of Changi Airport – to put a world class international airport on the sea.

Building an airport on a seabed

Just as Singapore’s harbour was growing into a global port, its airport at Paya Lebar was also growing in international stature. Paya Lebar airport was beginning to feel the strain of increasing air traffic. Something had to be done. British consultants had advised building a second runway at Paya Lebar to cater for the growth. Singapore’s Cabinet had accepted the recommendation and decided to build the second runway. But Dr Howe Yoon Chong would not have any of it.

The Chairman of PSA, Howe Yoon Chong, who would later become a Singapore Cabinet Minister, fought strongly to build Changi Airport. It was a revolutionary idea, to build the airport completely on reclaimed land. It would cost much more and take longer than expanding Paya Lebar, and would be highly experimental in the bargain. Singapore’s air traffic movements might suffer in the meantime and business at Paya Lebar Airport might be adversely affected.

Despite these misgivings, the Cabinet eventually did a U-turn on its decision to expand Paya Lebar and gave in to Howe’s convincing argument to build Changi Airport. Howe’s trump card was having Vijiaratnam on his team, with his track record at successfully building Singapore’s first container terminal. He had every faith that Vijiaratnam would pull off this next feat with flying colours.

Vijiaratnam led the efforts to reclaim land at Changi, widening and extending the old Royal Air Force airstrip there into a mega international airport that was far ahead of its time. He looked to India, which he learnt had one of only five stations in the world to create models for reclamation. As India’s station in Pune was a government concern, it charged the lowest amongst the five stations.

"Two of their top engineers came here and spent one month studying the local conditions to create a model back in their headquarters, Pune, and test how our reclamation project will work. The model they built was as big as a stadium and water running into it duplicated what was happening in Singapore. If it was high tide at 1.30 pm in Singapore, it would be the same in Pune. So if the reclamation model proved to be stable, we would replicate that in Singapore. If it didn't work, we would adjust things until they suited our conditions."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam



The model in Pune had worked very well. After one of the Indian engineers, Er Tarapore, had explained the entire process to Dr Howe in layman's terms, Dr Howe was convinced of the merits of land reclamation to build Changi Airport. With that conviction, he had swayed the Singapore Cabinet to his point of view.

The rest is history; in August 1981, operations stopped one night at Paya Lebar Airport and began at Changi Airport the next morning. The Prime Minister then, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, was so impressed with Dr Howe and Vijiaratnam's exploits that he recorded their achievement in his memoirs.

"Two men played key roles in making Changi Airport a success. Howe Yoon Chong was forceful in executing policies. He had encouraged me to move the airport from Paya Lebar to Changi by assuring me he had a team that could do it in time. He did, with the resources of the Port of Singapore Authority, its chief engineer, A Vijiaratnam, and Lim Hock San, a promising officer who implemented the project and became director of civil aviation in 1980."

Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Former Prime Minister of Singapore, in his book, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story – 1965–2000*.



Former Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, and his wife (both in white caps) inspecting the Changi reclamation site with Vijiaratnam and his team



PSA Carnival Day: Vijiaratnam (centre) with Cabinet Ministers, Othman Wok (extreme left) and Yong Nyuk Lin (next to Othman Wok)

"A siren sounded by Vijiaratnam (second from right), Director of Engineering Services, Port Authority, signalled the official commencement of major reclamation work at Changi for the Changi Airport. The project, described as the biggest reclamation contract in South-East Asia at a cost of \$239 million, is scheduled to be completed by March 1979."

Photo and caption courtesy of National Archives



Vijiaratnam, however, would not take credit for himself and chooses to acknowledge all the people he had worked with.

“India was very good at this reclamation; they had 700 models at the time. And we had worked with two of the top engineers from India. Many of the Indian engineers had degrees from distinguished places like Harvard and they were really dedicated to their cause; they wouldn’t move to Singapore even though we offered much more money than they were earning in India. They were real experts in their field, well-trained and had spent a lot of their time overseas. We even sent some of our people to India for a few weeks to learn from them.

I also had a very good team of engineers under me at the time. I always believe in hiring people who knew more than I. What’s the point of you and your staff knowing only the same thing? They should know something better than you. Always hire someone smarter than you, it’s alright, because the credit will go to you anyway. And always encourage them to express their ideas, otherwise, you’ll kill their enthusiasm.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

In fact, Vijiaratnam was always on the lookout for good talent to join his projects. Due to his excellent reputation and track record, he was often given the liberty to act as he saw fit.

“I was free to hire and fire, and I didn’t have to wait for a vacancy to hire someone whom I thought was good. I even went abroad to recruit people. The first time I went to Sri Lanka, my father’s homeland, was to recruit staff. The interview was held at a hotel and when I arrived, I saw several people wearing suits and waiting around in the lobby. I asked the Reception if there was a Rotary Club meeting on and they said ‘No, they are waiting for you’. So I hired a few people, with the help of one of the Chief Engineers in Sri Lanka.

I also did a recruitment drive in India.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam travelled widely for his work and that was his opportunity to soak up ideas and develop new concepts that would work for Singapore. His mind was constantly working on engineering solutions and innovation, to push the envelope for Singapore.

“The role of an engineer is to have ideas and implement them. I got my ideas from England, the United States, Japan, Rotterdam; the Dutch had a saying, ‘God made the world but the Dutch made Holland’ – they had created a port in the sea.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

But his tenure in the civil service had not always been a bed of roses. When the British withdrew from Singapore in the 60s, civil servants had to endure a pay cut. Thus, Vijiaratnam had to take on two jobs to support his family.

“I had built a house just before that and needed to pay the mortgage. So I took on a second job lecturing at the Singapore Polytechnic at nights, after work. I did it three times a week from 6 pm to 9 pm for three years, lecturing at the Department of Engineering. I prepared the students for the Institution of Structural Engineers’ examinations in the UK. That way, they didn’t have to go to the UK like we had to before.

Fortunately, the students at the Polytechnic liked me and I encouraged the bright ones to join me or the civil service. A couple of them came to work for me later.”

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam believed that if he employed people better than himself, they would introduce new ideas and new ways of doing things. This would lead to innovation and also allow him to move on to do novel projects.

His outstanding achievements in Engineering have not only been recognised in Singapore but in the global engineering sector as well. He is mentioned in the 1984 book ***International Who’s Who in Engineering*** published in the United Kingdom.

In recognition . . .

COLONEL L.B.A. THACKER

TELEPHONE
MANSION HOUSE 2500.

THE MANSION HOUSE,
LONDON, E.C.4.

2 August 77

Dear Mr. Vijiaratnam, The
Lord Mayor has asked
to tell you how very
much he enjoyed this
morning's programme. As
a sailor he particularly
liked the harbour trip.
He has also fascinated
with the cable car ride
and made good use of his
camera.

For my part thank
you too for your kind

attention and thanks also
to Mr. Richard Lim for
the part he played.
With kindest regards,
Yours sincerely
Norman Thacker



K. A. KRISHNASAMY
MINISTER FOR RURAL INDUSTRIES



FORT ST. GEORGE
MADRAS-600 009

Dated 9.7.82

Dear Mr. Vijiaratnam,

I hope you receive this letter in good cheers. After my visit to the Far-East Asian Countries, I returned to Tamil Nadu and I take this earliest opportunity to thank you for the keen interest you have taken to make my visit pleasant.

It was very good of you to have invited me to your house for the lunch. My wife was very glad to hear the same.

I need not mention as to how much I relished the dishes and lunch. Above all, I felt very homely in your midst. I thank you, and your wife, daughter and son-in-laws for the kind and courteous treatment accorded to me.

I hope you will also make it convenient to visit my place with your family at your convenience.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

K. A. Krishnasamy
(K.A. KRISHNASAMY)

To
Mr. A. Vijiaratnam,
No. 5 Maryland Drive,
Fort of Singapore,
SINGAPORE.

In recognition . . .



MINISTER FOR TOURISM,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



26th June 78.

Dear V.J.,

May I express my great appreciation of your kindness to us all today.

Mrs. MacKinnon and I were very impressed with your famous Sentosa Island. We were equally impressed by your hospitality and kindness.

Would you please convey our thanks to Richard Lim, Miss Lo Inn, Lim Eng Long, Hilary Hogan, Harry Ong and Patsy Loh.

It was obvious that there were others who contributed but whom we did not meet. Our gratitude to all.

Yours sincerely,

Graham C. MacKinnon.



On the occasion of
The re-opening of the Suez Canal

Engineer Mashhout A. Mashhout
Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority,
requests the pleasure of the company of

Mr. A. Vijiaratnam

at a reception on Friday, June 6th, 1975, at 8.00 p.m.,

Nile Hilton Hotel
Ball Room

59

R. S. V. P.
Tel. 20746/49



The President and Mrs Ong Teng Cheong
request the pleasure of the company of

Dr & Mrs A Vijiaratnam

at
Dinner at Sheares Room, Istana,
Second Level

on
Tuesday, 12 May 1998

Time: 7.45 for 8.00 p.m.
Dress: Smart Casual

P.T.O.

Istana
Orchard Road
Singapore 0922

***PORTRAIT
OF A PROFESSIONAL***

"Dr Vijiaratnam was Director of Engineering and I was taking care of operations at PSA when the containerisation project was going on. His favourite expression before embarking on anything was, 'Better find out first', because what we were doing was new and revolutionary. We were lucky to have him with us, as he was practical, down-to-earth and approachable. His solutions don't cost a lot of money, but when they're effected, you'd see how simple and obvious they actually are.

To take a phrase out of his sporting style, he says, 'When I shoot, I don't aim for the precise corner, I just hit between the posts'. So that's the practical approach he has taken with projects; not overly optimistic, but very realistic. His attitude is, 'If you do your best, you will be rewarded'.

He is a decent human being who has faith in his staff, because he knows what he is doing and is confident in what he does. He's a team player who says winning as a team is more important than whoever scores the goal."

Chung Kek Choo, Former Director of Operations,
Port of Singapore Authority

"I was Viji's boss when he was Senior Executive Engineer for Design and Research at the PWD. He did good work, as I witnessed whenever I visited his project sites. One of the best decisions I had made was to transfer him to PSA, because he made a success of PSA. I am very proud of him because he did a good job. I hadn't done anything for PSA, but I did send Viji there.

Together with a few other engineers, we founded the Institution of Engineers Singapore, IES, to improve local qualifications so that young engineers here can become professionals without having to go abroad. We started this whole thing from the ground up, using the PWD and PSA conference rooms for our meetings. Through the IES, we were able to carry our profession forward."

Dr Kenneth Gin, Former Director of
Public Works, PWD



"I met Dr Viji in the mid 1970s when he was working on the project to build Changi Airport. I am a consultant on soil improvement, so I worked with him regarding land reclamation for the airport.

The most important thing about him is that you feel you can trust him. He is a trustworthy man.

He also has very good judgement; when he hears a good idea, he accepts it and works on it right away. And when he is getting bad advice, he will reject it. So for someone overseeing the project, I couldn't have asked for a better client.

He is one of the best amongst people I've worked with, all over the world. He is not only a good engineer, but also a good engineer administrator who can execute projects well. He has contributed a lot to the development of Singapore."

Emeritus Professor Lee Seng Lip,
Consultant on Changi Airport Project

"The clearest sign of what Dr Viji is like, is the fact that whenever I went on leave, I had no trouble finding people to fill in for me; because they all loved Dr Viji and working with him, as he is such a nice boss. He wants things done fast, he is an impatient

man, but he doesn't shout at you. He would tell you nicely, 'I need this quickly, can you do it fast?' Even when people who filled in for me couldn't work as quickly as I did, because it's unfamiliar territory, he would help them to do their work. He would help them to look for things, he would remember how I did things and told them. So he made staff feel at home when working for him. Most people would say, 'I don't want to work for the Director or any of the big bosses'. But people were eager to work with him, it's marvellous!

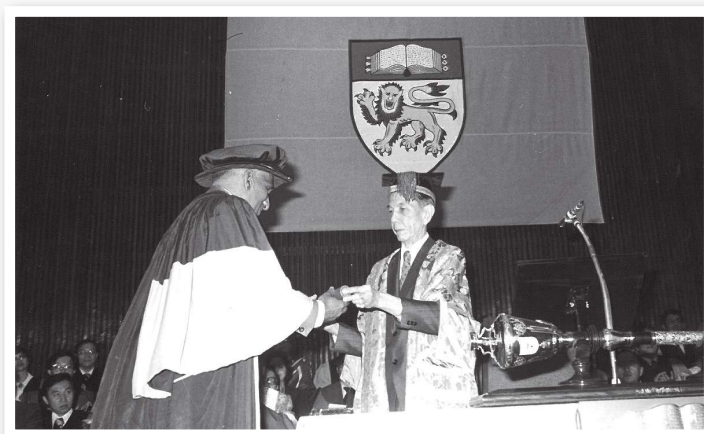
Even his bosses loved him very much. He is always respectful and he always spoke the truth to them. So they respected him too for that. He is on the level, if it's not the right thing to do, he will speak the truth.

His door was open to anyone, he never said, 'You talk to your boss first and then your boss will see me'. We had people from the highest engineers to the lowest level labourers seeing him. People even sought his advice on personal issues and he always helps anyone who approaches him. Even if he couldn't do anything, he would find someone who could; he finds creative ways to help. And he would follow up; some people just recommend and then forget about it, but he will remember and check on it. He takes the trouble to remember things. So I have learnt a lot from him.

And I was honoured that he invited me to go with his wife to see him awarded his Doctor of Letters by NUS. He is devoted to his family. I know his whole family and it is a sign of his upbringing style that even his children – who are all successful today – are also very nice and humble, whereas some high-ranking people have rude children. And he doesn't talk about himself saying, 'I'm so and so,' so that's why his children didn't know about his position and status when they were young.

Dr Viji has a noble heart; you can be a genius, but you can't go far without heart. You cannot find another person like him, he's incomparable."

Andrea Leo, Former Personal Assistant to
Dr Vijiaratnam in PSA



Vijiaratnam receiving his PhD



"I worked under Dr Viji in PWD from 1959, and when he was seconded to PSA and needed people there, he got me to apply and move over there.

Because of his sporting background, he is good in dealing with people. For example, he entrusted the surveying section to me completely, with so many staff under me. And he never questioned what was happening. That is his style. Even if he were to see any staff anywhere in town, he never asked 'What are you doing here?' because he had trust in us. But if he received a bad report about you, he would call you in and question you; he is very firm that way. But he doesn't hold grudges; he would scold you left and right if you did something wrong, but he forgets everything the next moment. So as a result, everyone in PWD or PSA says, 'He's a great man'. The labourers practically worshipped him.

Even when he went off to start PSA's subsidiary, SPECS Consultants, after retirement, the firm did well because of all his contacts from his Brighton College days. He knew people from all over the world and got on well with them. That was how he was able to secure international contracts and projects.

The secret of his success is in not micromanaging. No one else will do that. He is a complete professional, outstanding engineer and still manages to be a devoted family man, and loyal friend. He has no shortcomings, with most people you will find

shortcomings but no one speaks ill of him. Men like him are rare."

R Raveendran, Former Head of Survey Department in PWD and PSA

"I joined the PSA after I returned from my studies in the USA. By then, my Dad had retired and moved to SPECS Consultants. Everyone I worked with in PSA knew him. They only had good things to say about him, not because I was his son, but because they all looked up to him. They said he always cared for everyone's welfare, even the tea lady's.

They say he's kind and gentle; you could make mistakes, and he would not blow it up. He would handle it. He wouldn't fire you but reassign you to something more suitable. But he is firm, he would tell you off in a closed-door meeting.

Because his superiors listened to his counsel, he knew that the buck stopped with him. That allowed him to look after his staff without having to sack anyone. He would be fiery with his bosses but gentle with his subordinates, whom he would train and guide.

He would give people the time they needed to train and to get up to speed for a job. If you needed six months to learn, he'd give you the six months,

whereas other bosses may give you only two. So what that means is that he would carry your weight for that additional four months which other bosses are not willing to do.

He only loses his cool if someone is unethical, not if they make a mistake. But if you lie and cheat, you've had it."

Vijendran Vijiaratnam

"I knew my father was somebody because I had sat in his office and seen people come and go; I would sit in his secretary's room and watch them go by. I knew that people liked him. He was the blue-eyed boy of his fierce boss, Mr Howe Yoon Chong, and he had good relations with all the other people.

He'd always played team sports, not individual sports, so he knew how to manage a team. He had often been team captain, so he knew how to take charge.

He always told my children that studies are one thing but extra-curricular activities are another. Because he was a sportsman, he could think differently. So with his staff, he didn't look only at certificates and paper qualifications. He's open to ideas, rather than academic thoughts only.

But he's always straight-talking, honest and blunt, no diplomacy. And very punctual, he would go off

if people were late, regardless of their status or standing."

Rajini Vijiaratnam

"I never realised my father's standing until I was in Secondary 2, when Uncle Paran, the former Principal of Gan Eng Seng School and a close family friend, asked, 'Do you know that your Dad is someone very important and influential?' 'Really?' I asked. I only started to find out things after that. Uncle Paran was the first to make me aware of it. I have an uncle who holds a high position in the National University of Singapore, but I never knew my father was equally well placed. In the same year my father received a Gold Public Administration Medal from the government, another uncle had received the Bronze Medal, so I had simply thought 'Oh, the government gives out medals routinely to everyone.' So it never occurred to me that he was someone high-ranking.

He always says that you must do your best in whatever you do, otherwise, don't do it. And he is particular about the fact that you must complete and see through what you have started; you cannot give up half way. He also always said, 'Have people more capable that you in your team so that as a team you will succeed'. These are philosophies I adopt to this day.

The other thing is, honesty. You must work with integrity and don't work for monetary rewards only. Work hard because it is the right thing to do. "

Shiamala Vijiaratnam



From left: Lee Seng Lip, Kenneth Gin, R Raveendran, Vijiaratnam and Chung Kek Choo

SURESH NAIR

HE SHAKES his head repeatedly as he looks nostalgically at his biggest sporting achievement, which is recorded in the Singapore Guinness Book of Records: Quadruple international who wore the Singapore jersey in four sports.

"Who can ever do it now?" he challenges with a wry smile. "Even playing two sports for the country is close to impossible in today's world, where the paper chase beats sporting triumphs. That's why I was hailed by the media as 'Jack of all trades and master of all' because I excelled in four team-sports at national level."

"The kids nowadays do not have the time to train, play and enjoy. The homework and domestic pressures turn them into bookworms rather than star-quality sportsmen," he says.

Arumugam Vijaratnam, at 91, Singapore's oldest surviving Olympian, still sports a gutsy smile and a gritty demeanour and vividly recollects the glory-blazing era of the 1950s and '60s when he donned national colours in football, hockey, rugby and cricket.

What makes him special is that he excelled in both sports and studies and continues to be a role-model legend.

"We enjoyed sports those days, we were out there in the field right after mid-day school and during weekends, literally from dawn to dusk, polishing up on sporting skills and to be fighting fit to last more than a match," says Viji, as he is popularly known.

He represented Singapore at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games in hockey which also saw a team from Malaya. He was 35 and played the role of striker.

"I always enjoyed the striker's role, be it hockey or football because that was where the glamour was," he recalls during the one-hour interview at his residence off Holland Road.

"Scoring goals were a pleasure and you get the biggest cheers when you put the ball in the back of the net. You become a hero instantly and you get a lot more fans chasing you for the autographs!"

Viji remembers how he grew up in Spottiswoode Park and played football for his club team by the railway tracks near Kampong Bahru. From Outram School, he moved on to Victoria School before World War II. He made his name playing for Rovers in Singapore and then the Tamil Physical Cultural Association (TPCA) in then-Malaya, the leading sports club.

The TPCA team was ultra-dominant during the Japanese Occupation and Viji was able to represent his adopted state (Selangor) in 1943. At the end of the hostilities, when the Malaya Cup was revived, he played for Selangor in 1947 and 1948 before heading back to Singapore to play for Singapore for part of the 1949/50 season.

In both rugby and cricket, he donned Singapore colours in regional matches with Malaysia, when cross-border international matches were intensely competitive.

He stood out magnificently because he was a perfect example of a



Still hearty and strong... Viji showing off a wall filled with international sporting heroes and (below) during his footballing days. PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIJARATNAM FAMILY

Singapore's oldest Olympian

He's the first to don national colours in football, hockey, rugby and cricket

young sportsman who combined sports and studies brilliantly. He was one of the first government scholars to demonstrate that sports and studies can be balanced successfully. He secured a scholarship to pursue a course in civil engineering at Brighton College and while studying in England, he captained the hockey team and figured prominently in the cricket team, too. He also played for Cornthians, the famous amateur football club, during his stay abroad.

He recalled that on his return in 1955, and in part because of a thigh-muscle injury, he turned his attention to hockey again. An attacking player by instinct, he played for Ceylon Sports Club and by early 1956, he



had forced his way into the team that would tour Indonesia as part of the Olympic Games build-up. Out of 28 goals scored, he was responsible for nine.

His journey to the ultimate sporting stage – the Olympic Games – took place when he had reached a mature 35 years. He played at inside-right, a frontline position he shared with Chai Hon Yam. He switched to centre-forward against Belgium, perhaps his best match at the Olympics and he was always a dangerous threat.

An enduring impression of Viji is that he remains the most vibrant of individuals. He is easy going and enjoys the camaraderie of fellow Olympians and sportsmen alike who, it must be said, hold him in the highest esteem as one of Singapore's sporting greats.

"If you ask me for the secret of my success it is always to be at the pinnacle of potential," he says. "I prepared for the best and played my best, be it football, hockey, rugby or cricket. I gave nothing short of 100 per cent every time I took to the field."

"I relished team sports because of the teamwork and camaraderie and I thrived in playing upfront as a striker where my goal was always to score and to make sure my team wins," he adds.

After he returned to Singapore in 1953, as the first Singaporean

engineer, he worked for the Public Works Department and Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). And he was hailed by the Government for his strategic work behind the development of Singapore's first container port at Tanjong Pagar.

He retired from the PSA as the director of engineering at 75. He became the first pro-chancellor of Nanyang Technological University in 1992 and served until 2005. He was also president of the Institution of Engineers (Singapore), board chairman of Tamil Murasu and a World Bank consultant.

His expertise in engineering was world-class and the then president Wee Kim Wee appointed him one of the commissioners of the inquiry team of the 1986 Hotel New World collapse, which killed 17.

Viji, a father of four and grandfather of eight, whose wife passed away last December, notes that "no one motivated us in the 1950s or '60s with money or gifts... we played just for the love of sports and that made it all the more beautiful to succeed."

we@tabla.com.sg

CHAPTER 7

THE OLYMPIAN

National Hero

The demands of being a professional engineer never diminished Vijiaratnam's first love – sports.

This was despite the ankle injury he had sustained during a soccer game in Singapore in the early 1940s, before leaving for Brighton.

However, there had been a point early on in Brighton when he had thought that his sporting days were over.

"Although I played games in Brighton after my ankle injury, it used to give me trouble in winter. It was painful in the cold."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

But true to his nature, Vijiaratnam held on and persevered throughout his tenure as captain of both the hockey and cricket teams in Brighton College.

Once that was over, however, he decided it was well and truly time to hang up his boots. The pain in his ankle was increasing and his advancing age was not helping. He was, after all, older than his peers due to the years of education lost during the Japanese occupation of Singapore.

"I was already aged 32 in Brighton College. I thought I was old. So I decided to stop playing games. I gave everything – my games paraphernalia – away to my friends. So I came back to Singapore with nothing, and no thoughts of playing games."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Yet, his reputation had remained sterling and the people and fans in Singapore had not forgotten his prowess.

So at the ripe old age of 35, Vijiaratnam was poised to embark on the ultimate journey of his sporting life, one that marks the pinnacle of every sportsman's career.

"I had thrown my hockey stick away when I came back to Singapore. I was thinking, 'No more of this for me'.

And then they picked me to represent Singapore's hockey team for the Melbourne Olympics!"

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

The 1956 Olympic Games would be held in Melbourne, Australia. The nation had called upon Vijiaratnam and he could not refuse. His impressive performance as centre-forward for Singapore's pre-Olympic tour of Indonesia led to his place on the Olympic roster, and as fate would have it, the Singapore hockey team qualified

Singapore Olympic Hockey XI
Melbourne 1956

E.N. Pillai/A Hamid
R Mosbergen E Doriasamy
W Hay S Vellupillai V Devadas
B Coutts A Vijiaratnam P Pennefather O'Rozario M Wright








Reserves: Chai Hon Yam
Fred Fernandez
Ajit Singh Gill
Jeyathurai S
Roland Schoon
Roy Sharma

SINGAPORE OLYMPIANS



Back row (from left): Mosbergen, Pennefather, Vellupillai, Noel Hay (Manager),
Pillai, Doraisamy, Vijiaratnam.
Middle row: Sharma, Hay, Schoon, Coutts, Abdullah Hamid, Fernandez.
Front row: Wright, Chai, Ajit Singh Gill, Devadas, de Rozario, Jeyathurai.

THE SINGAPORE HOCKEY TEAM IN MELBOURNE

Singapore 	USA 	Afghanistan 	India 	New Zealand 	Belgium 	Australia 
Date	26 Nov	28 Nov	30 Nov	3 Dec	4 Dec	6 Dec
Result	6-1	5-0	0-6	0-13	0-5	0-5
Abdullah Hamid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rudy Mosbergen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edwin Doraisamy	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓
William Hay	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
Vellupillai S.	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓
Devadas V.	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓
Burdette Coutts	✓	✓	✓	*	*	*
Vijaratnam A.	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	*
Percy Pennefather	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Osbert De Rozario	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Michael Wright	✓	*	*	*	✓	✓
Chai Hon Yam	*	✓	*	*	✓	✓
Fred Fernandez	*	✓	✓	✓	*	✓
Ajit Singh Gill	*	*	*	✓	*	✓
Jeyathurai S.	*	*	*	✓	*	*
Roland Schoon	*	*	*	✓	*	*
Roy Sharma	*	*	*	✓	*	*

RESERVES

for the Olympics. Malaya was the only other Asian country seeded among the 12 qualifying teams for the hockey tournament.

Morale was high in Singapore and Vijjaratnam's team mates were hailed as heroes.

"There were several send-off parties by the various sports clubs. Even the PWD gave me a party. We were garlanded at the airport as we departed. I really felt elated before playing at the Olympics!"

Dr Vijjaratnam Arumugam

The Singapore hockey team comprised 18 players and did rather well in the early games. Vijjaratnam scored in their opening game against the United States of America. That inspired the team to push on and soundly beat the United States 6-1. They were in high spirits from then on.

"We won most of the games we played, until we got to the game against New Zealand. They were considered a weak side, so our coach was feeling confident and decided to field all our reserves in the game against them. We ended up getting roundly thrashed!"

Naturally we were upset with the coach, and even told him off."

Dr Vijjaratnam Arumugam

It was a great disappointment and the team returned to Singapore without a trophy. The hockey matches he played in Melbourne marked the end of Vijjaratnam's involvement in the game. Age and injury were definitely proving too much for him to continue.

By then, he had already phased himself out of playing soccer, and in 1958, he also stopped playing rugby.

"You shouldn't wait to be thrown out of the sport. Retire or quit from the games when you find that you can't walk so well anymore."

Dr Vijjaratnam Arumugam

Bowing Out

Vijiaratnam continued to play cricket after relinquishing soccer, hockey and rugby, as he felt it was physically less demanding and taxing.

"You don't have to run so much in cricket compared to hockey or the other games."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

But with time, he gave that up as well. When he was truly well and ready to hang up his boots, he did so with no regrets. He relishes the fond memories.

"Some of my best moments were winning 3 cups in one year, then playing for the Rovers in Singapore and, of course, representing Singapore in the Olympics."

I had a lot of energy in my youth. There was one time in Kuala Lumpur when I played two finals in one day; the hockey finals from 3pm to 4.30 pm, and then I went straight for the soccer finals after that.

I enjoyed playing all my games, but my favourite is soccer."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam played one last soccer game after he 'retired' from sports. Singapore's legendary soccer coach, Choo Seng Quee, had organised the Tengku Abdul Rahman Cup in 1977, featuring several of Singapore's former national players. The fact that 35 000 people turned up to watch the game speaks volumes of the draw that soccer and the local players had in those days.

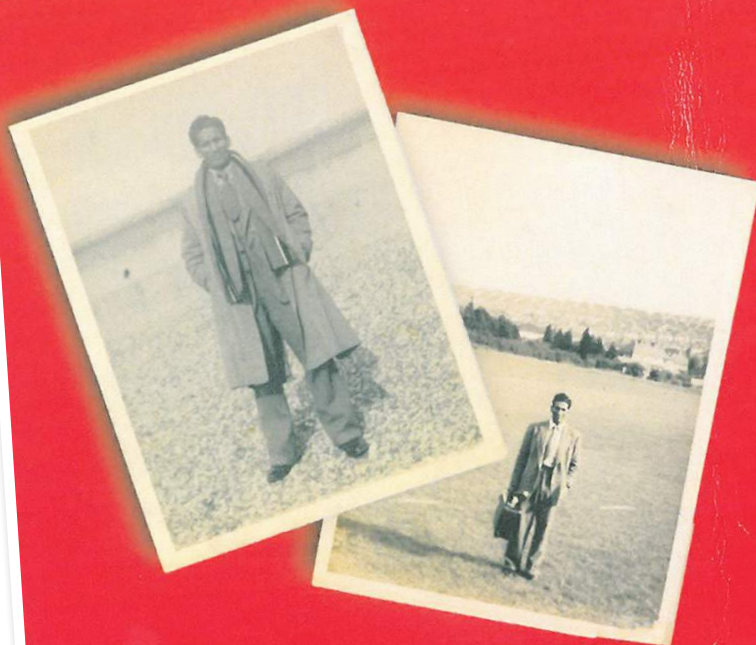
CHAPTER 8

THE FATHER FIGURE



Dr Vijiaratnam at his 70th birthday celebrations

90 years young



Please join us for a
90th Birthday Celebration
honouring
our beloved father and grandfather
Arumugam Vijiaratnam

on
Saturday, 27th August 2011
@ 7 pm
Temasek Club
Anvil/Turret Room
1 Portsdown Road
Singapore 139295

Bonding with his First-Born

In pursuing his dream of becoming the first Asian engineer in Singapore and ending the Western domination of the profession here, Vijiaratnam had to spend five years in England, away from his wife, Yoga Soundary Subramaniam. He could not return to Singapore once in all the five years, not even for the birth of his first child, Rajini, on 6 February 1951.

That initially caused a disconnect with his young daughter.

"In my early years, Dad's brothers were more like the father figure for me. I was close to my Uncle Neysa, Dad's younger brother.



"Uncle Neysa" (Neysadurai) was Vijiaratnam's third sibling

I remember going with my mother and Uncle Neysa to greet and welcome my Dad when he got off the ship from England. But he was a stranger to me; I had never seen him before. That was my first reaction at age five.

Five years is a long time to bridge, so it took a while for me to develop an attachment to him. My mother had to coax me to get familiar with him. Even when he asked me to lay beside him when he's resting in bed, I'd say, 'No'. I wouldn't sit in the front seat of the car next to him, I'd always go to the back.

But I have to say one thing; he had brought a doll for me from England, it's very big and could blink and talk. I still have that doll with me today."

Rajini Vijiaratnam

With time, a strong bond developed between father and daughter. Vijiaratnam was especially protective of his oldest child, perhaps unconsciously compensating for not having seen her through her early years.

"After I completed my medical studies abroad and came back to work in Singapore General Hospital, he bought me a car. I hadn't even asked for it, but he got it anyway. He seemed to know what we wanted or needed, and would get it for us.

And he drove his own car behind mine as I went to work the night shifts, all the way until I reached the hospital. He wouldn't leave until I called him from inside the hospital to say I was safe and sound. He did all that despite his work and other commitments. And he did that every single time until I got married. After that, I suppose he thought it was my husband's responsibility."

Rajini Vijiaratnam

Vijiaratnam was able to maintain a fine balance in directing his children without being overbearing.

"He told me I should become a Physics teacher as I was good at the subject, but I told him I wanted to be a doctor and he let me pursue that. He is open to suggestions, so if you give him options, he won't say, 'No,' to you. He would also give you the pros and cons of doing something, and you may eventually tilt towards his opinion too. So he was a dominant figure, but not domineering. He was not strict, he was supportive.

We were never afraid of him, we were always happy whenever he was home. Our mother was stricter than he. He used to leave for work at 7.30 am and return at 5 pm, if he had no other commitments. When we saw him coming, we threw our books

aside and went off to play. Mum would force us to study, because she wanted her daughters to be well-educated and independent. Dad always used to say he never studied, so he didn't expect us to, either. But he expects us to do our best. That's all he wanted from us."

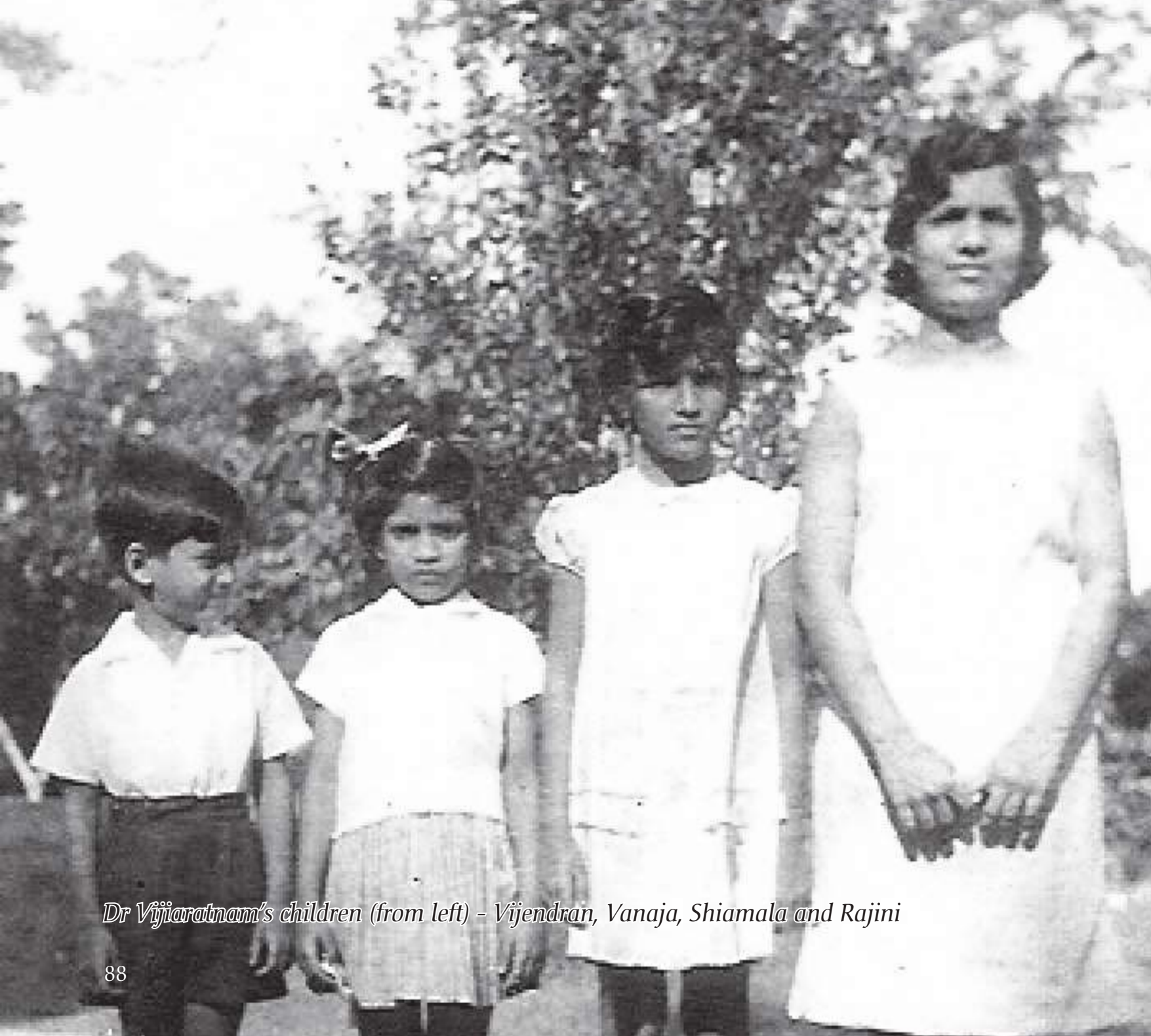
Rajini Vijiaratnam

Guide and Mentor

Vijiaratnam's second child, born on 9 May 1956, was also a girl. He easily established a rapport with little Shiamala. The knowledge of his firm presence steering her gave the young girl a strong foundation and sense of security.

"Growing up, Dad was always around. He was thirty-four when I was born, so he was much older compared to my contemporaries' Dads. He took me to school on my first day. Every single school function, appointment with the doctor or dentist, Dad would take us. I don't know how he could be there all the time, because I struggle to do that with my own children.

In kindergarten, I used to cry every day because I didn't want to go. Every time he dropped me off, I'd tell him to wait for me. So he would go off and



Dr Vijaratnam's children (from left) - Vijendran, Vanaja, Shiamala and Rajini



Yoga Soundary and Dr Vijiaratnam

come back at recess, then leave after that and return to take me home later. He did that for two weeks, in spite of his work, until I got used to kindergarten.”

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

As Shiamala grew, Vijiaratnam’s constant counsel guided her through challenging times in school.

“I had a bent for Science subjects, not Humanities, so in Secondary School I did badly in Literature, scoring red marks. He told me, ‘You must read, understand and analyse the material – that’s how you do Literature’. He didn’t berate me or scold me. And because he was so nice about it, I went on to score A1 for Literature in my ‘O’ Level Examinations. I made an effort after that conversation.

When I was doing my Chartered Accountancy examinations in England, I wanted to give up after my second paper. I was so sure I had flunked it and I didn’t see the point in doing papers 3 and 4, because you are required to pass every one of the four papers to get through. So I had called Dad immediately after that paper to tell him I planned to skip the rest of the papers. It was a critical call because you didn’t make long-distance telephone calls often in those days; they were expensive. He told me to go ahead and do the other papers

anyway, with whatever preparation I had already made. ‘Treat it like a revision, practice paper or rehearsal. Don’t panic, you have prepared for it, just do your best’. I am glad I took his word, because I passed after all.

He wrote to me every week the whole time I was studying in England. I had gone there at age 17 to study for nine years and he wrote every week. During my examinations, he wrote every day – aerogramme letters. The post would come in at 6.30 am, so I read his letters before going for my exams; he would always have some encouraging words for me. It was the first thing I looked for and forward to. It was great!”

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

Vijiaratnam did not let up on his reassuring presence, even through Shiamala’s adulthood.

“As I was leaving England, he went over there to accompany me back, although I had been alone and independent during all those years in England, with only his old friend from Brighton College, Mr Dyers, as my official guardian. I think he knew that I would be sad to leave and his presence would be a great comfort. Then, on my first day of work in Singapore, he accompanied me. When I asked why he wanted to do that, he said, ‘It’s your first day,

I have to be there'. So he took the bus with me, a half-hour journey, and saw me off at my stop. That was my first day at work in Singapore!

So I grew up thinking it was normal for fathers to be so present in their children's lives. It was only much later that I realised that for most people, their fathers were hardly there and rarely participated in their activities. But he was so involved in ours."

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

Three Times Lucky

Vijiaratnam's third daughter, Vanaja was born on 2 August 1958. Although his mother was unhappy with the birth of his third daughter, Vijiaratnam's reaction was quite the opposite. He has frequently said that given the choice of having four sons or four daughters, he would choose four daughters anytime, as a son is only your son until he gets a wife but a daughter is a daughter for life.

Vijiaratnam never showed any difference in the way he raised his daughters and son. He believed that a girl could do anything a boy would. With Vanaja, the youngest of his three daughters, he allowed her to pursue various interests. When she asked to pursue her studies in England, he encouraged her, helping her find suitable courses. He also accompanied her when she first went to Manchester to study.

"I am very thankful to Daddy for the biggest gift he has given me, which is education. This has helped me to stand on my own feet. As a result, I was able to survive many mergers and acquisitions which my company has gone through and I am still with the same organisation today."

Vanaja Vijiaratnam

Role Model

Vijiaratnam's only son, Vijendran, was born on 29 May 1960. The young child made an early decision regarding his career, thanks to his father.

"I am an engineer because my father is my role model. When I was young, about twelve or thirteen years old, he used to take me around to his projects; we'd take boat trips to the islands he was working on, I'd sit in his office or go to the work sites and see what's going on. So I picked up all that and made the decision to be an engineer very early in life. That's why I became a Civil and Environmental engineer.

I like the outdoors and civil engineering provided that outlet. I make sure my work and office is on site, not indoors. So I stayed away from designing.

The family (from left) - Vijendran, Shiamala, Yoga Soundary, Dr Vijiaratnam, Rajini and Vanaja





I learnt from his example. He doesn't push his deadlines, he delivers his targets every time. Even in his 90s he didn't like to put things off. For example, when I gave him his credit card bills, he would stop whatever he was doing and took his cheque-book to pay. 'You have one month, Dad,' I'd tell him. He didn't listen. He would pay on the spot. And that's what he was like at work, he didn't like to leave anything on the table. His desk was always empty at the end of each day."

Vijendran Vijiaratnam



Anandarajah (left) and Arulrajah (right), Yoga Soundary's nephews, both lived with Vijiaratnam's family and eventually became engineers in his wake

The Extended Family

Vijiaratnam's influence spread beyond his immediate family circle. While his son and brothers all became Civil Engineers in his wake, the trend did not stop there.

"One of Mum's sisters, fondly called 'Saroja akka', had to go overseas with her husband so Dad took both their sons in. The two boys came to live with us for quite some time and as a result, both became civil engineers because of Dad's influence."

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

Taking family members into their home was a common practice in the Vijiaratnam household. Vijiaratnam's wife, Yoga Soundary, affectionately called 'Baby' by family members, had a generous nature, always welcoming anyone who needed sanctuary, particularly her relatives from Malaysia.

"My mother had lost her father early in life and had her younger sister come to live with us. This aunt had wanted to study Medicine in the University here and Dad had supported her decision. So she came to Singapore for her medical studies and lived with us until she completed her course. Dad was like a father figure to her.

Another of mother's sisters had a daughter who was having a hard time during her 'O' Levels. My aunt's husband had to travel from state to state in Malaysia for his work, with his family trailing along. My cousin's studies were being disrupted. So Dad had suggested that she stayed with us. She, Vasantha akka, lived with us from age eighteen until she got married at thirty-one.

Another cousin, Vimala akka, also lived with us for four years."

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

It is natural to welcome family and friends into one's home, but Vijiaratnam's family made no exception for strangers, who eventually became like family.

"When I was about ten years old, a Chinese lady came to our house looking for work. She was pregnant, so my mother felt sorry for her and employed her as a maid. Dad got her husband a job at the PSA as a painter and the family moved into the servant's section of our PSA quarters. They became part of our family for 15 years. In his free time, the husband would also do some work around our house and some gardening. One of their daughters went on to Raffles Girls' School and the University, and their son also attended University on a teaching scholarship. Until today, their father,

who is in his seventies, likes to come to our house and do some gardening. That's how close the bond became."

Rajini Vijiaratnam

Enriching Minds

Vijiaratnam always kept an open house for young people who needed help with their studies and would go to him for guidance.

"Dad practically ran a tuition centre for the family. The kids would come to the house for tuition in Mathematics. Grandchildren would stay over for the weekends to learn Mathematics, and Mum would be busy cooking for them. If the children have any Mathematics problems, he would say, 'Leave it with me'. After he's had the time to look at it, he would call with the solution. This would usually be at 7 am, because he's an early riser."

Rajini Vijiaratnam

"Even in his 70s, he was teaching his grandchildren 'A' Level Mathematics. He read up on the syllabus and studied the style and format in order to teach them. He would read up before they arrived, and then teach them. He's a patient and loving teacher to them. They all scored distinctions."

Shiamala Vijiaratnam

Pillar of Strength

Life had not always been smooth for Vijiaratnam, he had his fair share of challenges, trials and tribulations. But he faced it all with the same equanimity he had always displayed since his childhood and youth. This intrinsic nature made him a natural leader as the oldest of seven siblings, a spontaneous captain for any team at work and play, and a dependable husband and father. He would be the first to shoulder any burden, and shield others from real distress.

"Even if there had been hardship in our youth, we were never aware of it. Dad had never let us feel it, and he never shared his troubles with us. There must have been difficult times after the British left

Singapore and his salary at the PWD was reduced. He had to take on a second job by working nights teaching at Singapore Polytechnic. I used to see him marking papers in his spare time. But it didn't look as though he was having a difficult time. It seemed to me as though he was enjoying it.

He's a caring father, giving us the best and never depriving us of anything."

Rajini Vijiaratnam



*From left: Rajini, Vimala, Vasantha,
Rajmala, Meena*



*From left: Rajini, Shiamala, Vimala, Saroja,
Balambikai, Vasantha, Rajmala*



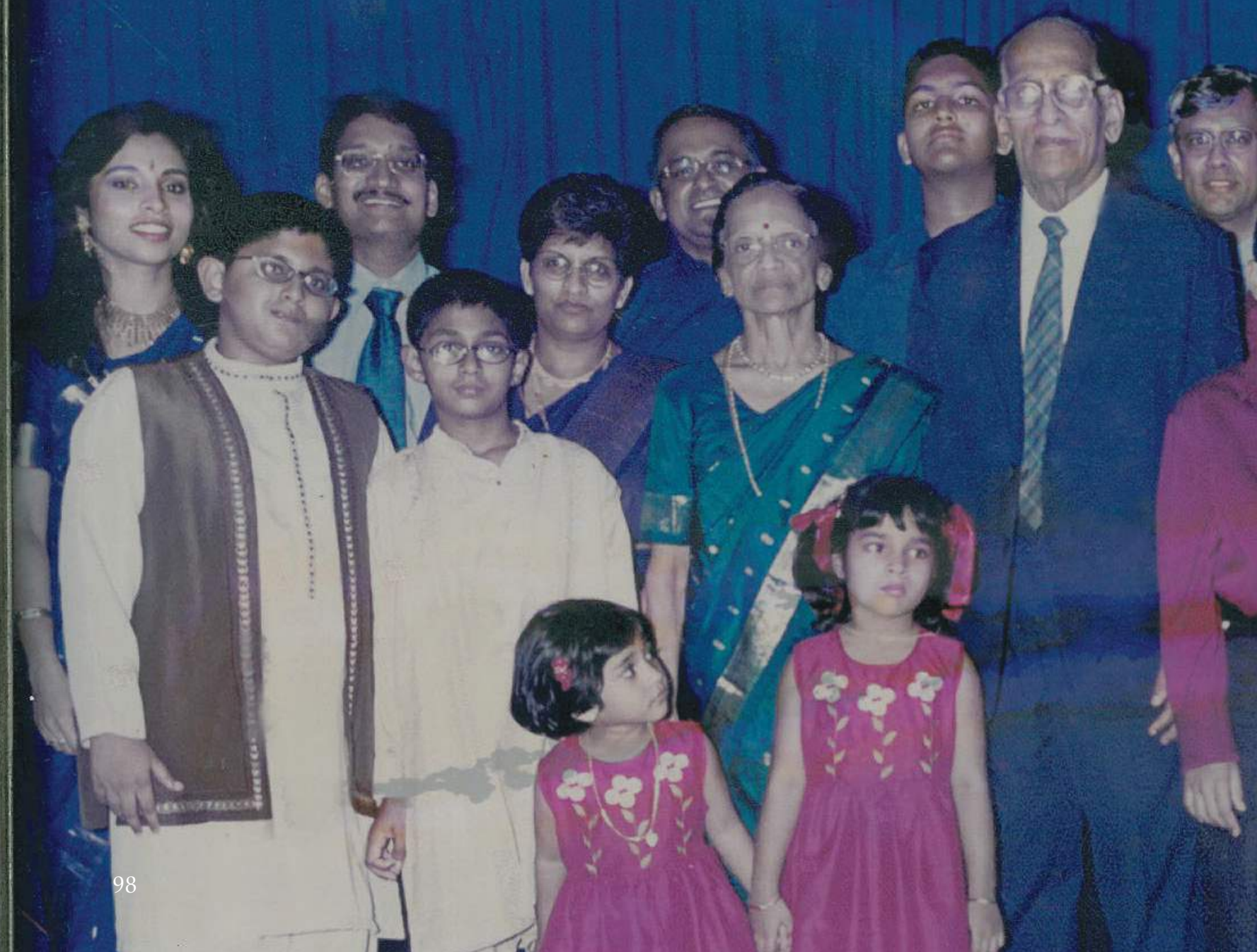
*Front, from left: Shiamala, Vijendran, Vanaja,
Yogalingam*

*Back, from left:
Vasantha, Rajmala, Rajini, Vimala, Sivarajan*

Dr Vijiaratnam with his extended family



Dr Vijjaratnam with his children, in-laws and grandchildren







Award of the Public Administration Medal (Gold) by the Singapore Government, presented by President Benjamin Sheares

EPILOGUE

Vijiaratnam had an illustrious career and left his imprint on several aspects of Singapore's infrastructural growth and development. Almost every local landmark is his legacy; Changi Airport, PSA's container terminals, Sentosa Island, Singapore Cable Car, just to name a few. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Institution of Engineers Singapore.

His contributions were not confined to civil engineering and structures. Beyond his career, Vijiaratnam has also guided and steered organisations on a voluntary basis. One instance was during the time he was made Chairman of Singapore's only Tamil daily, Tamil Murasu. Readership was falling and he brought it back from the brink of bankruptcy. Vijiaratnam introduced creative ways to raise its profile and revenue.



At its 50th Golden Anniversary celebrations, Indian Movie News presented a cheque for S\$10 000 to Tamil Murasu Chairman, Dr Vijiaratnam, to be used for the newspaper's Best Family Award

"I am not very good in the Tamil language so I could not influence content, but I ramped up the sales for the newspaper. My idea was to create interest among school students, make it something they would buy to improve their language skills. So we featured mock exam papers, published best essays contributed by students, wrote stories about India or interesting articles so more people would read, and we started serial stories with daily instalments of the stories so people would be hooked to follow the story every day. I got sponsorship and advertisement from Indian companies. It was a privately run paper then, and by the time Singapore Press Holdings came to buy it out, sales had increased by fifty percent."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

"Under his guidance, Tamil Murasu was transformed from a struggling vernacular paper with a dwindling circulation to one which is profitable. It is now more reader-friendly and widely embraced by the Indian community, including younger Indians. Under Vijiaratnam's chairmanship Tamil Murasu underwent two major revamps in 1999 and, in April 2005, to beef up its coverage of local and foreign news, as well as sports and entertainment. It now gives readers a daily dose of 'something for everyone'".

Lim Chin Beng, Chairman, Singapore Press Holdings,
during an interview with The Straits Times



*Dr Vijiaratnam, Patron of the Sri Ruthra
Kaliyamman Temple, attending the temple's
Centenary Celebrations Dinner on 21st September
2013 where Minister Khaw Boon Wan was the
Guest-of-Honour*

Vijiaratnam had been active in community service. For example, he was trustee of the Singapore Ceylon Tamils Association and the Ceylon Sports Club.

He was also a trustee of and mentor to several temples in Singapore. For example, he had guided the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar temple during various stages of development. The relocation and building of Sri Ruthra Kalliamman Temple at Depot Road had benefitted from his input; with his advice on fund collection, it became the first temple in Singapore to conduct a public donation drive. In 1988, the temple had mobilised a group of Singapore citizens of Indian origin to make representations to a Parliamentary Select Committee. Vijiaratnam was among this group who were successful and instrumental in the inclusion of Indians as a distinct minority community in the two Constitution Amendment Bills relating to Group Representation Constituency (GRC) that were passed by Parliament. The Sri Arasakesari Sivan Temple and the Sree Ramar Temple had also enjoyed his committed care.

In the same vein, he had sat on several other bodies and organisations, contributing in whatever capacity he was called upon to do. These include the Nanyang Technological University as the First Pro-Chancellor, the Presidential Council on Minority Rights, the Hindu Endowment Board, the National University of Singapore, and several others.

He continued to serve even after retiring from SPECS Consultants in 1995. Yet, he was discerning enough to step back whenever he felt it was time for someone younger and more agile in mind and body to move forward and do their part.

To stay young, he always kept company with the young ones in the family.

"I spent the time with my grandchildren, teaching them Mathematics. It's good for the brain."

Dr Vijiaratnam Arumugam

Vijiaratnam passed away on 18 February 2016 as this book was going to print. He was 94 and had remained his equanimous self, enjoying the company of old friends right to the end, in the midst of the family he had remained devoted to despite the demands of his career and public service commitments.

When asked how he would sum up what he had been through, the sporting legend – the only Singaporean to have represented Singapore in four sports, namely hockey, cricket, football and rugby – and the first Singaporean to become a full-fledged engineer, said, "I have reached the pinnacle. What else can I ask for?" he laughed.

Work Experience

- 1954-1955 Assistant Engineer, Coode and Partners, London. Responsible for the design of the Lighter Berth at Port Harcourt, Nigeria*
- 1956-1960 Civil Engineer, Public Works Department, Supervision of construction of airport development comprising runway, taxi way and apron building works.
Construction supervision of Highways
District Engineer in charge of all engineering development works in the eastern region of Singapore*
- 1960-1964 Senior Executive Engineer (Design and Research), Public Works Department.
In charge of planning, design and construction supervision of schools, hospital airport development, highways etc.

In charge of the soils and materials testing laboratory which undertook all the necessary testing analysis involved for the projects carried out by the Public Works Department*
- 1960-1964 PT Lecturer, Singapore Polytechnic*
- 1964-1970 Director (Engineering Services), Port of Singapore Authority (PSA)
In charge of PSA's Engineering Services Division comprising of the following departments:
Civil and Structural Engineering Services
Electrical Engineering
Mechanical Equipment
Marine Engineering
Overall in charge of port development works including construction of conventional berths, transit sheds, warehouses and back up facilities as well as Equipment workshop and stores Complex*

1970-1975

*Director (Engineering Services), PSA Engineering and Consultancy Services
Overall administration, direction and control of the Engineering Services Division,
comprising the following sectors:
Civil and Structural Engineering Services
Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Services
Marine Engineering*

*In charge of construction supervision of PSA Container Terminal Development
involving the construction of 3 main container berths, 2 feeder yard areas, freight
stations, container operations yard area gateways systems and other infrastructures*

*In charge of major reclamation works for airport development, together with soil
improvement works for runway, taxiway and high speed turnoffs*

*Expansion and maintenance of the Port's extensive fleet of equipment for conventional
and containerised cargo*

*He was also responsible for the planning, design, construction, execution and
development of all major port-engineering projects, PSA warehousing, flatted
factories services, Stop and Reception Treatment Centre, housing projects, cable
car project, tourist island Sentosa, major reclamation and soil improvement works
including the reclamation of Changi for the Singapore International Airport and
Island projects. Feasibility study for the development of port facilities at Bacolod and
Mariveles Bay in the Philippines*

1976-1980

Engineering Consultant – PSA Engineering and Consultancy Services

Overall administration, direction and control of the Engineering Services Division, undertaking development projects for PSA, providing consultancy services for both overseas projects and for large private organisations in Singapore. The engineering services division comprises the following sectors:

Consultancy Projects

Civil and Structural Engineering Services

Electrical and Marine Engineering Services

Mechanical Equipment Services

Appointed by the World Bank to be their consultant to the Government of Thailand for the proposed development of major Thai ports at Sattahip, Bangkok and Chuk Samet

Brief feasibility study for the Port Authority of Fiji, for proposed rehabilitation and improvement works at Suva, Fiji.

1980-1995

Executive Chairman, SPECS Consultants Pte Ltd, subsidiary of PSA.

As Chairman he was involved in undertaking overseas projects, mainly in China, Brunei, Malaysia, Fiji and Mauritius. Other advisory assignments were carried out for Oman, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates relating to port development projects

1996-2006

Arbitrator with the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators dealing in Engineering Disputes well into his eighties.

Board Membership

<i>1969-1972</i>	<i>Board Member, Jurong Town Corporation</i>
<i>1970-1980</i>	<i>Chairman, Port and Marine Services Pte Ltd</i>
<i>1971-1980</i>	<i>President, Keppel Club</i>
<i>1972-1974</i>	<i>President, Institution of Engineers, Singapore</i>
<i>1972-1975</i>	<i>President, Port Authority Recreation Club</i>
<i>From 1973</i>	<i>Trustee, Sri Arasakesari Sivan Temple</i>
<i>From 1973</i>	<i>Trustee, Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple</i>
<i>From 1973</i>	<i>Trustee, Ceylon Sports Club.</i>
<i>From 1973</i>	<i>Trustee, Singapore Ceylon Tamils Association</i>
<i>1974-1979</i>	<i>Member, Singapore Polytechnic Engineering Advisory Committee</i>
<i>1974-1977</i>	<i>Director, Singapore Cable Car Pte Ltd</i>
<i>1975-1981</i>	<i>Director, Sentosa Development Corporation</i>
<i>1975-1982</i>	<i>Member, Executive Committee on Airport Development</i>
<i>From 1976</i>	<i>Trustee, and later, Patron, Sri Ruthra Kalliamman Temple</i>
<i>1976-1977</i>	<i>Director, Sentosa Golf Club Pte Ltd</i>
<i>1978-1980</i>	<i>Council Member, National University of Singapore</i>
<i>1978-1980</i>	<i>Director, Applied Research Corporation</i>
<i>1978</i>	<i>Member, Advisory Committee, The Institution of Civil Engineers</i>

<i>1979-1989</i>	<i>Board Member, International Development and Consultancy Corporation Pte Ltd (INDECO)</i>
<i>1981-1983</i>	<i>Vice President, Tanah Merah Country Club</i>
<i>1982-1988</i>	<i>Member, Liquor Licensing Board</i>
<i>1983-1989</i>	<i>Member, Hindu Endowment Board</i>
<i>1984-1985</i>	<i>Vice-President, Institution of Structural Engineers, UK (First Asian)</i>
<i>From 1985</i>	<i>Patron, Sree Ramar Temple</i>
<i>1986-1987</i>	<i>One of the Commissioners to investigate the collapse of the Hotel New World. As a result of the investigation Accreditation Checker System was introduced</i>
<i>1988-1990</i>	<i>Member, Science Council</i>
<i>1988</i>	<i>Member, Indian and Other Minority Communities Committee</i>
<i>From 1988</i>	<i>Member, Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple Management Committee</i>
<i>1988-2000</i>	<i>Member, Panel of the Strata Titles Board</i>
<i>-</i>	<i>Trustee, Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS)</i>
<i>1989</i>	<i>Chairman, Accreditation Selection Panel for Accreditation of Checkers under the Building Control Act, 1989</i>
<i>1991</i>	<i>Member, Advisory Committee of the Nanyang Technological University, Centre for Advance Construction Studies</i>
<i>1991</i>	<i>Member, Consultative Committee, Faculty of Engineering, National University of Singapore</i>
<i>1992-2005</i>	<i>First Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University</i>
<i>-</i>	<i>Appointed by World Bank to be consultant to the Government of Thailand for the proposed development of a major Thai port at Sattahip in Bangkok</i>
<i>1994-2003</i>	<i>Member, Presidential Council for Minority Rights (PCMR)</i>
<i>1995-2005</i>	<i>Chairman of the Board of Tamil Murasu Pte Ltd</i>

Professional Accreditation

Chartered Engineer United Kingdom

Fellow, American Society of Civil Engineers

Fellow, Institution of Civil Engineers, UK

Fellow, Chartered Institute of Transport, UK

Fellow, Institution of Structural Engineers, UK

Fellow, Singapore Institute of Arbitrators, Singapore

Singapore Representative, Institution of Structural Engineers, UK

Fellow, Institution of Engineers, Malaysia

Fellow, Institution of Engineers, Singapore

Awards

1940-1944	Scholarship from PWD to study engineering in the Technical College in Kuala Lumpur
1946	Did the London Matriculation as a correspondence course by himself and passed in 1948 with a first class diploma
1950	Awarded Singapore Government Scholarship by British Government, to study Civil Engineering at Brighton College, now known as University of Brighton
1965	The Public Administration Medal (Silver), awarded by the Government of Singapore
1972	The Public Administration Medal (Gold), awarded by the Government of Singapore
1976	Long Service Medal, awarded by the Government of Singapore
1980	Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt), University of Singapore
1987	Lewis Kent Award by the Institution of Structural Engineers, United Kingdom, for his contribution to the engineering profession in the field of public works and consultancy
1990	Member of team to receive IES Innovators Award for the submission, Layered-Clay-Sand Land Reclamation Scheme
1995	4 th Asean Achievement Award for Excellence in the Engineering Field

Sporting Accolades

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1940–1958 | Competitive Sporting Career, including representing Singapore in soccer, hockey, rugby and cricket |
| 1956 | 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, represented Singapore in hockey |
| 1958 | Stopped playing competitive sports |
| – | First President of the Ex-National Soccer Players Association |

As Pro-Chancellor of NTU ...



Engineer is NTU's first pro-chancellor

AN EMINENT engineer who has been very active in his profession has been appointed the first Pro-Chancellor of the Nanyang Technological University.

Dr A. Vijiaratnam, 70, whose appointment took effect on Feb 7, was appointed by President Wee Kim Wee, who is also NTU's Chancellor.

The Pro-Chancellor takes over the duties of the Chancellor when the latter is away.

Dr Vijiaratnam is the executive chairman of Specs Consultants, an engineering consultancy firm.

He served in various capacities in the Public Works Department and the Port of Singapore Authority from 1956 to 1980.

He is a fellow of the Institu-

tion of Engineers, Singapore, and was president of the institution from 1973 to 1975.

He is also a member of the advisory committee of the University's Centre for Advanced Construction Studies and the Consultative Committee, Faculty of Engineering, National University of Singapore.

Other societies of which he is also a member include the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Chartered Institute of Transport (UK), the Institution of Structural Engineers (UK) and the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators.

Dr Vijiaratnam was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 1972 and the Lewis Kent Award by the Institution of Structural Engineers (UK) in 1988.



"Chairman of United Overseas Bank (UOB) Wee Cho Yaw presenting donation cheque for S\$1.5 Million to Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Dr Vijiaratnam during launch of UOB professorship in banking at NTU held at UOB Plaza penthouse."

Photo and caption courtesy of National Archives

COMMENTARY AND ANALY

THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL

Distributed Saturday, September 5, 1981

By IAN GILL

SINGAPORE — Position vacant: Head of state, Singapore.

Qualifications: Distinction in his profession, diplomatic skill, an interest in politics.

Remuneration: Undisclosed, but the President currently is allowed \$42.3 million (US\$1.07 million) a year to cover his salary, entertainment expenses, the salaries of his personal staff and household expenses.

Perks: A palace with extensive grounds, opportunity to travel.

The above position hasn't been advertised but Singapore is entering its fourth month without a permanent head of state since President Benjamin Sheares' death in May. As Parliament's Speaker, Yeoh Chim Seng automatically became Acting President but political observers here believe he doesn't want the post permanently.

So the search for a suitable candidate appears to continue.

The President here is elected by Parliament for a term of four years. Although the political power of a President is nominal, he can have influence in other areas.

One of the official highlights of the presidential year is the policy speech he makes when opening Parliament. The speech, however, is prepared by high-ranking government officials. The President also appoints Cabinet members — but does so on the advice of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

The main importance of the President's role is that he symbolizes unity for Singapore's multiracial society. Mr. Sheares, who was approaching his 10th year as President, was held in widespread respect and affection here.

In a country where some 75% of the population is ethnically Chinese and Parliament is dominated by Chinese politicians, it has been seen as politically desirable in the past to have a President from the minority races. When Singapore became self-governing in 1959, the Governor, Briton Sir William Goode, took office as the first Yang Di-Pertuan Negara, or head of state. A few months later, Yusof Bin Ishak, a Malay,

became head of state. Mr. Sheares, who took office in 1971, was Eurasian.

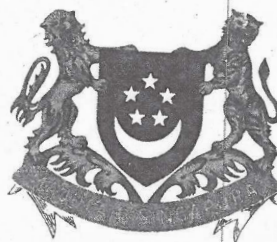
A political observer says that in the 1960s, which saw Singapore first merge and later separate with some bitterness from Malaysia, "it was all the more important to show (neighboring countries) that (Singapore) wasn't a Chinese state." The period of confrontation with Indonesia, which regarded Singapore as a nest for Communists, emphasized the point.

Such considerations have become less

and a long-time confidant of Prime Minister Lee. Friends of Mr. Nair say he's been approached for the presidential job and turned it down. Mr. Nair won't confirm this but says he's content to remain president of the NTUC.

Some observers, however, believe Mr. Nair still may accept the job. They note that a recent reshuffling in the NTUC hierarchy could pave the way for a successor to Mr. Nair should he step down from the trade union post.

The main importance of the President's role is that he symbolizes unity for Singapore's multiracial society.



relevant over the years and some believe the way is open for the first Singaporean of Chinese descent to become President. Acting President Mr. Yeoh is Chinese. Like Mr. Sheares, who was a gynecologist, Mr. Yeoh, a surgeon, has a medical background. He also has political experience, having been a member of Parliament for the Joo Chiat constituency since 1967.

Others believe a Singaporean of Indian origin is being sought for the job. The subject of the most speculation is labor leader Devan Nair, president of the powerful Singapore National Trades Union Congress. He also is a member of Parliament

Mr. Nair, 58 years old, undoubtedly would be a controversial choice for President. Unlike Mr. Sheares, who was known as gentle and mild-mannered, Mr. Nair has a long-standing reputation for being outspoken. He recently was at a center of a controversy when he was asked to step in and sort out a dispute between management and pilots of Singapore Airlines. Mr. Nair typically took both sides to task in public.

The son of Indian immigrants from Kerala, Mr. Nair was born in the Malayan state of Malacca. He later moved to Singapore where he trained as a teacher. Singa-

pore was then under British rule and Mr. Nair became active in the Anti-British League, which he says was "a testing ground for recruits for the Malayan Communist Party."

Mr. Nair was jailed twice in the 1950s for his Communist connections. He says he later became disillusioned with the Communists and decided to side with Mr. Lee's faction in the People's Action Party. When the PAP won the general elections in 1959, Mr. Lee made it a condition of forming a government that a group of eight detainees, including Mr. Nair, be released. They were.

Singaporeans have mixed feelings about the prospect of having Mr. Nair as President. One political commentator says he "can just see him standing up and scolding people when he opens Parliament." One associate of Mr. Nair believes that "it will be a pity if he becomes President because he can do a lot more outside than as President." Another says, "It's not the sort of job (Mr. Nair) would enjoy. He likes to mix freely with people and all that."

One of Singapore's old guard leaders who says he turned down the job as President is S. Rajaratnam, second deputy prime minister (foreign affairs.) Mr. Rajaratnam, a former journalist who decided to devote himself full-time to politics with the PAP from 1959, has been quoted as saying the presidential choice is likely to be "a surprise."

Other names that have been put forward as possible presidents include Wee Chong Jin, Punch Coomaraswamy, B.W. Barker and A. Vijiaratnam. Mr. Wee is Singapore's Chief Justice and acted as head of state in 1963 when President Yusof Ishak was traveling. Mr. Coomaraswamy, a former lawyer and law lecturer, is currently Singapore's ambassador in Washington. Mr. Barker is minister for law and also is leader of the house. Mr. Vijiaratnam is chairman of a Port of Singapore Authority subsidiary, Singapore Engineering Consultancy Services.

Ian Gill is an Asian Wall Street Journal correspondent in Singapore.

Dr Vijiaratnam was among those considered to serve as Singapore's President

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12 June 1995

Er Dr A. Vijiaratnam
Executive Chairman
SPECS Consultants Pte Ltd
Cable Car Tower, Maritime Square
#08-00 Telok Blangah Road
Singapore 0409

Dear Dr Vijiaratnam,

4TH ASEAN ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
14 JULY 1995, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL *
SINGAPORE
CATEGORY: ENGINEERING

Heartiest Congratulations!

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Asean Business Forum (ABF), I am delighted to advise you that of the numerous nominees submitted by government agencies, professional bodies and individuals, you have been selected to receive the 4th Asean Achievement Award for outstanding contributions to ENGINEERING.

The presentation will take place at a blue-ribbon banquet to be held on 14 July 1995 at The Shangri-la Hotel in Singapore. The Guest-of-Honour is His Excellency, the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Brigadier-General (NS) Lee Hsien Loong. In attendance will be some 400-500 distinguished members of the Asean community including Ministers from each of the Asean countries, the Ambassadors for the Asean countries, members of the ABF and luminaries from the Asean business community. The award is in recognition of your notable contributions in your specific discipline.

think ASEAN

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Dr Vijiaratnam received the 4th Asean Achievement Award for Excellence
in the Engineering Field



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Kontena Nasional Sdn Bhd
Perak Traders & Co. Sdn Bhd
Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co.
Parkway Holdings Limited

Page 2

If you are unable to accept in person, the award will go to the second choice, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent you from attending in person.

You will be a guest of the ABF for two days in Singapore, ie, 13 to 14 July 1995, and your Business Class airfare and hotel accommodation will be borne by the ABF. You may either purchase your own airline ticket, and will be reimbursed, or we would PTA your ticket once you have decided on the flight. Please ensure you arrive in Singapore by 3 p.m. on 13 July 1995. Kindly advise your flight details.

We will appreciate your immediate response which should be sent to:

Mr Ranjit Gill
Executive Director
Asean Business Forum
101 Cecil Street, #10-05
Tong Eng Building
Singapore 0106

Tel: (65)223 3038, Fax: (65)223 3193

We will then in turn communicate with you and make all the necessary arrangements for you to receive the award.

Should you wish to purchase a table at the dinner, please fill in the attached form and return it to the Singapore Liaison Office.

I look forward to personally welcoming you in Singapore on 14 July 1995.

Yours very sincerely

ABURIZAL BAKRIE
President

E. C. A. Tan's Day, K.P. Singapore

Presidential Council for Minority Rights Singapore 20 April 1996



Seated (left to right)

Mr H R Hochstadt, Mr Chan Sek Keong, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Mr Yong Pung How (Chairman), Mr S Rajaratnam, Tuan Haji Othman bin Wok and Prof Lim Chong Yah

Standing (left to right)

Dr Andrew Chew, Mr Oscar Oliveiro, Mr Sat Pal Khattar, His Grace Msgr Gregory Yong, Tuan Haji Ridzwan Dzafir, Dr A Vijiaratnam, Mr Abu Bakar bin Maidin and Mr P O Ram (Secretary)

Not in Picture

Dr Goh Keng Swee

Presidential Council for Minority Rights Singapore 12 February 1999



Seated (left to right)

Tuan Haji Othman bin Wok, Mr Chan Sek Keong, Prof S Jayakumar, Mr Goh Chok Tong, Mr Yong Pung How (Chairman), Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Dr Goh Keng Swee, Mr H R Hochstadt and Mr S Dhanabalan

Standing (left to right)


Mr P O Ram (Secretary), Dr Andrew Chew, Mr Oscar Oliveiro, Prof Lim Chong Yah, His Grace Msgr Gregory Yong, Tuan Haji Ridzwan Dzafir, Mr Sat Pal Khattar, Dr A Vijiaratnam and Haji Shafawi Ahmad



In exercise of the powers vested in me by Article 69 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore, I, ONG TENG CHEONG, President of the Republic of Singapore, concurring with the advice of the Cabinet, hereby appoint Mr. A. VIJARATNAM to be a member of the Presidential Council for Minority Rights established under the said Article for a period of three years, with effect from the 16th day of June 1994.



In Witness Whereof, I, ONG TENG CHEONG, President of the Republic of Singapore, do cause this Instrument to be sealed with the Public Seal of the Republic of Singapore, at Singapore, this 16th day of June 1994.

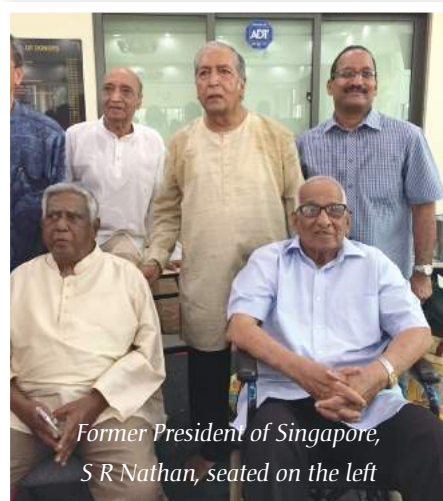

President



President SR Nathan & Mrs Nathan with members of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple Management Committee. Dr Vijiaratnam is seated second from left



*Tharman Shanmugaratnam,
Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore*



*Former President of Singapore,
S R Nathan, seated on the left*



*S Iswaran, Minister for Trade
and Industry*

Dr Vijiaratnam in his 90s was still popular and sought after by well wishers anywhere he goes, including dignitaries and Heads of States

"Mrs A Vijiaratnam, wife of Port of Singapore Authority Director (PSA) (Engineering Services) presenting a bouquet to Madam Cho Lin (centre), wife of the People's Republic of China Senior Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping (Deng Xiaoping) and Madam Ho Li-Liang (right), wife of Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua when they visited Clifford Pier to tour the Singapore waterfront. Madam Cho is accompanying the Senior Vice-Premier on his three-day visit to Singapore as part of a three-nation tour of South-East Asia that includes Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore."

Photo and caption courtesy of National Archives



"Madam Cho Lin (centre), wife of People's Republic of China Senior Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping (Deng Xiaoping), on board the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) VIP motor launch at Clifford Pier. She is accompanied by Mrs Ong Teng Cheong (second from right), wife of Minister-in-attendance, Minister for Communications and Acting Minister for Culture. On the right is PSA Director (Engineering Services) A Vijiaratnam. Madam Cho is accompanying the Senior Vice-Premier on his three-day visit to Singapore as part of a three-nation tour of South-East Asia that includes Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore."

Photo and caption courtesy of National Archives

NEWS FOCUS



PM Goh with a group of architects and construction industry experts. To his right are Professor Chen Charn-Ning from the Nanyang Technological University; and National Development Minister Lim Hng Kiang. To his left are Dr A. Vijiaratnam from Specs Consultants; Mr Goh Chong Chia from TSP Architects (partly hidden) and Mr Lam Siew Wah, CEO of Construction Industry Development Board.

The Sunday Times, 23/04/1995



Singapore's Arumugam Vijiaratnam relives his stellar international sporting career with a collection of newspaper clippings. ST PHOTO: DELON HO

Multiple international is 90

Singapore's only quadruple international turned 90 on Wednesday.

From 1946 to 1956, Arumugam Vijiaratnam represented Singapore in football, hockey, cricket and rugby.

That is an exceptional feat, as Singapore has produced a few triple and several double internationals, but they were not proficient in rugby too.

"Now it is impossible for anyone to play four sports for the country," said the still-fit retiree, who used to play golf regularly till two years ago.

"I could do it because I used to finish my classes (at Victoria School) at 1pm, have a quick lunch, do my homework till 4pm, play in the school till 6pm and return home. Which boy can do that now?"

He was a brilliant student too –

one of the first government scholars to demonstrate that sports and studies could be balanced successfully.

After completing his engineering degree from England's Brighton College of Advanced Technology, where he captained the hockey and cricket teams, he returned home in 1953 to work for the Public Works Department and the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). He retired from the PSA as the director of engineering at 75.

He continued to play at the top level well into his 30s and was picked for the Singapore hockey team that finished eighth at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

"I was successful because I believed in concentrating hard and playing with passion," he said. "In whatever I did, I wanted to reach the pinnacle."

V.K. Santosh Kumar

Four in One

In 1956, Arumugam Vijaratnam represented Singapore at the Olympic Games in Melbourne – in four sports! SURESH NAIR discovers how our oldest surviving Olympian also managed to excel academically and flourish at work.



Viji tests through collection of newspaper articles about himself

He laughs heartily when reminded of how a leading sportswriter once hailed him: "A Jack of all trades and master of all".

Arumugam Vijaratnam, 91, recalls the glory-blazing era of the 1950s and 60s when he national colours in football, hockey, rugby and cricket.

"We enjoyed sports those days, we were out there in the field right after mid-day school and during weekends, literally from dawn to dusk, polishing up on sporting skills and to be fighting fit to last more than a match," says Viji, as he is popularly known.

He represented Singapore at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games at 35, playing the role of striker – the first and last time Singapore ever took part in a team event at the pinnacle of sports competition.

"I always enjoyed the striker's role, be it hockey or football because that was where the glamour was. Scoring goals were a pleasure and you get the biggest cheers when you put the ball at the back of the net. You become a hero instantly!"

Viji remembers how he grew up in Spottiswoode Park and played football for his club team by the railway near Kampong Bahru. From Outram School, he moved on to Victoria School before the war. He made his name playing for Rovers in Singapore and then the Tamil Physical Cultural Association (TPCA) in Malaya, the leading sports club – the equivalent of today's Manchester United.

The TPCA team was ultra-dominant during the Japanese Occupation and Viji was able to represent his adopted state (Selangor) in 1943. At the end of the hostilities, when the Malaya Cup was revived, he played for Selangor in 1947 and 1948 before heading back to Singapore for part of the 1949/50 season.

Perfect sporting example

He was one of the first government scholars to successfully balance sports and studies. While studying civil engineering at Brighton College in England on scholarship,

he captained the hockey team and figured prominently in the cricket team, too. He also played for Corinthians, the famous amateur football club, during his stay abroad.

He recalled that on his return in 1955, and in part because of a thigh muscle injury, he turned his attention to hockey again. An attacking player by instinct, he played for Ceylon Sports Club and by early 1956, he forced his way into the team that would tour Indonesia as part of the Olympic Games build-up. Out of 28 goals scored, he was responsible for nine of them!

His journey to the ultimate sporting stage – the Olympic Games – took place at the mature age of 35. He played at inside right, a frontline position he shared with Chai Hon Yam. He switched to centre-forward against Belgium, perhaps his best match at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and he was always a dangerous threat.

"The secret of my success is always preparing, and playing my best, be it football, hockey, rugby or cricket. I gave nothing short of 100% every time I took to the field."

"I relished team sports because of the teamwork and camaraderie and I thrived in playing upfront as a striker where my goal was always to score and to make sure my team wins!"

Quadruple international

His biggest sporting achievement, which is recorded in the Singapore Guinness Book of Records, was being a quadruple international – donning the Singapore jersey in four sports.

"Who can ever do it now," he challenges with a wry smile. "Even playing two sports for the country is close to impossible in today's world, where the 'paper chase' beats sporting triumphs."

Arumugam Vijaratnam

INSIDE RIGHT

Date of Birth: 28 August 1921

Competition Career: 1943-1958

MAN FOR ALL SEASONS



It is virtually impossible to recall a man who, as an international sportsman, represented his country in the wide variety of sports of opportunity, who, for Singapore in hockey, football, cricket, and water polo, and who, in Singapore, played football for his club, the Rovers, and for his country, the TPCA, in Malaya. The TPCA team was selected during the Japanese Occupation, when the Malaya Cup was revived, he played for Selangor in 1947 and 1948 before heading back to Singapore for part of the 1949/50 season.

playing for Rovers in Singapore and then the Tamil Physical Cultural Association (TPCA) in Malaya. The TPCA team was selected during the Japanese Occupation, when the Malaya Cup was revived, he played for Selangor in 1947 and 1948 before heading back to Singapore for part of the 1949/50 season.

Tribute to Arumugam Vijaratnam as "Man of All Seasons" in the 487-page book: Singapore Olympians.

"The kids nowadays do not have the time to train, play and enjoy. The homework and domestic pressures turn them more into bookworms than star-quality sportsmen."

After he returned to Singapore in 1953, as the first Singaporean engineer, he worked for the Public Works Department and Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). And he was hailed by the government for his strategic work behind the development of Singapore's first container port at Tanjong Pagar.

He retired from the PSA as the director of engineering at 75, becoming the first Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University in 1992 and serving until 2005. He was also President of the Institution of Engineers, Singapore and a World Bank consultant.

Viji, a father of four and grandfather of eight, lost his 85-year-old wife last December. He notes:

"no one motivated us in the 1950s or 60s with money or gifts...we played just for the love of sports and that made it all the more beautiful to succeed."

Next Magazine, August 2012



"From left: Lim Soo Ping, Professor Lee Seng Lip, Justice L P Thean, President Wee Kim Wee, Dr A Vijiaratnam and Professor Bengt B Broms, taken during presentation of Commission of Inquiry Report on Hotel New World disaster to President Wee Kim Wee at the Istana."

Photo and caption courtesy of National Archives

Cover Story



Tamils in high places (clockwise from top left): Former Senior Minister Mr S. Rajaratnam, former Minister for National Development Mr S. Dhanabalan, engineer Dr A. Vijayaratnam and Justice M. Karthigesu.

FAREWELL AND TRIBUTES

Top sportsman, engineer, civil servant dies at age 94

He excelled at four sports, played key role in developing PSA, Changi Airport

K. C. Vijayan

A sportsman who represented Singapore in four arenas, an engineer who rose to the top of his profession and dedicated public service officer, Dr A. Vijaratnam died yesterday without seeing the book about his life, *Engineered For Success*, get launched next month.

But for his son Vijendran, 55, and many others who knew him, a tome can barely sum up the measure of the man. "There are not enough words to describe my father and his contributions," said his son, citing the many positions he held at work and in the community. Although he was a busy man, he spent a lot of time with family too, he added.

Dr Vijaratnam, 94, died peacefully yesterday at his home in Maryland Drive, off Holland Road.

Born in Ipoh in 1921, he later moved to Singapore, where he studied at Victoria School. In 1950, he received a government scholarship to study civil engineering at Brighton College of Technology in Britain.

When he returned in 1953, he joined the Public Works Department until he was seconded to the Port of Singapore Authority in 1964.

Dr Vijaratnam played a key role in PSA's formation, helping to develop its containerisation programme, among other things, and rose to become its chief engineer.

He worked there for 17 years, and was one of two key men under then PSA chairman Howe Yoon Chong who were instrumental in reclamation works for Changi Airport, a feat that drew mention in former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's book *From Third World To First*.

National University of Singapore Emeritus Professor Lee Sing Lip, a consultant for the Changi Airport project, said Dr Vijaratnam was "one of the best amongst people I have worked with, all over the world".

Prof Lee said in the book that he was not only a good engineer, but also a good administrator who could

execute projects well.

However, it was on the playing field where he really shone. The only Singaporean to represent the country in hockey, rugby, soccer and cricket, he played for about a decade from 1946. He was part of the national hockey team that went to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Singapore National Olympic Council vice-president Tan Eng Liang - a water polo player who also went to the 1956 Olympics - said Dr Vijaratnam was exceptional in being able to play four sports at a high level, and that athletes today could learn from him.

He said: "He was a role model in the way he was able to juggle both sports and a successful career."

Dr Vijaratnam was also the first pro-chancellor of Nanyang Technological University, serving from 1992 to 2005. He was also chairman of Tamil Murasu for 10 years from 1995, and served on the Presidential Council for Minority Rights from 1994 to 2001.

A chartered engineer, he became the first Asian to serve as vice-president of the British-based Institution of Structural Engineers.



Among Dr A. Vijaratnam's public service contributions was serving as NTU pro-chancellor from 1992 to 2005.

Dr Vijaratnam also served on the commission of inquiry for the Hotel New World disaster in 1986.

Former MP and Tamil Murasu chairman S. Chandra Das worked at PSA with Dr Vijaratnam, but was familiar with the man for a long time before that, having admired his sporting career as a schoolboy.

He said his passing was a great loss to the Indian community.

Dr Vijaratnam is survived by his son and three daughters, and eight grandchildren. His wife Yogasundary died in 2011, aged 86.

The funeral is tomorrow.

vijayan@sph.com.sg

* Additional reporting by Chua Siang Yee

People

Rare sporting hero left all-round legacy

K.C. Vijayan

IN A brief eulogy last week for an unusual man, a relative, V. K. Rajah, made an unusual move.

He asked the audience to rise, not to observe the usual one minute's silence but to join him in applauding for a minute to celebrate a life not just "well lived but fully lived".

Dr A. Vijaratnam, who died this month aged 94, was an unusual man "whose like you will not see again," said Rajah.

He was not only a sports legend - the only Singaporean who represented the country in four sports (football, hockey, cricket and rugby) - but was also successful in his professional life, as well as being a humanist who extended a helping hand whenever he was asked.

"What distinguished him from many others I have met was his intellectual curiosity and his desire to find out how people were doing, how things were being done and how to make a difference," added Rajah.

The litany of portfolios that he held in his career, from being the chief engineer of the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) to being the first pro-chancellor of Nanyang Technological University (NTU), did not prevent him from being a family man who made a difference to many lives and who even had time to tutor his grandchildren in mathematics, said another eulogist.

There is much to laud about the man, but this is not meant to be a catalogue of the accolades he received.

Two examples suffice: In September 1980, when the University of Oxford conferred the honor of doctor of laws on him - he is believed to be the first local engineer so honoured - its registrar Lu Sinclair wrote to say it was in recognition of his contribution to the engineering profession and his distinguished service at the PSA, where he served for 17 years before heading a consultancy subsidiary.

Secondly, after he served for a decade as chairman of Tamil Murasu, then SPI chairman Lim Chin Beng wrote in 2006 that "under his guidance, TM was transformed from a struggling vernacular paper with a dwindling circulation to one which is profitable and more reader-friendly".

Three aspects that were key to his success bear mention. Firstly, as son Vijendran remarked, he was a results-orientated man who believed in fast action.

"His office was not littered with documents or papers as expected of an office, because he would clear all papers that came before him promptly. This was his trademark - he had a clear table."

He made similar speed work of the hills posted home as well.

Secondly, what he did as a centre-forward in his footballing days he also reflected in his approach to work projects.

"When I shoot, I don't aim for a precise corner. I just hit between the posts to score," he once said. Former PSA operations director Chung Kex Choo, in recalling this, said: "His was a practical approach, not overly optimistic but very realistic."

Thirdly, he believed in employing people who were better than himself so that they would introduce new ideas and new ways of doing things.

"I always believe in hiring people who know more than I. What is the point of you and your staff knowing only the same thing? I had a very good team of engineers under me at the time," he said. In *Engineered For Success*, a book about his life that is due to be published.

Among those he sought to recruit for the PSA was Dilip Nair, who interned there during his engineering undergraduate days in the early 1970s.

Nair, a scholar who studied abroad, went on to instead to a distinguished public service career and is now Singapore's non-resident ambassador to Ghana.

But sports, not engineering, was Vijaratnam's first love. By the time he completed his engineering studies in England on a Government scholarship and returned to Singapore, he had decided there would be no more hockey for him.

In his mid-30s, when he thought he was through with the game, he was picked for the Melbourne Olympics in 1956.

Singapore National Olympic Council vice-president Dr Tan Eng Liang said: "I always found him to be extremely friendly, approachable, humble and selfless."

"To be able to represent Singapore in four sports clearly shows what an exceptional athlete he was. He's certainly a role model for athletes today. In the way he was able to juggle sports and a successful career."

Role model he was, but the man was more than the sum of his parts. In September 1981, the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, in a commentary piece by Ian Gilliland of Singapore's Continues Search For President, said that Vijaratnam, then chairman of PSA subsidiary Singapore Engineering Consultancy Services, was put forward as a possible candidate, alongside the likes of Wee Chong Jin, E. W. Barker and Punch Coomaraswamy.

vijayan@sph.com.sg

MAN OF MANY TALENTS

He's certainly a role model for athletes today, in the way he was able to juggle sports and a successful career.



DR TAN ENG LIANG, on the late A. Vijaratnam (right) who represented Singapore in four sports - football, hockey, cricket and rugby.



The Straits Times, 19/02/2016

The Straits Times, 29/02/2016

Dr A. Vijiaratnam, former Tamil Murasu chairman, dies at 94

HE WAS a man who wore many hats – a sportsman who represented Singapore in football, hockey, rugby and cricket, an engineer who performed very well and a dedicated public service officer.

He was also the chairman of Tamil Murasu for 10 years from 1995 to 2005. A book on Dr A. Vijiaratnam's life, *Engineered For Success* was due to be launched next month but he won't get to see it as he died on Feb 18 in his sleep at his home in Maryland Drive, off Holland Road.

The 94-year-old was born in Ipoh in 1921 but moved to Singapore and studied at Victoria School. In 1950, he received a government scholarship to study civil engineering at Brighton College of Technology in Britain.

When he returned to Singapore in 1953, he worked for the Public Works Department and Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). He was one of the two men who worked under then-PSA chairman Howe Yoon Chong, and played a significant role in reclamation works for Changi Airport. His achievement was mentioned in former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's book *From Third World To First*.

National University of Singapore Emeritus Professor Lee Sing Lip, a consultant for the Changi Airport project, told *The Straits Times* that Dr Vijiaratnam was "one of the best among people I have worked with all over the world".

Dr Vijiaratnam was also praised by the Government for his strategic work behind the development of Singapore's first container port at Tanjong Pagar. As his expertise in engineering was world-class, then-president Wee Kim Wee appointed him one of the commissioners of the inquiry team into the 1986 Hotel New World collapse. He retired from PSA as its director of engineering at 75.

He was the first pro-chancellor of Nanyang Technological University in 1992 and served till 2005. He also sat on the Presidential Council for Minority Rights from 1994 to 2001.

His son Vijendran, 55, told *The Straits Times*: "There are not enough words to describe my father and his contributions."

Dr Vijiaratnam was also a top sportsman. He was the only Singaporean to represent the country in hockey, rugby, soccer and cricket and he played for about a decade from 1946. He was part of the national hockey team that went to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Singapore National Olympic Council vice-president Tan Eng Liang, a water polo player who also went to the 1956 Olympics, said Dr Vijiaratnam was exceptional in being able to play four sports at a high level, and that athletes today could learn from him.

He told *The Straits Times*: "He was a role model in the way he was able to juggle both sports and a successful career."

Former MP and Tamil Murasu chairman S. Chandra Das worked at PSA with Dr Vijiaratnam, but knew him a long time before that. He said his passing was a great loss to the Indian community.

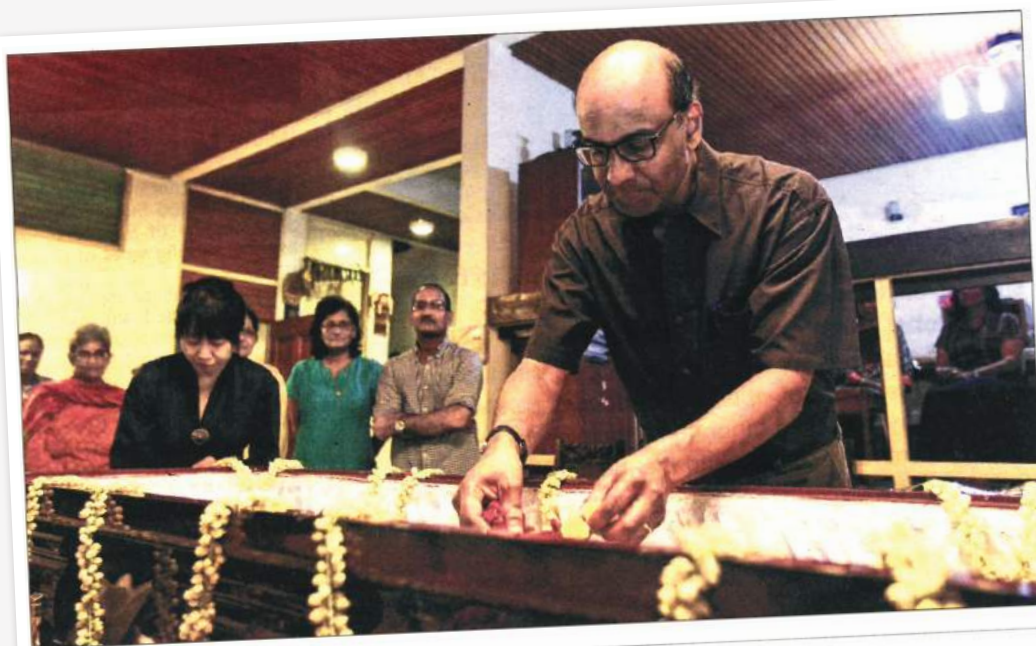
Dr Vijiaratnam leaves behind his son and three daughters, and eight grandchildren. His wife Yogasoundary was 86 when she died in December 2011.



Man with many hats

Sporting past... (top left) the late Dr Vijiaratnam with a collection of newspaper clippings on his sporting career and (top right) during his footballing days.

PHOTOS: TAMIL MURASU, THE STRAITS TIMES, COURTESY OF ARUMUGAM VIJARATNAM



Tribute to a pioneer

DEPUTY Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam attended Dr A. Vijiaratnam's wake (above) and spoke highly of the late pioneer.

He told Tamil Murasu: "Dr Vijiaratnam's accomplishments are well known in sports, as an engineer, as a community leader and as an outstanding citizen of Singapore. I think what we learn from people like Dr Vijiaratnam is not so much about the accomplishments but their contributions to society. It is worth remembering that he comes from a generation for whom life assured nothing.

"They had to depend on themselves, their abilities, their hard work, raising their families with their spouses. But there was something in them that was about spirit and

passion and wanting to give as much to others."

He added: "Dr Vijiaratnam is not just a member of that generation but an outstanding example of that generation. But what came naturally to that generation must now be cultivated, encouraged and we got to find ways of keeping the spirit going. That's the way we recognise the pioneer generation that Dr Vijiaratnam was such an outstanding example of."

Mr Tharman also remembered Dr Vijiaratnam as a gentleman. "I met him last at the Ruthra Kaliyammann temple. He always bothers to come for community events, exchanges a few words, always such a gentleman. That was him. Sometimes it's humility that gains respect," he said.

தமிழ் மூலம்

‘முன்னோடிகளின் பண்புகள் நமக்கு பாடப்பினை’

தி. பூரணசுந்தரம்

தலைவரின் பண்புகள் விளங்கி வருகின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன.



தலைவர் முன்முயற்சி மற்றும் தலைவரின் பண்புகள் விளங்கி வருகின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன.

தமிழ் மூலம்... தலைவர் முன்முயற்சி மற்றும் தலைவரின் பண்புகள் விளங்கி வருகின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன. அவைகளில் பண்புகள் கருவிகளாக இருக்கின்றன.

Tamil Murasu, 21/02/2016

Deputy Prime Minister
Tharman Shanmugaratnam at
Dr Vijiaratnam's wake





Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean at Dr Vijiaratnam's wake said, "He was a giant of a man"



Grace Fu

Saddened to learn of Dr Arumugam Vijiaratnam's passing.

We have lost a dedicated civil servant, a brilliant academic, a community leader, and a sporting legend. The only Singaporean to represent our nation in hockey, rugby, football and cricket, Dr Vijiaratnam will remain an inspiration and role model for future generations of athletes. His deep sense of public service and numerous contributions to the community will also be remembered. A former Chief-Engineer of PSA, he had laid the foundation of a highly mechanised and engineering-intensive operation at my former company.

My deepest condolences to his family and friends in this difficult time.

Photo by Sport Singapore

Grace Fu's photos in Timeline Photos · Yesterday at 10:00



View full size · More options

Facebook Tribute by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Grace Fu, and former CEO of PSA South East Asia and Japan

Eulogy

Tan Ee Ping

On behalf of my family and all engineers in Singapore, may I extend our sincere & deepest condolences to the family of the late Dr Vijiaratnam.

I have known Dr Vijiaratnam, my good friend, for some 50 years. He had always been kind, fair & reasonable, accommodating and forgiving to people.

Dr Vijiaratnam graduated as a civil engineer in 1953. He then worked at the Public Works Department and Port of Singapore Authority, and retired as the executive chairman, SPECS Consultants at the age of 75. His engineering contribution towards our country's infrastructures includes the design and development of ports, shipyards, oil & container terminals and major reclamation work for Changi Airport development. Dr Vijiaratnam's keen desire to promote the professional engineering practice, and his strong convictions and deep passion for engineering excellence, led him to serve on the Council of the Institution of Engineers, Singapore, from 1972 to 1974. For his the President, Institution of Engineers, Singapore, he was awarded the Lewis Kent Award by the Institution of Structural Engineers (UK) in 1988. In 1995, he was awarded the ASEAN Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution to engineering.

He has consistently rendered his engineering skill and knowledge with utmost fidelity and with the highest standard of professional conduct.

Dr Vijiaratnam always placed his professional service and standing of the profession before personal advantage, and public welfare above all other considerations. He would never yield to temptation.

He dedicated himself to the dissemination of engineering knowledge to the younger members of the profession. He had set an example that engineering professional service and expertise carries along with it the obligation to serve humanity with complete sincerity, fair dealing, tolerance and respect. His character was impeccable and exemplary.

Dr Vijiaratnam had contributed immensely to the community and society in many ways. He was:-

- Member, Presidential Council for Minority Rights
- Patron, Sri Ruthra Kaliannan Temple
- Patron, Sree Ramar Temple
- Trustee, Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple
- Member, Hindu Endowment Board

- Member, Singapore Science Council
- Commissioner on the Inquiry into the Collapse of Hotel New World
- For 10 years, he was the Chairman of Tamil Murasu, our country's Tamil newspaper
- 1st Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University from 1992 to 2005

He also served on many other public & statutory boards and academic institutions.

He was a well-known arbitrator, specializing in resolving sophisticated disputes in the construction industry.

In sports, Dr Vijiaratnam is the only Singaporean to have represented our country at international level in 4 sports, - football, hockey, rugby & cricket. His achievement was published in the Singapore Guinness Book of Records. He was in the Singapore hockey team that played at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Dr Vijiaratnam had a very warm & sincere attachment to all his friends. He affectionately looked after his family and grandchildren. Although he was in his late seventies, he was still giving maths tuition to his grandchildren who are now doctors, engineers, accountants and lawyers.

The words of Charles Dickens would epitomize Dr Vijiaratnam's philosophy of life :-

"Whatever I have tried to do in this life,
I have tried with all my heart to do well;
Whatever I have devoted myself to,
I have devoted myself to completely;
In great aims and in small,
I have always been thoroughly earnest"

Ladies and gentlemen, we have lost a great friend and a brilliant engineer, who was highly respected by all, and whose work is indeed difficult to emulate. Although Dr Vijiaratnam has left us, our memory and precious thoughts of Dr Vijiaratnam remains eternally with us.

"And when the stream
Which overflowed the soul, was passed away,
A consciousness remained, that it had left
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed"

William Wordsworth



CSC News

The voice of Ceylon Sports Club - Singapore

Volume 31

Issue: No 16 MCI (P) 099/08/2015

September 2015 - February 2016

CSC Trustee Dr. A. Vijiaratnam



Dr. Arumugam Vijiaratnam who was born on 24th August 1921 passed away peacefully in his sleep on the morning of 18 February 2016 at the age of 94.

Dr. Vijiaratnam or Viji as he is affectionately known is the only Singaporean who had represented Singapore in four sports namely Football, Hockey, Rugby and Cricket between 1946 and 1956.

Dr. Vijiaratnam studied in Victoria School from 1937 to 1940. He was one of the first government scholars to demonstrate that sports and studies could be balanced successfully. He was awarded government scholarships to study engineering at Kuala Lumpur Technical College in 1941 and Brighton College of Advanced Technology in 1950, where he graduated with an engineering degree. He captained the Hockey and Cricket teams at the Brighton College of Advanced Technology. After he returned to Singapore in 1955, Viji played Hockey for the Ceylon Sports Club, which eventually led to a spot in the National team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

**"I gave nothing short of
100 percent every time
I took the field"**

In 1953, he worked for the Public Works Department and thereafter the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). He retired from PSA as the Director of Engineering at the age of 75. He became the first Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University in 1992 and served until 2005. He was a former President of the Institute of Engineers, Board Chairman of Tamil Murasu and the World Bank consultant.

In an interview Viji cordially shared "if you ask me for the secret of my success, it is always to be at the pinnacle of my potential... I gave nothing short of 100 percent every time I took the field".

Continued on page 8

CSC Trustee Dr. A. Vijiaratnam continued from page 1

In a society that exhorts "well-rounded individuals" Viji stood as a beacon, a time "Master of all"

As has been said by many Viji lived a full life and a life well lived. He was an exceptionally talented sportsman, an efficient, result orientated and dependable professional who could be called upon to take any challenges. Finally as a father, grandfather, relative and friend he was always there for people.

**"Viji lived a full
life and a life well
lived. He was an
exceptionally talented
sportsman."**

the club but Singapore has lost a truly remarkable, talented and exceptional man and we pray for his soul to rest in peace.

At his funeral service all present at the funeral hall at the Mandai at the beckon of Mr. V K Rajah (Attorney General) stood and instead of a one minute silence gave a one minute continuous applause to celebrate Viji's life and his many accomplishments.

Not only his family and talented and exceptional man and we pray for his soul to rest in peace.



SANGHU சங்கு

the voice of the

SRI SENPAGA VINAYAGAR TEMPLE & SINGAPORE CEYLON TAMILS' ASSOCIATION

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செந்திப்பெயர்

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 www.senpaga.org.sg / email: ssvtmanager@gmail.com January to March 2016 Issue I

MCI (P) 116/10/2015

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE DR. ARUMUGAM VIJIARATNAM. A MAN OF EXCEPTIONAL STATURE



Our beloved trustee, the late Dr. A. Vijaratnam left us on 18th February 2016.

The late Dr Arumugam Vijaratnam was a man of remarkable stature and standing in society. He had led an illustrious and industrious life excelling in public service, his career as an academic and love for sports.

A forerunner to be reckoned with in academia, he had served as the first Pro-Chancellor of Nanyang Technological University, was the President of the Institution of Engineers, Singapore, the Chairman of Tamil Murasu, Director, Engineering Services, Port of

continued on page 3

continued from page 1

Singapore Authority, and was the first Asian to serve as the Vice-President, Institution of Structural Engineers, UK. In addition, he also served as the Patron of the Sree Ramar Temple and Trustee of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple.

His enthusiasm for sports led him to become Singapore's first Olympian, a feat published in the Singapore Guinness Book of Records. A legendary athlete, he represented Singapore in rugby, soccer, hockey and cricket.

He had lived a life of brilliance dedicating his time in the pursuit of civil service, academic, sports, community service and his family, doting on his children and grandchildren. His numerous and

invaluable contributions to public service and to the community will always be remembered.

We are comforted that a person of such an immense standing stood amongst us and supported us. He has left an indelible imprint in our memories. We are indeed thankful that we have had the opportunity to bond and share special moments with him. We will always value and cherish him for being a great pillar of support and a guiding light to all.

With fondest memories,

From The Secretariat of the Ceylon Sports Club and the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple and the Singapore Ceylon Tamils' Association.

*“ Say not in grief that he is no more,
but live in thankfulness that he was. ”*

- Hebrew Proverb



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Ms Lo Man Yi

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Web:
Under Construction

18th February 2016

Dear Family of Vijiaratnam Arumugam

We are all saddened at the passing on of dear Vijia today.

On behalf of all Olympians Singapore we extend our deepest condolences to the whole family.

Vijia was a gentleman to the end. In the past couple of years, although he was not always 100% mobile, he always found time to make it to our events. Always keeping his sense of humour all the time.

He was such a giant of a man. Representing Singapore in 4 different Sports, a feat no one has emulated since. And a top civil servant. What a man !

His memory will always linger with us, just as it will we are sure, with your whole family.

On behalf of the President, Dr Tan Eng Liang, and all the members of Olympians Singapore we hope we can keep in touch with you and your family.

Sincerely

C Kunalan
Honorary Secretary

Tribute to the late Er. Dr Arumugam Vijiaratnam, IES President 1972 – 1974



To his fellow colleagues, Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam was both an excellent engineer and administrator; he knew what

he was doing and was able to execute projects well. In the sporting arena, he was a role model, for he played four sports at a high level and had a successful career at the same time.

Words are barely enough to sum up the measure of this man, who passed away peacefully in his home on 18 February 2016, aged 94. Throughout his illustrious life, although Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam wore many hats, he still managed to spend quality time with his family members.

Born in Ipoh in 1921, he moved to Singapore to complete his secondary education. He was later awarded

a government scholarship in 1950 to study civil engineering at Brighton College of Technology in Britain.

Upon completing his studies, he joined PWD until his secondment to PSA in 1964, where he worked for the next 17 years, rising to become its chief engineer. Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam played important roles in the development of Changi Airport and Singapore's first container port at Tanjong Pagar. For his outstanding service to the nation, he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Gold) during the National Day Awards in 1972.

Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam's passion for engineering shone brightly amongst the engineering community in Singapore. He was a part of the founding council of IES in 1966, and served as a general member until 1970, when he was elected Vice-President.


Two years later, he was elected IES President and served in this capacity until 1974, when he stepped down and remained on the Council

for another four years till 1978, briefly heading the Civil & Structural Engineering Practice Committee during this period.

Speeches on record in the IES archives show that he was extremely concerned with ensuring that young engineers had equal opportunities for success, as well as the maintenance of high professional standards amongst IES members. In 1992, he was conferred the title of IES Honorary Fellow for his invaluable contributions to IES and the engineering community.

Apart from these, Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam was the first Pro-Chancellor of NTU, Chairman of Tamil Murasu, and served on the Presidential Council for Minority Rights. He was also a member of the commission of inquiry on the Hotel New World disaster in 1986. Adding on to this string of accolades are the ones he gained as a sportsman, having represented Singapore in hockey, rugby, soccer and cricket in his younger days.

Er. Dr. Vijiaratnam is survived by his son, three daughters, and eight grandchildren. His wife, Mdm. Yogasoundary, died in 2011, aged 86.

IES Council and Secretariat is deeply saddened to learn of his passing and offer sincere condolences to his family. 

"The Singapore Engineer", The Magazine of the Institution of Engineers, Singapore, (IES), February 2016

Book Launch:
"Engineered for Success"

Unveiling of the Biography of Dr A Vijiaratnam at the
South Asian Diaspora Convention 2016

From left: Chairman, Institute of South Asian Studies,
NUS and Ambassador - at -Large, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Singapore, Gopinath Pillai;
son of Dr Vijiaratnam, Vijendran Vijiaratnam;
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe;
Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore,
Tharman Shanmugaratnam;
and daughter of Dr Vijiaratnam, Shiamala Vijiaratnam



டாக்டர் விஜயரத்னம் சுயசரிதை வெளியீடு

வில்சன் சைலஸ்

சாங்கி விமான நிலைய களையை நளவாக்க உதவியது உட்பட பல விதங்களில் சிங்கப்பூரின் முன் னேற்றத்திற்குப் பாடுபட்டுள்ள அமர் டாக்டர் ஆறுமுகம் விஜய ரத்னத்தின் சுயசரிதை (உம்) நேற்று வெளியிடப்பட்டது.

சிங்கப்பூர் தேசிய பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் தொகாசிய ஆய்வுக் கழகத்தால் ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்ட 3வது தொகாசிய புலம்பெயர்ந்தோர் மாநாட்டில் 'என்றி ஹியர்ட் ஸார் சக்ஸ்' என்ற தலைப்பில் சிங்கப்பூரின் முதல் பொறியாளர் என்ற விஜயரத்னம் குறித்த நூல் அறி முகம் கண்டது.

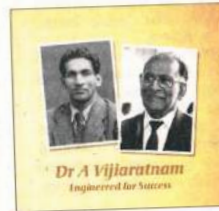
சிறப்பு விருந்தினராக மாநாட் டில் கலந்துகொண்ட இலங்கை பிரதமர் ரணில் விக்கிரமசிங்கே உட்பட நூற்றுக்கணக்கானோரின் முன்னிலையில் அதிகாரபூர்வமாக

நூலை வெளியிட்டார் துணைப் பிரதமரும் பொருளியல், சமுதாயக் கொள்கைகளுக்கான ஒருங்கி ணைப்பு அமைச்சருமான தர்மன் சண்முகரத்னம்.

மலேசியாவின் ஈப்போவில் 1921ஆம் ஆண்டு பிறந்த டாக்டர் விஜயரத்னம் சிங்கப்பூருக்கு வந்த பிறகு, லிக்டோரியா பள்ளியில் பயின்றது, பின் அரசு உபகாரச் சம்பள உதவியுடன் பிரிட்டனில் உள்ள பிறைட்டன் தொழில்நுட்பக் கல்லூரியில் கட்டடப் பொறியியல் படிப்பை முடித்தார்.

கல்வி முடிந்து சிங்கப்பூர் திரும்பி முக்கிய சின்னங்களாக விளங்கும் செந்தோசா, சாங்கி விமான நிலையம், துறைமுகம் ஆகியவற்றை உருவாக்குவதற்கு முக்கியக் காரணமாக இருந்த இவர், சிங்கப்பூரின் சாஸ்சிறந்த விளையாட்டாளர்களில் ஒருவராக லும் விளங்கினார்.

காற்றிது, கிரிக்கெட், ஹாக்கி, ரக்பி என அனைத்திலும்



வெளத்தூக்

1956ஆம் ஆண்டு மெல்பர்னில் நடந்த ஒலிம்பிக் போட்டியில் பங்கேற்ற சிங்கப்பூர் ஹாக்கி குழுவிலும் இடம்பெற்றிருந்தார் டாக்டர் விஜய ரத்னம்.

இன்றைக்கும் விளையாட்டாளர் கள் அவரிடமிருந்து கற்றுக் கொள்ளும் அளவிற்கு நான்கு விளையாட்டுகளிலும் அவர் சிறப் பாகப் பெய்பட்டதாகப் பலரும் கருத்துரைத்தனர்.

சிறுபான்மையினருக்கு ஆதரவு

அளித்த அவர், தமிழ் முரசு நாளி தழின் முதல் நூலவராகவும் பொறுப்பு வகித்து இந்திய சமூகத் தின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்காக உழைத் தார்.

கடந்த பிப்ரவரி மாதம் தமது 94ஆம் வயதில் இறையனடி சேர்ந் தார் டாக்டர் விஜயரத்னம். உள் கட்டமைப்பைமையமாக்கக்கொண்டு நடத்தப்பட்ட தொகாசிய புலம்பெ யர்ந்தோர் மாநாட்டின் முதல் நாளில் தம் தந்தையின் சுயசரிதை வெளி யிடப்பட்டது மிகவும் பொருத்தமா னது என்றார் திரு விஜயேந்திரன்.

"சிங்கப்பூரின் வளர்ச்சிக்கான காரணங்களில் ஒன்று உள்கட்ட மையம். அவற்றுள் பெரும்பான்மை யானவற்றில் என் தந்தையின் கைவண்ணம் உள்ளது. தொக்ா சிய வட்டாரத்திலிருந்து வந்துள்ள பலரின் முன்னிலையில் என் தத் தையின் சுயசரிதை வெளியிட்டு அவனைக் கொள்கைகளில் பெரு மிதம் கொள்கிறேன்," என்று அவர் கூறினார்.



*This book was lovingly put together
by Vijiaratnam's children, as a small way to honour their father.*

*Intended also as a gift for his eight grandchildren, it attempts to capture the
essence of a brilliant man with impeccable character, who not only made olympic
strides at work and on the playing fields, but who was, above all else, a loving
and devoted husband, father and grandfather.*

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