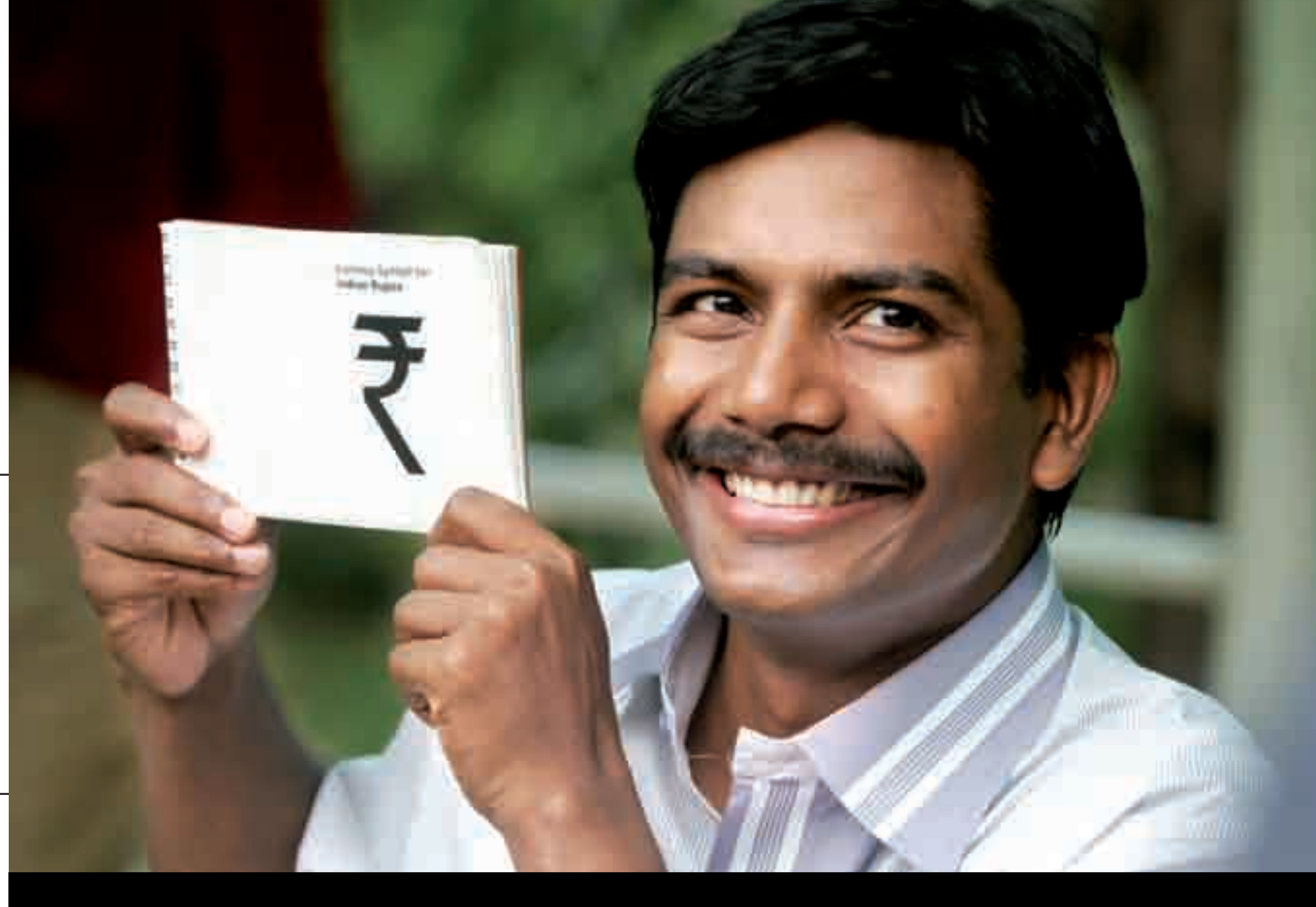




ECONOMY D. UDAYA KUMAR

Symbol of Success

TEXT: SWATI BHASIN



The designer of the rupee symbol now turns his attention to making jewellery from junk

A year ago Dharmalingam Udaya Kumar, 32, invented the rupee symbol. This month it has emerged from the mint stamped on coins of various denominations as well as ₹ 10 notes. Now, everybody in India, from a child buying a toffee for 50 paise in Nagercoil to a person paying ₹ 10 for parking at a busy bazaar in Delhi will be familiar with Kumar's design, which was the winner of a contest organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Kumar, who pursued his doctoral studies at the Industrial Design Centre at IIT Bombay, beat 3,000 other participants to

take the prize of ₹ 250,000, which he has donated to Prajwala, a Hyderabad-based NGO.

Currently an assistant professor at the Indian Institute of Technology in Guwahati, Kumar must be a proud man because India is only the second country in the world – the first being England – to have its currency symbol printed on its notes. And the fifth to have a symbol at all.

The Indian rupee mark is a blend of the Devanagari – '₹' and the Roman 'R' and is based on the Indian tricolour and arithmetic equivalence according to the designer. Kumar chose this fusion so that the mark would be unique and be easily differentiated from the rupiah of Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Passionate about graphic design, typography, type design and design research, the young designer has to his credit

a Tamil font, Parashakti, and a book on Tamil typography.

Born in Kallakurichi and brought up in Chennai, Kumar is fascinated by the ocean, so much so that he has designed Waterworld, a futuristic floating city to deal with congestion in Mumbai. A visit to his webpage www.dudayakumar.com reveals that the bachelor is a sports enthusiast, a nature lover and leads a simple lifestyle. Also, he strongly believes in himself and certain fundamental principles – righteousness, equality, love, trust, cleanliness and discipline. He says "Every time I see the symbol in newspapers and magazines, it strikes me, it is my biggest achievement so far." An achievement that has ensured his place in India's business history. ■

More on D. Uday Kumar at www.dudayakumar.com

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