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THE FRENCH LEAVE AFTER THE BRITISH. PUDUCHERRY RETURNS TO INDIA!

By Vatsala Mishra

On 1 November 1954 Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru also acting as the Union Minister of External Affairs and the French Ambassador Stanislas Ostrorog sign the Treaty putting an end to French Rule in India. The agreement reached on October 21 comes into effect today. Pondicherry, along with other, former French Territories will now be a part of the Union of India and will cease to be under the authority of the French Republic. While the buildings, customs, language and food of the region resonate with its French History, the people's struggle to join the Indian Union testifies to their loyalty and patriotism towards the nation. The annexation is a huge feat for India as it finally renders the integration of the nation complete.

Ancient History

The very first sourced of the History of Pondicherry come from the region's trade with Ancient Rome. These ancient Roman texts dated back to First Century A.D. (Anno Domini). They refer to a coastal town named Poduca or Poduke. They trace the development of the small coastal fishing town to a grand port city. Evidence dating back to the Fourth Century AD indicates the rule of the Pallava dynasty in the region. Close to 10th Century



Nehru in Pondicherry

AD the land was taken over by the Cholas of Thanjavur. During the thirteenth Century, the kingdom came under the Pandyas. This was followed by a brief period of rule by the Muslims from the North under the Sultanate of Madurai.

The Sultanate was also known as the Ma'bar Sultanate. It came in to being as Jalaluddin Ahsan Khan declared his Independence and broke off from the Delhi Sultanate. The sultanate only lasted for a short span of 8 years. The Sultanate under Ahsan Khan and his descendants ruled the region until 1378. The Sultanate ceased to exist when the eighth and last sultan, Sultan Ala-ud-Din Sikandar Shah lost to the forces of the Vijaya Nagar Empire.

However, the rule of Vijayanagar Empire was destined to last longer. Until 1638, Pondicherry remained a part of the Vijayanagar Empire after which the Sultan of Bijapur Yusuf Adil Shah took over. This Sultanate was also

European Rule

On May 20 1498, Portuguese Sailor Vasco Da Gama discovered the sea route to India. From then on the Portuguese began establishing harbour towns across the coastline of India. Then they took to establishing factories but were forced to leave within an year by the ruler of Gingee. However Pondicherry was then taken over by the Dutch and the Danes. The compete with them the ruler of Gingee invited the French to setup factories and trade.

The town of Pondicherry acquired greater area, and it became a great and prosperous town under the leadership of French governors like Lenoir (1726-1735), Dumas (1735-1741), and the ambitious Dupleix (1742-1754). However, French ambition was in direct conflict with English interests in India and the nearby kingdoms. Thus it led to the beginning of clashes

and political strife. The army of Dupleix was successfully in charge of the region between Hyderabad and Cape Comorin under Bussy's direction. However, when daredevil officer Robert Clive arrived in India, he crushed Dupleix's plans to establish a French Colonial India. Dupleix was called back to France following a setback and failed peace negotiations.

Following a peace agreement with England in Europe in 1765, the town is given back to France. On the old ruins, Governor Law de Lauriston began to reconstruct the town, and within five months, 200 European and 2000 Tamil homes had been built. Pondicherry was

strengthened the economy, the legal system, and the educational system.

Independence of Pondicherry

On October 18 1954, a referendum was held in Kizhur to decide the fate of Pondicherry. The administration of the referendum was carried out by French Authorities. The majority out of 178 Representatives of the Legislative Council voted for the merger with the Union of India. Only 8 members voted to be merged with France. As per the councillors about 4 lakh families wanted to join the Union of India. As a result, on November 1 1945, the French settlements of Pondicherry



Perry Landy and Kewal Singh signing the Document

traded back and forth between France and England for the following 50 years as a result of their frequent wars and peace agreements.

French couldn't regain permanent authority over Pondicherry until 1816, by which time the town had mostly lost its former splendour. Over the following 138 years, successive governors

(Pondicherry), Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam were transferred to the Indian Government. English and French were the two languages used in the official Treaty. The treaty comprised of thirty-one articles, with an attached protocol/annexure containing an additional 9 articles covering Nettapacom, Trubuvane, Yanam

and Mahe as well as educational institutions and buildings that continue to remain in French ownership. Citizens covered by the treaty were given options to choose their citizenship; most would become Indian citizens after the transfer, but were given the option to retain French citizenship. French citizens born in the

from the tradition followed by his predecessors during the French Rule, he would refrain from using his powers to nominate half of the six-membered Government-in-council (equivalent to council of ministries in Indian state assemblies). He assured that the assembly members can elect all the six members The chief

Article I
The Government of India shall be entrusted with the administration and related affairs of the erstwhile French Territories and Establishments in India. The special Administrative status conferred upon these establishments and territories prior to the de facto transfer will remain valid. In order to make any constitutional changes in this special status in the future, the wished of the people would have to be taken into consideration. This can be done, for instance through referendum.

Article II
In the communes of the Establishment (i.e. during the transfer of territories), the representative assemblies and the municipal regime shall continue to exist in their current forms.

Article III
The administrative rights for the territories in question, which until now rested with the Government of the French Republic will now be vested with the government of the Union of India

Article IV
The transfer of territories taking place now is de-facto (in effect). Before the de-jure transfer (Transfer by law, i.e. official) takes place, the question of citizenship of the residents of the regions will be clarified. Both the governments agree that citizens should be left free to choose their nationality

Article V
The civil servants of the territories will now fall under the Government of the Union of India. The government of India shall also take responsibility for their remunerations,

pensions and privileges. However those civil servants of these territories who are French in ethnicity or nationality or who belong to French Ministries shall be left free to return to France with their families.

Article VI
Until the de-jure transfer of powers, those pensions that are paid through the metropolitan budget will remain as the responsibility of the Government of Republic of France. While the Government of Union of India will be responsible for the payment of pensions, allowances and grants made through the local budget. The pension system in accordance with the regulations of the various local Retirement Funds shall continue to remain in effect.

Article VII
Nationals of France and the French Union who were born in or have resided in the Establishments before the date of the de facto transfer and are currently practising their professions there, shall be allowed to continue to do so without having to obtain additional credentials, diplomas, or permits or follow new formalities.

Article VIII
No changes shall be made to the charitable institutions or loan offices of the administration. They shall continue their operation as they do under their current status. Any changes made to these provisions in the future will be made only after being ratified by the people. The Private Charitable Institutions shall also continue to enjoy the privileges granted to them.

Article IX
The ownership of any

facilities or properties used for worship or for cultural activities shall belong to the missions or institutions in charge of managing those properties under the current parameters acknowledged by the Government of the Republic of France. The "Conseils de fabrique" and the management boards of the Missions would be acknowledged by the Government of the Union of India as legitimate corporate organisations with all the powers that go along with that status.

Article XIII
Nationals of the Republic of France who were either born in or reside in the territories before or on the date of de facto transfer shall be seen as equals to the Indians residing in the region and shall have the same freedoms of establishment, movements and trade as the Indian residents of these territories.

Article XIV
In respect of taxes and duties, other than customs duties and excises, Nationals of the Republic of France who were either born in or reside in the territories before or on the date of de facto transfer shall be, be subjected in regard to their persons, properties and enterprises to the same laws and regulations as are at present in force up to the date of the de-jure transfer

Article XV
Any person or corporate body that leaves or has already left the territories permanently shall be permitted freely, without any restraints, to repatriate their capital and properties over a period of ten years from the date of de facto transfer.



Map of French India

Establishments but living abroad would retain their French citizenship. Other articles cover the civil service, historical and judicial archives, pensions and recognition of educational degrees. French nationals to be allowed to transfer their property to France free of charge for a period of 10 years after the signing. Articles 21, 22, 23, 24 and 28 contain linguistic provisions; notably, article 28 indicates that the French language would remain the official language of the Establishments until the population voted otherwise.

First Chief Minister

Mr. Kewal Singh, The Chief Commissioner of Pondicherry gave his word to the leaders of both, The Congress and the People's Front Parties that breaking away

commissioner, Mr. Singh invited Maurice Pakkirisami Pillai for the formation of government led by Congress. The Congress with the support of independents was thus able to form a Government. The chief opposition party was the Communist (i.e. People's Front) with 12 seats. the first Pondicherry Representative Assembly demanded that Pondicherry should remain as a separate state within India putting into rest any speculations about merger with neighbouring states.

Legal Provisions

We wish to inform the reader that what they read hereafter are not exact quotations from the legal text of the de facto transfer of territories, rather their simplified summaries done by us, for the better understanding of the reader.

Feature

THE MERGER OF OTHER FRENCH TERRITORIES.

By Vatsala Mishra

Chandranagore

The Government of the Republic of France declared in 1948 that it shall allow the citizens of Chandranagore to decide their own fate on the question of joining either India or France. The declaration came after several agreements between the Republic of France and the Union of India. The consequent year, through a referendum the citizens voted in clear majority to join the Union of India following which through de-facto transfer of power the government of India tookover the administration of the region. In 1951 through the Treaty of The Free Town of Chandranagore, signed in Paris in the name of the presidents of The Union of India and The Republic of France through their representatives. In 1952 the de-jure transfer of the region to India was finally accomplished. The official notification of the same was also made by the Ministry of Public Affairs of the Republic of France in the same year.

The Government of India retained control over the civil servants of both French or Indian descent and took responsibility of their welfare, pensions and remuneration.

In 1953 the Government of India appointed a Commission consisting of Dr. Amarnath Jha, Chairman, P.S.C., Bihar to inquire and ascertain the wishes of the citizens of Chandernagore in regard to the future administration of the Territory. In 1954 the

government of India acted upon the recommendations of the Jha Commission as per which Chandernagore should have a Municipal Corporation. Public schools were developed with Hindi and French. Chandernagore was merged with the State of West Bengal 2nd day of October 1954

Mahe

The History of the French in Mahe dates back to in 1721. Inspired by the British the French decided to



fortify their territory as they built their first fort in Kerala, Thalassery, in 1670. They then built a storeroom at Punnol and bought another fort, Fort Mahe, in 1769. The fort was destroyed during the war against the British and the remnants of the fort are still found in "Malyammel Parambu". The French also built forts Dufan and Kanthe at Mahe.

Like Pondicherry the village of Mahe too went to and fro between France and Britain due to several wars and treaties. Finally in 1817 it became a French Territory. However, since the rest of the Malabar remained under the British.

Gandhi visited Mahe on 13 January 1934. Inspired by him, the people of Mahe started organising themselves through various ways one such was the

Mahe Sports Club founded in the same year. In 1938 the Mahe Mahajanasabha was formed. In 1938 a public opinion poll was carried out where the people overwhelmingly voted for a merger with India. On 21st October 1948 the people of Mahe captured the police station and captured the bungalows of French officials and collaborators. The next day they uprooted French Flags and replaced them with Indian Flags.

This did not go without repercussions from France. After four days, a French Ship anchored on the coast of France and swept away the revolutionaries, they re-hoisted the French Flag in the region. Shortly after a French Warship was anchored in Mahe, but perhaps only to spread terror as no war was ensued and the warship left after 2 days.

In April 1954 leaders agitating for the Independence of Mahe such as Usman Master and Ammancheri Bhaskar were arrested. Their arrest led to Satyagrah in Mahe. Several leaders were killed. From May the members of the legislative assembly began to demand the merger of Mahe with the Indian Union. On 8th May 1954 Indian flag hoisted at Naluthara in Mahe. On 5th June 1954 Mahe Railroad was opened. On 18th June the rice transportation through Mahe Railway Station was blocked by Protestors. Such agitations went on till 16th July 1954 when Mahe finally became independent.

Yanam



Yanam (or Yanaon) was believed to be a Dutch Colony until 1720s. However, This is considered to be a rumor since there is no corroborative evidence to indicate the same. Even if it wasn't technically a colony of he Dutch in administrative definitions, The Dutch certainly set their feet here as can be gathered from Dutch-built Indigo Wells still found in West Yanam. The Dutch also built a fort in Yanam where they stored their currency that they minted at Neelapalli, A village close to Yanam. The fort, today known as Saali Kota or Saalivandru, meaning "shawl-hut" has been taken over by cloth weavers since the departure of the Dutch.

In 1723 Yanam was presented to Marquess of Bussy by the ruler of Vizianagaram as a token of appreciation for Bussy's aid in the war against the rulers of Bobbili. Bussy Street reminisces of this incident in Yanam even today. The French now established a trading post in the region, however, four years later in 1727 they returned the region to India as it was not economically profitable or viable for them to retain Yanam. In 1731 Governor General Dupleix (of France) regained control over Yanam. In 1751 the Nizam of Hyderabad seized control over Yanam. The region

then went into the British Hands till the end of the Napoleonic wars. In 1814 the French re-established their control over the region.

A coup d'état began in Yanam on 13 June 1954, enraging the French Authorities in Pondicherry. A cruiser was dispatched by the French Government to Yanam to capture the leaders advocating a merger with the Union of India and to re-establish French Authority.

In the aftermath of the coup, the last French administrator of Yanam, George Sala was summoned by André Ménard, Governor General of Pondicherry in June 1954.

An Acting Commissioner was appointed for France for 14 days. He was Dadala Raphael Ramannay an active leader for the Merger. The commissioner of Pondicherry Kewal Singh paid a visit to Yanam and requested Dadala's return to Pondicherry to continue his activities there. On 3 July, accepting Kewal Singh's request, Dadala left Yanam, after ensuring all arrangements for its proper administration. Until 13 June 1954 Yanam remained under the French authorities. It was through Military action that India gained control over the region. On 1 November 1954 along with Mahe, Chandranagore and Pondicherry, the defacto transfer of Yanam administration from Republic of France to the Union of India took place.

Editorial

PONDICHERRY: FRENCH, INDIAN OR IN BETWEEN?

By Vatsala Mishra

As not even a decade has passed since the independence of India from British Rule, It is not a rare sight to spot British-styled architecture in any part of the country. Even are systems of Education and Judiciary British Rule is still reminiscent. However, Pondicherry sets itself aside as she speaks French Fluently and relishes French Delicacies. However, her Indianness too cannot be questioned as she relentlessly fought for a merger with the Union of India. Can Pondicherry be seen as a little France in India, or should we call her a part of India that is covered in the aroma of France and presents a unique cultural and social system whose developments in the days to come would be an intriguing sight to observe!

The Locals of Pondicherry have displayed patriotism through their struggles for independence from the French Coloniser and their die-hard advocies for joining the union of India. These locals have also held on to the French Culture as they colloquilly talk in French and relish French delicacies such as Salad Nicoise, Poisson Du Jour, Pate De Foie Gras, Rillettes, Bisque De Crevettes, Poulet Aux Champignons A La Crème, Quiche, Cassoulet, Sole Meuniere, Ratatouille, Crème Caramel, Coq Au Vin, Croissant, Bouillabaisse, Crepes-Sweet And Savory, Croque Monsieur, Cheese Fondue, French Pastries, and the list

goes on. The people here are habitual of spending their leisure hours in French Cafe's and Bars and streets that too are designed in French Styles and serve French street food.

But it was in these French styles Cafe's that the talks of Independence and reunion with the Indian motherland were kindled. It was in these French styles streets that the agitations for merger with India took place. The homes and buildings are fashioned in French Style by the stories of the struggle of Independence that are narrated to the children here reek with Indian Passion. Pondicherry wears a French Attire and speaks in a French Tongue but her heart and soul are Indian and she has testified that beyond doubt.

Even as we go through the legal provisions, The citizens of Pondicherry have easy access to French citizenship. Civil Cervants Hailing from France can continue to hold their positions in Pondicherry and are remunerated by the Government of India. The Sign Boards here too are in French.

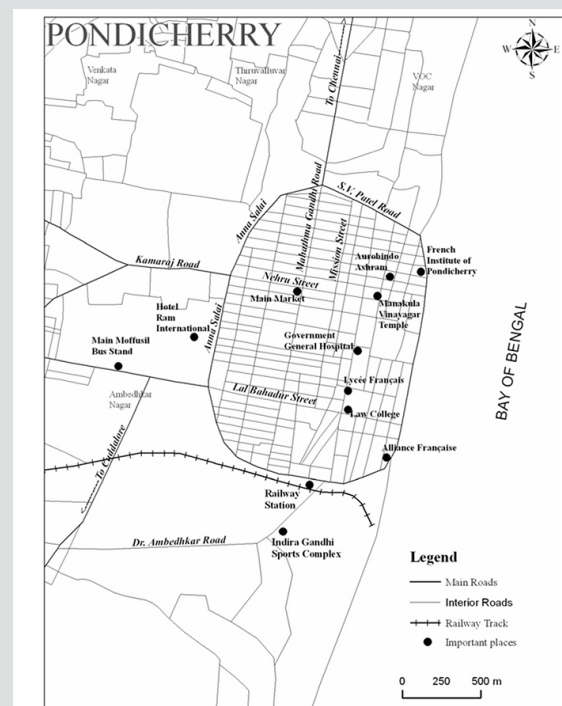
The present transfer of powers has been de facto i.e. in effect but the de-jure, or transfer by law is still awaited, though it is certainly assured. Until the de-jure transfer of power takes place several French Colonial Laws would continue to be effective. These laws mainly pertain to administrative officials, their remunerations and privileges. They also deal with export and imports and presently favour

France in matters of trade from the port of Pondicherry. Churches of Pondicherry also presently remain under the administration of French Missionaries. After the de-jure transfer of powers, these matters will hopefully be in the hands of the government of India.

As temples such as th Kamakshi Amman Temple, Sri Dolls hand-crafted in Terra-cotta. The Famous Karraikal sarees of Pondicherry closely bind her with Indian culture. Crafts and Art of a region are closely associated with the ideological heritage. Pondicherry receives not only the strength of Unity of Indian Nationalist Movement but also the vigour of the French Revolution that set it apart from any other region in the world. Making it an even greater asset for the country.

The most significant way in which Pondicherry speaks of its Indian roots is its compassionate exercise of the noble thought of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam', that is 'The World is One Family' as it houses French foods, culture, infrastructure and most importantly French People in its affectionate Indian lap in the trust of her India born citizens, crafts, cuisine and architecture in a beautiful symbiotic relationship with few matches around the world.

Pondicherry can thus be seen as souvenir of the journey of cultural exchanges with France that has now been restored forever to India with colours of France still intact but amalgamated in the larger cosmopolitan hues rooted in the Global and Internal Outlook. Therefore there must be no doubts left lingering about the Indianess of Pondicherry who has established herself as the epitome of International as well as national harmony and fraternity that India stands for.



Pondicherry also becomes a spectacle for International Peace that India had stood for since the times of the Making of the Constitution when Prime Minister Nehru moved in the Objectives Resolution that spoke as one of its significant pointers, about the commitment of India for International Peace. A commitment that India is still spear heading through the Non Alignment Movement. Pondicherry also commits itself to this stance of India as it guarantees equal right to French citizens born or domiciled in Pondicherry.

Assumption Church, The Church of Lady of Lourdes and many more, Pondicherry also establishes her loyalty to the idea of Secularism that forms the heart of the Constitution of India. She puts the beauty of coming together and praying together over and above the differences of Religion.

While the French arts of hand-made paper and papier-mache have left a mark on the land. Pondicherry also resonates strongly with India through her arts and crafts from the hand-woven Korai mats that women weave together as they sit in the bazaars