

During the Asia Urbs project a number of designs were prepared to improve public spaces like the Bharathi Park, Gandhi Plaza and the Beach Promenade. Bharathi Park renovation was completed in 2006 and the other two projects are now under implementation.



The design of the Pondicherry Pavilion drew its inspiration from the contrasting and complementing architecture of French and Tamil parts of the town. The typical Tamil veranda and an imposing French Gate characterised the pavilion. The plan of Pondicherry formed the floor pattern and light cubes on poles depicted images of Pondicherry. The narration of the project was through exhibition panels and videos that displayed images and impressions. The Pavilion was managed by a team of Indian and Chinese staff.

A small shop and a cafe brought Pondicherry close to the visitors - to taste, feel and take home!

The cafe served light snacks - Tamil and French. The shop sold handicraft items produced in and around Pondicherry for visitors to take back as mementos. The products were tagged with a label carrying a message: "Save Asian Heritage," The shop also sold a number of Publications.

AN APPEAL:

*Dear Pondicherrians,
This international recognition and honour that has come to Pondicherry also brings with it responsibilities: let us all work together to preserve our unique Tamil and French architecture, keep our city clean and make it a better place to live!*

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Exhibition

PONDICHERRY PAVILION

at the Shanghai World Expo 2010
in the Urban Best Practices Area (UBPA)

May 1 to October 31, 2010



We welcome Pondicherrians to see what was showcased at the Expo

January 26 - February 2, 2011

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Exhibition Hall
Goubert Avenue, Puducherry
Time: 9.00 - 11.30 am & 4.00 - 8.00 pm

PONDICHERRY PAVILION was independent of the Indian Pavilion at the World Expo. City of Pondicherry, was invited to showcase the **Asia Urbs Programme** carried out by the Pondicherry government in collaboration with INTACH in 2002-2004. The title of the project explains the concept best:

Achieving Economic & Environmental Goals through Heritage Preservation Initiatives



The idea of **Urban Best Practices Area** within the larger World Expo theme of **Better City Better Life** was to showcase projects and initiatives to address and solve urban problems resulting from rapid growth, traffic congestions, environmental degradation, loss of heritage etc. from all over the world. About 50 cities from across the world participated with their own Pavilions during the entire 6 months and another 30 cities showcased their projects through short exhibitions and seminars.

In a letter from the Indian Consulate in Shanghai to the Pondicherry Municipality, in September 2008 the reason for selection was stated as:

“The best practices from select cities around the world are proposed to be showcased in the ,Urban Best Practices Area (UBPA) pavilion. This section would be the largest thematic pavilion of the EXPO 2010. In this regard I am happy to convey that at the recommendation of World Bank, the Shanghai Expo Committee has identified two Indian cities - Ahmedabad and Pondicherry - for being invited to participate in UBPA section. The invitation stems from Pondicherry’s successful partnership with INTACH to develop an integrated program for urban environmental management and heritage preservation,,

The Pondicherry Pavilion (about 220 sqm in size) was located inside a hall meant to showcase heritage preservation initiatives. Our neighbours were Liverpool, Venice and two Chinese heritage cities Hangzhou and Suzhou. During the six months of the Expo more than 700,000 persons passed through Pondicherry Pavilion. This project was carried out by the Department of Tourism, Government of Puducherry and coordinated by INTACH Pondicherry.

Our Pavilion presented the projects carried out under the Asia Urbs Programme, a European Commission initiative to bring Asian and European cities together for exchanging best practices in the area of urban development. The project was carried out by the

Pondicherry Government in partnership with 2 European cities: Villeneuve-sur-Lot in France and Urbino, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Italy. In addition there were panels on history and important personalities of Pondicherry.

The Pavilion was formally inaugurated by Sri Iqbal Singh, Lt.Governor of Puducherry and the Honourable Tourism Minister, Sri Mallady Krishnarao on the 14th June.

The Pondicherry Asia Urbs project addressed urban issues, with focus on heritage preservation, in order to improve the quality of life and the local economy through the following targeted activities:

- Upgrading the local urban economy and the environment through heritage preservation;
- Initiating participatory decentralised planning and management practices;
- Sharing the approach, process, experience and information related to the project with various stakeholders.

Highlights of the project were the restoration of a stretch of Vysial Street in the Tamil Quarter which won the **UNESCO Heritage Award in 2008** and the restoration of 10 listed heritage buildings under the matching grant scheme where 50% of the restoration cost was borne by the owner and the rest provided by the project up to a maximum of Rs. 2.5 lakhs.