Puducherry

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Puducherry, formerly known as **Pondicherry** /ˌpɒndɪˈtʃɛri/, is a Union Territory of India formed out of four exclaves of former French India and named after the largest Puducherry district.

The Tamil name is (*Puducherry*), which means "New Town".[4] Historically known as *Pondicherry* (*Pāṇṭiccēri*), the territory changed its official name to *Puducherry* (*Putuccēri*) on 20 September 2006.[5]

Union Territory of Puducherry Pondicherry	
Union Territory	
Government of Puducherry **Seal of Puducherry**	
Location of Puducherry (marked in red) in India Coordinates: 11.93°N 79.13°E	
Country	India
Formation	7 Jan 1963
Capital and Largest city	Pondicherry
District(s)	4
Government	
• **Lieutenant Governor**	A. K. Singh (additional charge) [1]
• **Chief Minister**	N. Rangaswamy (AINRC)
• **Legislature**	Unicameral (33*seats)
Area	
• **Total**	492 km2 (190 sq mi)
Population	
• **Total**	1,244,464
• **Rank**	2nd
• **Density**	2,500/km2 (6,600/sq mi)
Demonym	Puducherrian
Time zone	IST (UTC+05:30)
ISO 3166 code	IN-PY
Official languages	Tamil Malayalam Telugu
Website	www.py.gov.in (https://www.py.gov.in/)[2][3]
^* 30 elected, 3 nominated	

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Geography

The union territory of Puducherry consists of four small unconnected districts: Pondicherry, Karaikal and Yanam on the Bay of Bengal and Mahé on the Arabian Sea. Pondicherry and Karaikal have the largest areas and population, and are both enclaves of Tamil Nadu. Yanam and Mahé are enclaves of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala respectively. The territory has an area of 492 square kilometres (190 sq mi): Pondicherry 293 km², Karaikal 160 km², Mahé 9 km² and Yanam 30 km². Its 2011 population was 1,244,464.

Some of Puducherry's districts are themselves amalgamations of non-contiguous enclaves, often called *pockets* in India. The Pondicherry district is made of 11 such pockets, some of which are very small and entirely surrounded by the territory of Tamil Nadu. The Mahé district is made up of three pockets. This unusual geography is a legacy of the colonial period with Puducherry retaining the borders of former French India.

Map showing the districts of Puducherry

Rivers

All four districts of Puducherry are located in the coastal region. Five rivers in Pondicherry district, seven in Karaikal, two in Mahé and one in Yanam drain into the sea, but none originates within the territory.

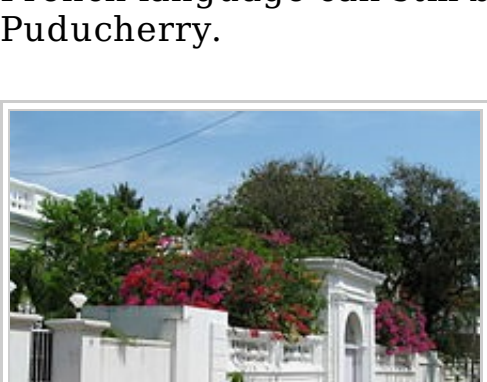
History

The earliest recorded history of Puducherry can be traced to the 2nd century CE. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* mentions a marketplace named Poduke (ch. 60). G. W. B. Huntingford identified suggested this might be a site about 2 miles from the modern Pondicherry, which was possibly the location of Arikamedu (now part of Ariyankuppam). Huntingford noted that Roman pottery was found at Arikamedu in 1937. In addition, archaeological excavations between 1944 and 1949 showed that it was "a trading station to which goods of Roman manufacture were imported during the first half of the 1st century AD".[6]

Sri Potti Sri Ramulu Yanam Bridge

French influence

The plan of the city of Puducherry is based on the French grid pattern and features perpendicular streets. The town is divided into two sections: the French Quarter (*Ville Blanche* or 'White town') and the Indian quarter (*Ville Noire* or 'Black Town'.) Many streets retain French names, and villas in French architectural styles are a common sight. In the French quarter, the buildings are typically colonial style with long compounds and stately walls. The Indian quarter consists of houses lined with verandas and with large doors and grilles. These French and Indian-style houses are preserved from destruction by an organisation named INTACH. The French language can still be seen on signs and menus, and heard in Puducherry.


French architectural styles are common, a reminder of the years that the territory was part of French India.

Puducherry has a number of residents with French passports: most are of Indian descent and a small number are of non-Indian descent. At the time of Puducherry's transfer to India in 1954, residents were given a choice to remain French or to become Indian citizens. Those with French passports today are generally descendants of residents who chose to keep their French citizenship.

Several monuments in the city pertain to the French period. A French Consulate is located in Puducherry, along with several cultural organisations. Another important building is Le Foyer du Soldat legion hall for soldiers who served in French wars.

Among the French cultural organisations, the French Institute of Pondicherry, the Puducherry Centre of the École française d'Extrême-Orient and a branch of the Alliance Française are noteworthy. A French-medium school system, the Lycée Français de Pondichéry, continues to operate under the aegis of the French Minister of National Education.

Official languages of government

Consulate of France located at Goubert Avenue, White Town, Puducherry

The Pondicherry Official Language Act 1965 (Act No. 3 of 1965) states that "the Tamil language shall (…) be the language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory." It also provides for the use of the Malayalam and Telugu languages is the Mahé and Yanam districts. The law also states that English "may be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory". Contrary to a still widespread belief, the French language has no official status in the Union Territory.[7]

The languages of Puducherry are Tamil (89%), Malayalam (4.8%) and Telugu (2.9%). The status of each language varies by district. When communicating between districts of different languages, generally Tamil, English or Hindi are used as Lingua franca.

- Tamil is used by the Puducherry government, especially used when communicating within and between the Tamil majority districts (Pondicherry and Karaikal) and is the language of official decrees. Telugu is widely spoken in the Yanam district while Malayalam is spoken in the Mahé district.

Official symbols

On 16 April 2007, the government of Puducherry announced that the following were to be its state symbols:[8]

State symbols of Puducherry

Song	Invocation to Goddess Tamil
Animal	Squirrel
Bird	Koel
Flower	Cannonball tree's flower
Tree	Bael fruit tree

Government and administration

Puducherry is a Union Territory of India rather a state, which implies that governance and administration falls directly under federal authority. However, along with Delhi, Puducherry is one of two union territories in India that is entitled by special constitutional amendments to have an elected legislative assembly and a cabinet of ministers, thereby conveying partial statehood.

Puducherry Legislative Assembly

The Centre is represented by the lieutenant governor, who resides at the Raj Nivas (Le Palais du Gouverneur) at the Park, the former palace of the French governor. The central government is more directly involved in the territory's financial well-being unlike states, which have a central grant that they administer. Consequently, Puducherry has at various times, enjoyed lower taxes, especially in the indirect category.

Special administration status

According to the Treaty of Cession of 1956, the four territories of former French India territorial administration are permitted to make laws with respect to specific matters. In many cases, such legislation may require ratification from the federal government or the assent of the President of India.

Article II of the Treaty states:

> "The Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to 1 November 1954. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people."

The territory changed its name to Puducherry in 2006.

In culture

Puducherry was the residence of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). The Sri Aurobindo Ashram still operates from Puducherry. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother stayed here. Their writings remain a tremendous source of spiritual awakening that emphasises the progress of humanity and its spiritual brotherhood. A unique experimental city, Auroville, the brainchild of the Mother, whose inhabitants are drawn from all parts of the world, is situated on the outskirts of the city.

Puducherry was the setting for Yann Martel's first third of his Booker Prize-winning novel *Life of Pi* (2001). A portion of the subsequent film adaptation of the same name was filmed there.[9]

Lee Langley's novel *A House in Pondicherry* (1996) was set there.

"Prince Pondicherry" is an Indian character from Roald Dahl's children's novel *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* (1964). The prince orders Willy Wonka to build a palace of chocolate in India; the palace melts in the hot sun.

Puducherry was where the national poet ShriSubramania Bharati wrote several of his masterpieces. His local disciple Bharathidasan wrote poems dealing with social revolution and emancipation of women.

Economy

Output

The gross state domestic product of Puducherry, at market prices estimated by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation with figures in millions of Indian rupees grew from 1,840 to 37,810 million rupees from 1980- 2000.

The Promenade in the main town Puducherry is one of the most popular tourist attractions of the Union Territory

Year	Gross State Domestic Product
1980	1,840
1985	3,420
1990	6,030
1995	13,200
2000	37,810

Puducherry's gross state domestic product for 2004 was estimated at $2 billion in current prices.

Fisheries

The potential for fisheries is substantial in the Union Territory. The four regions of the Union Territory have a coastline of 45 km with *675* of inshore waters, 1.347 hectares (3.33 acres) of inland water and 800 ha of brackish water. 27 marine fishing villages and 23 inland fishing villages host a fishermen population of about 65,000 of which 13,000 are actively engaged in fishing. Tanks and ponds are also tapped for commercial fish rearing.

Power

The present availability of power is about 400 MW.

Tourism

Puducherry is one of the most popular tourist spots for national and international tourists. There are several beaches here. There is also Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where Sri Aurobindo spent his last years. There are several temples,churches,monuments, parks and mosques which attract tourists.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry

Transport

Rail

Puducherry is connected by a railway branch line from the five-way junction at Viluppuram and Chennai. The railway line is a broad gauge line. Express trains come from Chennai, Bangalore, Viluppuram, Mumbai, Bhubaneswar, Howrah and other cities. It takes approximately four hours to reach Puducherry from Chennai by train.

A new broad gauge line from Karaikal to Nagore is underway.

Puducherry railway station

Road

Puducherry is endowed with excellent infrastructure on par with India's best. A network of all weather metalled roads connecting every village exists in the territory. Puducherry has a road length of 2552 km (road length per 4.87 km²), the highest in the country.

Road length comparison with Tamil Nadu and India as a whole			
Total Road Length (in Puducherry)			2552 km
Road Length per 1000 km²	Puducherry	Tamil Nadu	India
	4575	1572	663

Classification of roads

Sl. No.	Type of road	Length in (km)
1	National Highways	64.450
2	State Highways	49.304
3	District & Other Roads	
	Puducherry – 173.384	
	Karaikal – 55.162	
	Mahé – 19.622	
	Yanam – 26.460	
	274.628	274.628
4	Rural Roads	
	Puducherry – 164.964	
	Karaikal – 83.470	
	248.434	248.434
	Grand Total	**636.816**

Yanam

Air

- Pondicherry Airport is situated at Lawspet. The Puducherry Government upgraded the airport in 2012[10] with a new terminal building and apron to accommodate larger aircraft. The new terminal building was inaugurated in January 2013 and scheduled flights to Bangalore were launched.[11] A MoU has been signed with Airports Authority of India for expansion of Pondicherry Airport in two phases.[12]
- Karaikal Airport, a greenfield airport to be ready by 2014, will be the India's first airport to be built entirely with private capital.[13]

Once again, from 14 April 2015 as PM N.Modi announces the city to be a Smart City - Pondicherry (PNY) is now connected by Air India with an ATR aircraft service 6 times a week except wednesday, its an afternoon service departing from Bangalore returning by evening to Bangalore. One can earn & redeem Star Alliance miles on the route.

Education

Puducherry has almost a hundred per cent literacy level.

Pondicherry University

Pondicherry University is a Central University.[14]

Colleges

- Aarupadai Veedu Medical College & Hospital[15]
- SHRI KRISHNAA COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY, Mannadipet, Puducherry[16]
- Achariya College of Engineering Technology[17]
- Alpha College of Engineering and Technology
- Bharathithasan Government college for Women
- Bharathiyar College of Engineering and Technology, Karaikal
- Christ College of Engineering and Technology
- Indira Gandhi college of arts and science
- Indira Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute
- Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research
- Indira Gandhi Institute of Dental Sciences
- Kasthurba College for Women, Villianur
- Mahatma Gandhi Government Arts College, Mahé
- Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute
- Mahatma Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Dental Sciences
- Mahé Co-operative College for Higher Studies and Education
- JIPMER Hospital and Medical college
- Manakula Vinayagar Institute of Technology
- National Institute of Technology, Puducherry
- Mother Theresa Post Graduate and Research Institute of Health Sciences, Puducherry. [18]
- Orient Flight School[19]
- Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Institute of Engineering and Technology[20]
- Pondicherry Engineering College
- Pondicherry Institutes of Medical Sciences
- Rajiv Gandhi ayurveda medical college, Mahe
- Rajiv Gandhi College of Engineering and Technology
- Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences
- Regency Institute of Technology
- RVS engineering College
- Shree Sathguru Engineering College
- Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education
- Sri Ganesh College of Engineering & Technology
- Sri Lakshmi Narayana Institute of Medical Sciences
- Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College
- Sri Manakula Vinayagar Medical College & Hospital
- Sri Venkateshwaraa Medical College Hospital and Research Centre
- Tagore Arts College
- University College of Engineering
- Vinayaka Missions Medical College
- PoPe John Paul II College Of Education
- Dr SJS Paul Memorial College of Engineering and Technology

See also

- Puducherry
  - Puducherry (Lok Sabha constituency)
  - Road Network in Pondicherry District
- French colonies
  - Causes for Liberation of French colonies in India
  - French East India Company
  - French colonial empire
  - French India
  - Municipal Administration in French India

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External links

- Official website of the Government of the Union Territory of Puducherry (http://www.pon.nic.in/)
- Treaty establishing De Jure Cession of French Establishments in India (http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5302/Treaty+establishing+De+Jure+Cession+of+French+Establishments+in+India)
- Official website of Department of Tourism, Pondicherry (http://tourism.puducherry.gov.in/)
- Official website for Tourism Development, Pondicherry (http://www.pondytourism.in)
- Pondicherry's City Guide - Hotels (https://www.zoompondy.com/hotels-resorts-accommodation-in-pondicherry/)
- Puducherry travel guide from Wikivoyage

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Categories: Puducherry | South India | Tamil-speaking countries and territories

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