

### RUE DE LA COMPAGNIE

In 1664, Louis the 14th and the 'Contrôleur général des finances' Colbert set up an East Indian company, following the model of the British and the Dutch in the early 17th century. The 'Compagnie des Indes Orientales' received trading rights from the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb to set up an establishment in Surat in 1666. The southern operations from Pondicherry commenced in 1673 and prospered until 1750's with textiles being the largest trade item. The company was unable to sustain profitable ventures during the times of war and by 1769 the Compagnie des Indes Orientales was taken over by the French crown.



### RUE FRANCOIS MARTIN

Governor General Francois Martin is considered to be the 'founder of Pondicherry' where he settled as early as 1673, as its first administrator. He was made the first governor general in 1699 and Pondicherry was established as the headquarters of French India in 1701. The urban character of the city began to evolve after he implemented a grid patterned Dutch town plan. Indian weavers and artisans came to settle in Pondicherry due to his initiatives, making it a flourishing trade centre.



### தும்மா வீதி RUE DUMAS



### RUE DUMAS

Governor General Pier Benoit Dumas (1734-41) was instrumental in enlarging both trade and territory of Pondicherry. He gained Karikal for the French in 1738 and he initiated the French policy known as 'nababism' and earned the right to mint gold pagodas and silver fanams in Pondicherry from the Mughal courts (1736). The income from this venture augmented greatly the profit of the La Compagnie Française de Indes Orientales and due to this new wealth, the urban development of Pondicherry was completed by the addition of many ornamental buildings.

### ANANDA RANGAPILLAI STREET

Ananda Rangapillai (1709 -1761) was a wealthy commercial agent working for the Compagnie des Indes as a 'courtier' who also acted as chief interpreter or 'dubash'. He served under four governor generals, notably Dupleix. During his governorship he was made Diwan (councillor) and 'chief of the Indians'. Rangapillai maintained a private diary in which he left a vivid picture of Dupleix and Pondicherry of the 18th century. Rangapillai's home, a fine example of Franco-Tamil architecture, built in 1735, still exists on the street that bears his name.



### RUE ROMAIN ROLLAND

Romain Rolland was a famous 20th century French dramatist, novelist, essayist and art historian after whom Pondicherry's public library is also named. Romain Rolland had close ties to Mahatma Gandhi with whom he had been corresponding for a very long time. After the merger with India, when the new authorities wanted to erase the symbols of colonial domination, but also recognize the special relation Pondicherry had with France, the name of Romain Rolland came naturally.



### RUE MAHÉ DE LABOURDONNAIS

Comte Mahé de La Bourdonnais (1699-1753) was a French naval officer who achieved success as the governor of the Isle de France (now Mauritius). He came to Pondicherry to aid Dupleix and participated in the first Carnatic war by laying siege to Madras which he took in 1746. Having negotiated the surrender of Madras with the British, he stood in opposition to Dupleix who wanted the complete destruction of Madras. La Bourdonnais also distinguished himself in the defence of the French outpost of Mahé. When he came back to France, he was jailed at the Bastille due to the accusations against him sent to Compagnie by Duplex.



### RUE LALLY-TOLLONDAL

Governor General Arthur de Lally, Baron de Tollondal (1758-61), was a renowned hero of the French army. He was personally commissioned by the directors of the Compagnie, and endorsed by King Louis the 15th to fight the seven years war in India (also known as the third Carnatic war). Of Irish origin, he was eager to defeat the British. Made the governor general in 1756, he launched a series of attacks against the British soon after his arrival in Pondicherry. Having failed to besiege Madras, and left on their own by the king, the French subsequently lost the war and Pondicherry was handed to the British in 1761, who razed the town nearly to the ground and it was abandoned for four years. Lally, accused by the Supreme council of Pondicherry of treachery, was sentenced to death in 1766.

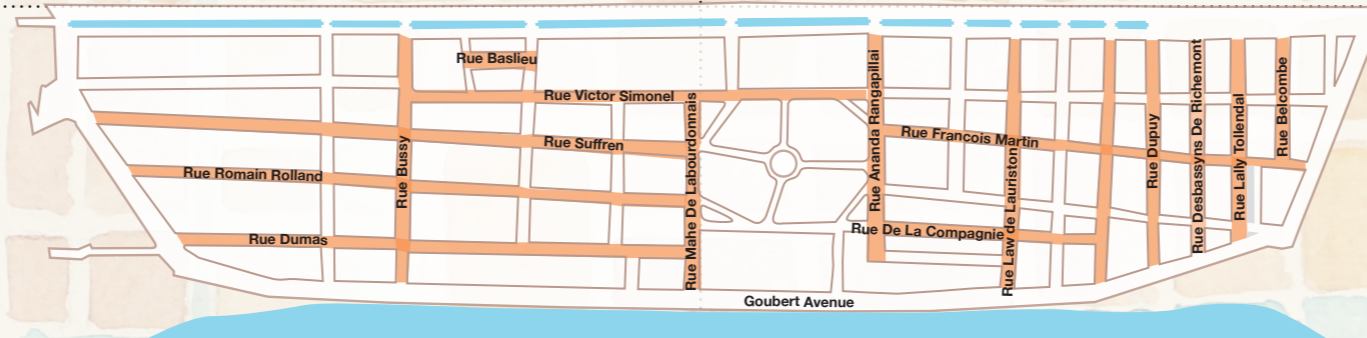
### RUE LAW DE LAURISTON

Governor General Jean Law de Lauriston (1765-1777) was sent as the governor general when Pondicherry was given back to the French, following the peace treaty of Paris in 1763. His primary task was to re-build the town and he was successful in restoring some of its lost glory in a period of acute financial distress and political disorder. The current Raj Niwas was constructed at this time as the New Government Palace by the engineer Bourcet, and was extended at the end of the 19th century. Works on the canal (which still exists today and divides the French and Tamil town) were planned at this time and slowly realized between 1770 and 1827.



### RUE DE BELLECOMBE

Governor General Guillaume Léonard de Bellecombe (1777-1778) was the governor general of Pondicherry from 1777 to 1778. Hostilities created by the American war of independence led the British to lay siege to Pondicherry in 1778. Guillaume Leonard de Bellecombe bravely held ground for ten weeks after which he was forced to surrender to the English.



### RUE SUFFREN

Admiral Pierre André de Suffren de Saint Tropez, Bailli de Suffren (1729-1788) was a brilliant naval commander known both for his nerve and skills in handling his ships. Suffren navigated the south eastern coasts of India in the 1780's to support Bussy during the French-Indian war.



### RUE DE BUSSY

Charles Joseph Patissier, Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau (1783-85) was the first lieutenant of Dupleix who was keen to further the French influence among the local rulers by participating in regional conflicts. Marquis de Bussy aided Count Lally in the third Carnatic war in 1757 during the French campaign against the British in Madras. When the French lost, he along with Lally, was taken as a prisoner of war but was later released in Europe. He returned to Pondicherry twenty one years later as the new governor general in 1781. The two years of his governorship were spent in continuous warfare against the British until a shaky peace was established in 1783-84.

### RUE DUPUY

Governor André Julien, Comte Dupuy (1816-25). On behalf of Louis the 18th, Comte Dupuy restored the French sovereignty of the settlements in India after the peace treaty of Paris of 1814. He made significant contributions to the legal proceedings in Pondicherry by applying uniform legal codes for the French establishments. Dupuy had found in Pondicherry a poor and deprived population which he tried to help during his generous, but weak administration. He also started the boulevards (of the present town) in order to clean the ruins of the old fortifications destroyed by the British in 1793.



### RUE DESBASSAYNS DE RICHEMONT

Governor General Comte Desbassayns de Richemont (1826-1828). First made administrator of the colony, he was named governor per interim soon after, which made him the youngest of all the governors of French India (25 years). In two years of governorship he managed to completely renew the French administration. Under Governor de Richemont significant advancements were made using a strong authoritarian policy in the fields of health, education, law, commerce and industries. Under his patronage the College Royal, now the Lycée Français de Pondicherry, was established on 26th October, 1826 and Bibliothèque publique, was inaugurated in 1827. He brought in qualified European workers with a view to introduce industrialisation and the first modern spinning wheel was established in 1829. During his administration, the boulevards were completed and the 'Cours Chabrol' (Goubert Salai) was started.



### RUE GOUBERT

Edouard Goubert, the French Indian creole who played a major political role during the decolonization process, became the first chief minister of the Union territory of Pondicherry in the independent India.



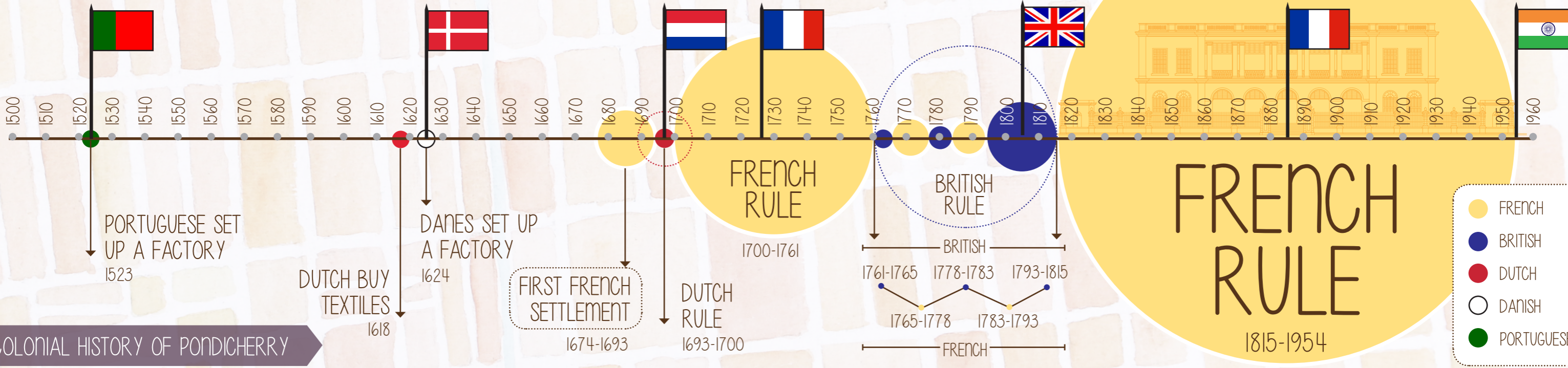
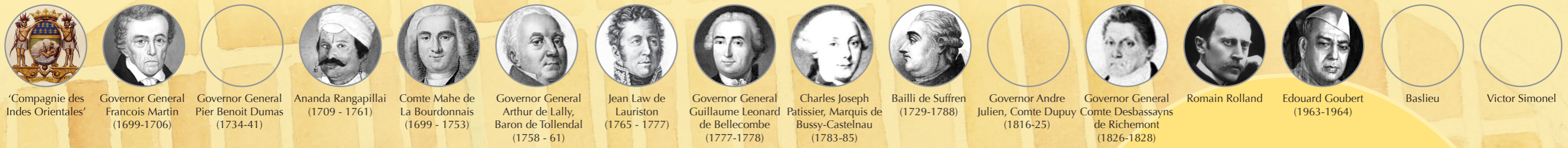
### RUE BASLIEU

Baslieu was a wealthy settler who died just before the Seven years war leaving no children. He gave all his fortune to the poor children and widows of Pondicherry, but as it was placed with the French Company, which actually was bankrupted in 1764 and suspended in 1769, the beneficiaries had to wait for more than 15 years before receiving the benefits.

### RUE VICTOR SIMONEL

Victor Simonel was a young aspiring officer, who belonged to a well known French family of Pondicherry and having completed his studies at the Collège colonial, he served during the WWI. He was killed in action at the battle of Verdun. After the war, the street was renamed to honor his sacrifice as a symbol.





COLONIAL HISTORY OF PONDICHERRY

## INTRODUCTION

Any town is truly experienced when we have walked its streets and felt its air. We invite you to walk through our town and take in the unique Franco-Tamil atmosphere that pervades the streets of Pondicherry. As you walk through the 'French Town' look out for the signboards with street names. Most of the streets carry the name of people involved in the history of this town. Each name is like a door opened to a moment in history.



*Intach, 62 Rue Aurobindo,  
Pondicherry - 605001*

# TALKING STREETS OF PONDICHERRY

*Open the gates of Pondicherry  
history through its streets*

## HISTORY

During the 1500's the Indian coastline was explored by Portuguese, Dutch and Danish merchants in search of lucrative trade. By comparison the French were relatively late entrants. They were invited in the 1670's by Sher Khan Lodhi, vassal of the Sultan of Bijapur, to settle down in the region of Pondicherry. Bellanger de Lespinay was the first French official to come to the future settlement. It was, however, his successor Francois Martin who laid the foundation of the town. The political intrigues among the European nations in India affected Pondicherry on many occasions. In its long vibrant colonial history it changed hands many times.

