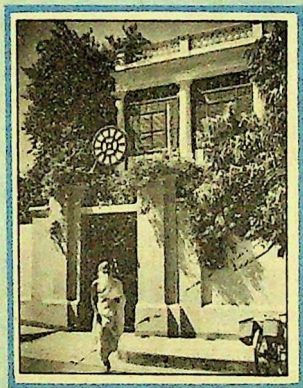


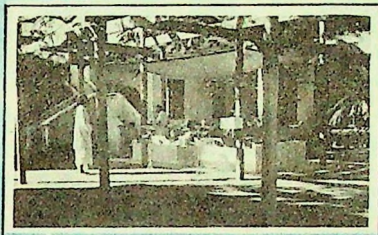
**GUIDE  
TO**



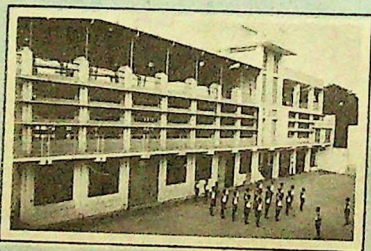
**SRI  
AUROBINDO  
ASHRAM**



Meditation hall



Main building courtyard with Samadhi



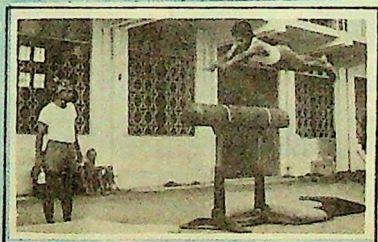
New gymnasium



Higher course school building



Attention in the sports ground



Gymnastics





**Sri Aurobindo** was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. At the age of seven he was taken to England for education and in 1890 went up to King's College, Cambridge. Here he stood in the first class in the Classical Tripos and also passed the final examination for the Indian Civil Service. Not wishing to serve in the I.C.S., he disqualified himself by not attending the riding test. He obtained employment in the service of the Maharaja of Baroda and returned to India in 1893.

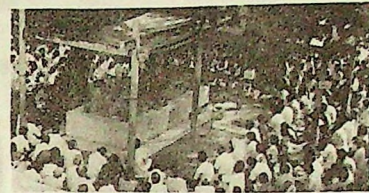
Sri Aurobindo served thirteen years in the administrative and educational departments of the Baroda State. These were years of preparation for his future work. In 1906 he went to Bengal and took up openly the leadership of the revolutionary movement which for several years he had been organising in secret. He was the first to put forth, in the pages of his journal *Bande Mataram*, the ideal of complete political independence for India. Three times prosecuted for his activities, he was each time acquitted for lack of evidence.

Sri Aurobindo had begun the practice of yoga in 1905. After gathering up in himself the essential elements of past spiritual experience, he moved on in search of a more complete realisation, one which would unite the two poles of Spirit and Matter. In 1910 he retired from politics and went to Pondicherry in order to devote himself entirely to the spiritual discipline of yoga.

**The Mother** was born Mirra Alfassa in Paris on 21 February 1878. An accomplished painter and musician, she began to have psychic and spiritual experiences at a very early age. In 1914 she came to Pondicherry and at once recognised Sri Aurobindo as the teacher who occultly had been guiding her spiritual development. She helped him start his review *Arya*, in which most of his major writings, *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, etc. appeared between 1914 and 1921. The Mother spent the years of the First World War in France and Japan. She returned to Pondicherry on 24 April 1920 and resumed her collaboration with Sri Aurobindo. When, after a special spiritual experience which took place on 24 November 1926, Sri Aurobindo retired into the exclusive practice of yoga, the guidance of the disciples who had gathered around him was entrusted to the Mother. This was the beginning of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, which has since developed into a many-faceted centre of spiritual research. Sri Aurobindo left his body on 5 December 1950. His work continued under the Mother's direct guidance until her passing on 17 November 1973. Their work in the Ashram, its Centre of Education and other organisations and groups, still goes on.



View of the Mother's rooms



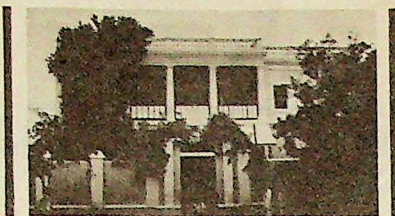
## THE TEACHING

There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result: she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mind and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness, which he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.

*From a talk of the Mother to the children of the Ashram*





Ashram main building

### THE ASHRAM

"The Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions," Sri Aurobindo wrote, "not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit."

When Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry in 1910, he lived at first with a few associates from the political field. Afterwards a few more joined him and there slowly developed spiritual relations between these young men and Sri Aurobindo. When the Mother returned to Pondicherry on 24 April 1920, the number of disciples began to increase rapidly, and as the Ashram thus began to take shape, it fell to the Mother to organise it. When in 1926 Sri Aurobindo retired into seclusion to pursue his yogic sadhana undisturbed, the whole material and spiritual charge of the Ashram devolved on the Mother. Under her guidance the Ashram developed into what it is today.

At present the Ashram community is made up of some 2000 persons, who live and work in more than 400 buildings spread over the town of Pondicherry. There is no fixed routine, either of spiritual practice or of material

duties. Sri Aurobindo has written: "What is being done here is a preparation for a work—a work which will be founded on yogic consciousness and Yoga-Shakti [the force of yoga]. . . . Meanwhile, every member here is expected to do some work in the Ashram as part of this spiritual preparation."

The work of the Ashram is organised into a number of different departments. There are *essential services* concerned with construction, house maintenance, furniture, electricity, water, sanitation, etc.; farms, a granary, rice, oil and flour mills, a bakery, and a dining hall; sections for tailoring, shoemaking, laundry, etc. There are *industries* and technological operations such as a handmade paper factory, a foundry, a sheet-metal works, automotive and electrical workshops, etc. Such *crafts* as weaving, embroidery, batik, marbling, pottery and incense-making are represented. The Ashram has its own *dispensaries* staffed by doctors and nurses of different medical systems. *Books* and *magazines* in many different languages are published, and are printed at the Ashram's own *printing presses*. The Ashram has an *archives*, a *large library*, and an *educational system* which deserves special mention.



Ashram bakery

### SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is an integral part of the Ashram. Students from the kindergarten to the Higher Course level learn arts and sciences according to the "free progress system", which encourages initiative and spontaneity. The Centre of Education has libraries, laboratories and sections for dance, drama, music, painting, etc. Its physical education department gives training in athletics, aquatics, gymnastics, games, combative sports, judo and asanas. The facilities of this department include a fully equipped sports ground, swimming pool, gymnasium, playground, tennis courts and judo hall.

### THE MAIN BUILDING AND THE SAMADHI

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram's main building, spoken of in Pondicherry simply as "the Ashram", is a complex of four houses, two of which, at different times, were the abodes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In the inner courtyard of this premises is the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Here, in two chambers, one above the other, their bodies are laid. The Samadhi is open to all visitors between 8 A.M. and 6 P.M. daily.



School courtyard



Children in the playground

### VISITING THE ASHRAM

General information and guidance for visitors is provided by the Reception Service (in the main building, map number 1) from 8 A.M. to 12 P.M. and from 2 P.M. to 5.30 P.M., and by the Visitors' Service (at Matrisharanam, map number 6) from 6.30 to 11.30 A.M. and from 4.00 to 6.00 P.M. If there is an adequate number of interested visitors, the Reception Service will arrange a conducted tour of the Ashram any day except Sundays, "darshan days" and other special days (see panel 11), and government holidays. The tour, guided by a member of the reception staff, leaves the gate of the main building at 8.45 A.M. Within three hours a number of representative departments are shown.



Dining hall

### DINING

The Ashram Dining Room (see no. 7 on map) serves breakfast, lunch and dinner to Ashramites. Visitors who wish to take food in the Dining Room must obtain meal coupons from the Reception Service, the Visitor's Service or their guest house.

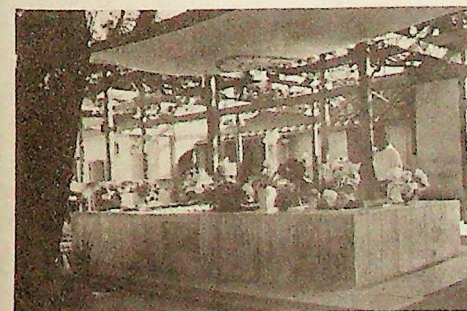
### STAYING AT THE ASHRAM

Visitors who wish to spend time at the Ashram in order to experience its life and atmosphere may stay at one of its guest houses. (A listing of guest houses is given in the legend at the left side of the map.) Dormitory space on mats is available for Rs 2/- a night. Charges for rooms vary according to the type of accommodation. A wide range of accommodation is available throughout the year. The times around the "Darshan days" (see panel 11) are the most crowded. Visitors must arrange their own accommodation; they may inquire at the Reception Service.

the Visitors Service or Matrisharanam for advice and assistance.

A lodging card (pass) will be issued to the visitor at his guest house. He will be required to show this pass to be admitted to many places in the Ashram (all such places are marked (P) in the legend to the map). **THE VISITOR IS REQUESTED TO KEEP THE PASS ON HIS PERSON AND TO SHOW IT WHEREVER AND WHENEVER ASKED.**

The gates of the main building are open to pass holders who wish to meditate near the Samadhi or in the Meditation Hall between 4.30 A.M. and 11 P.M. daily. A list of other activities open to pass holders is given on panel 10. Foreign visitors staying at Park Guest House must have their passes endorsed by the guest house in order to attend programmes in the Playground.



The Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother



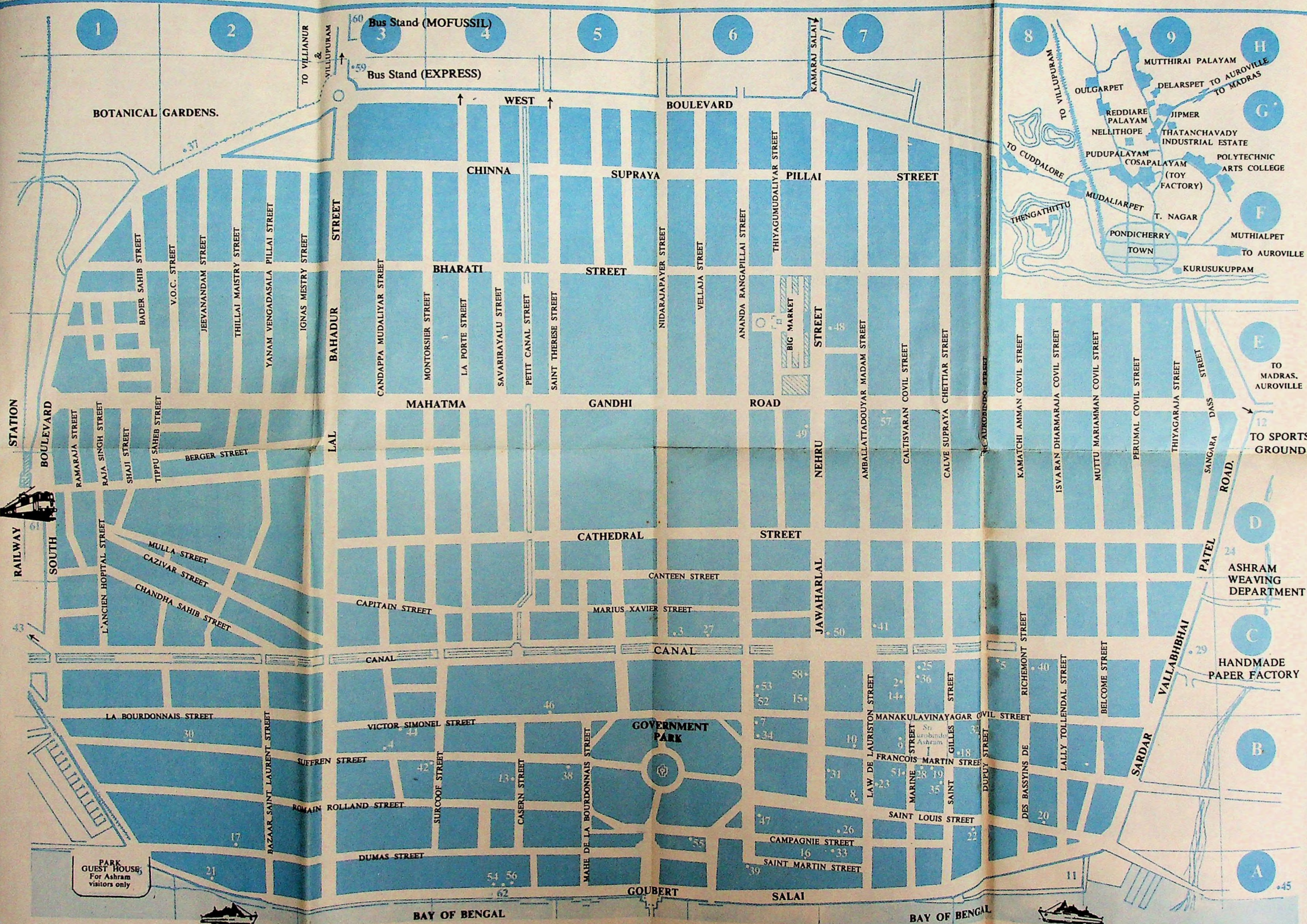
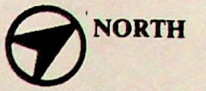
**ADMISSION TO MANY ASHRAM DEPARTMENTS  
IS RESTRICTED. VISITORS SHOULD BE PRE-  
PARED TO SHOW THEIR PASSES AT ALL  
PLACES MARKED (P)**

<b>ASHRAM</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Square</b>	<b>No. on Map</b>	<b>Phone</b>
	<b>MAIN BUILDING</b>			
	Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother	7B	1	
	Ashram Reception Service	7B	1	4836
	Photo Section (Sales)	7B	1	4836
	Reading Room (P)	7B	1	
<b>DINING</b>				
	Ashram Dining Room (P)		7	
	Cottage Restaurant	6C	3	4414
<b>EDUCATION, SPORTS, PROGRAMMES</b>				
			8-12	
<b>BOOKS AND PERIODICALS</b>				
	Ashram Reading Room (P)	7B	1	
	Publication Department (Sales)	7B	1	
	SABDA — Main Office (Sales)	4B	13	4980
	SABDA — Kripa Branch (Sales)	7C	14	4072
	Sri Aurobindo's Action (Reading Room)	6C	15	
	Sri Aurobindo Library (P)	6A	16	4648
<b>MEDICAL</b>				
	Ayurvedic Section	2B	17	4498
	Dental Clinic	8B	18	
	Dispensary (P)	7B	19	4499
	Homeopathy Clinic	8B	20	7156
	La Clinique	8B	20	7156
	Nursing Home (P)	2A	21	4411
	School for Perfect Eyesight	8B	20	7156
	Tresor Nursing Home	8B	22	6671
<b>ARTS AND CRAFTS</b>				
	Art Gallery	7B	23	
	Ashram Weaving Department	10D	24	
	Auroshikha Agarbathies	7C	25	4976
	Batik Section (Nanteuil)	7B	26	
	Cottage Industries	6C	27	3324
	Embroidery Department	7B	28	
	Handmade Paper Factory	9C	29	4763
	Handweaving Section (Hablik)	2B	30	4820
	Handwork and Batik Section (Art House)	7B	31	
	Harpagon (Sales and Showroom)	8B	32	4130
	Marbling Group (Harmonie)	7A	33	
	New Bindery	6B	34	
	Perfumery (Senteur)	7B	35	4870
<b>OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST</b>				
	Bakery and Laundry (P)	7C	36	
	Botanical Gardens and Aquarium	2G	37	6088
	Pondicherry Museum	5B	38	6236
	Society Beach Office	6A	39	6396
	World Union	8C	40	4834
<b>GUEST HOUSES</b>				
	Cottage Guest House	6C	3	5024
	Matrisharanam (day rest house)	7C	2	
	New Guest House	3B	4	



SCALE 1 cm = 50 meters

# PONDICHERRY



PARK GUEST HOUSE, For Ashram visitors only



**ADMISSION TO MANY ASHRAM DEPARTMENTS  
IS RESTRICTED. VISITORS SHOULD BE PRE-  
PARED TO SHOW THEIR PASSES AT ALL  
PLACES MARKED (P)**

Name	Square	No. on Map	Phone
New Sweet Home	8C	5	
Park Guest House	1A	6	4412

## **PUBLIC SERVICES IN PONDICHERRY**

### **BANKS**

Central Bank of India	7C	41	6640
State Bank of India	3B	42	5528

### **GUEST HOUSES AND HOSTELS**

Government Tourist Home (Uppalam)	1C	43	3590
Municipal Guest House	3C	44	7175
Youth Hostel	10A	45	3495

### **HOSPITAL**

General Hospital	4C	46	6971
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### **LIBRARY**

Romain Rolland Public Library	6B	47	6203
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### **PHARMACIES**

Ananda Emporium	7E	48	7124
National Medicals	6E	49	4510

### **POLICE STATION**

Grand Bazaar Police Station	7C	50	6087
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### **POST AND TELEGRAPHS**

Ashram Post Office	7B	51	7107
General Post Office (GPO)	6C	52	7086
Telegraph Office	6C	53	7030

### **TOURIST INFORMATION**

Government Information Office	4A	54	5512
Tourist Information Bureau	6A	55	4398

### **TRAVEL**

Air India	4A	56	3637
Amsham Travels		57	3713
Auro Travels (air bookings)	6C	58	5128
Bus Stand (Express)	3H	59	6513
Bus Stand (Mofussil)	3G	60	
Railway Station	1D	61	6684

### **VISA OFFICE**

Foreigners' Registration Office	4A	62	7114
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## ASHRAM ACTIVITIES

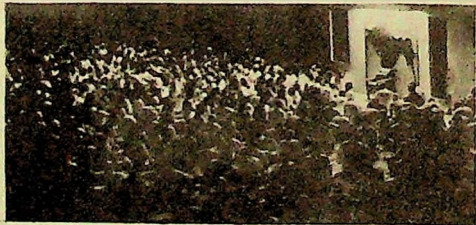
The gate of the Ashram main building is open between 4.30 A.M. and 11.00 P.M. Pass holders are permitted in during these hours. Visitors without passes are permitted to go to the Samadhi between 8 A.M. and 6 P.M. only.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE OPEN ONLY TO  
ASHRAMITES AND PASS HOLDERS

**Collective meditation in the playground.** Thursdays and Sundays, 7.40–8.15 P.M. Meditation starts punctually at 7.40; the gate is closed at this time and is not opened until the meditation is over. Visitors are advised to come at least five minutes before the starting time. Meditation is preceded by the regular physical education activities of the older men. These activities, held 7.15 to 7.40 P.M. daily, may be observed by pass holders.

**Collective meditation in the main building compound (around the Samadhi).** Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 7.30–7.50 P.M.

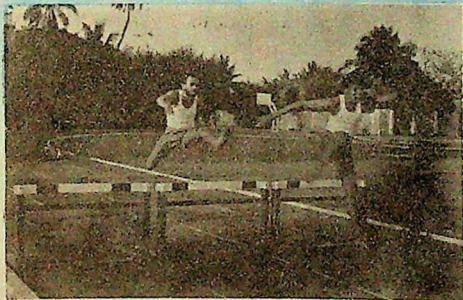
For other programmes please see the notice board in the main building. *Please note that children below four years are not permitted inside the playground or the Ashram main building.*



Collective meditation in the playground

## DARSHAN DAYS (D) AND OTHER SPECIAL DAYS

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 21 February    | — The Mother's birthday (D)                     |
| 24 April       | — The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry (D) |
| 15 August      | — Sri Aurobindo's birthday (D)                  |
| 17 November    | — The Mother's withdrawal                       |
| 20 November    | — The Mother's Samadhi day                      |
| 24 November    | — The Day of Realisation (D)                    |
| 1 & 2 December | — Anniversary of the Ashram School              |
| 5 December     | — Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal                    |
| 9 December     | — Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi day                   |



Competition at the sports ground

**THE RECEPTION SERVICE,  
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM,  
PONDICHERRY-605002 INDIA.**

Printed at All India Press, Pondicherry.



Embroidery



Gymnasium interior



View of Pondicherry





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Sri Aurobindo