

TAMIL NADU

## A heritage walk through Walajapet, Ranipet, Arcot



### STAFF REPORTER

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### Project aims to raise awareness about local heritage sites

Bringing together the Green Stone Mosque in Arcot, Raja Rani Mandapam at Ranipet and the Kanjanagiri temple in Lalapet among other historical monuments, the students and teachers of Vedavalli Vidyalaya Schools have undertaken a project, to highlight the various facets of heritage sites in Walajapet, Arcot and Ranipet.

As a part of this project, an exhibition titled 'My town, My pride,' was inaugurated at the C.P. Art Centre on Sunday, showcasing paintings, sketches and models on eight sites identified at these places.

“We chose Walajapet, Arcot and Ranipet, as these are the areas in which majority of our students and teachers reside. While we initially identified several monuments, we narrowed it down to eight sites and the students collected anecdotal as well as factual information about these sites, from local residents as well as museums and other authentic sources,” said Vidya Sampath, Dean and Director of Vedavalli Vidyalaya.

“The students immensely enjoyed being a part of this process and also helmed guided tours, that we had organised to these sites in June. It was a revelation for many, that small towns could have such rich heritage and we will continue working towards raising awareness about our local heritage sites,” she said.

### **Objective understanding**

Inaugurating the exhibition, the Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali said that history is to be understood in an objective manner and should not be altered or distorted at any time. “There is an inherent need to preserve the rich history and heritage of our country. Children especially, need to be educated about the pluralism of our country and how they should live with peace and harmony,” he noted.

Tracing the history of his ancestors in the State, Mr. Ali recalled the period of Nawab Muhammad Ali Wallajah of the Carnatic and his secular attitude towards non-Muslims in the State. The exhibition will remain open for the public till August 22.

S. Priyanka, a class IX student, said that through the project they learnt the need to protect and conserve them.



# Pupils shape respect from pieces of history



Students man the various displays and explain their historical value to the visitors ● P Jawahar

● Rochana Mohan

Coins made of terracotta, models made from paper, clay and ice cream sticks, and hand-drawn paintings made by the students hung on the walls mark the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Akshaya Vidya Trust and the Vedavalli Vidyalaya Schools. Students from classes six to 11 prepared models and presentations around the theme “My Town My Pride” at the CP Arts Centre, Alwarpet, which highlighted the towns Walajapet, Arcot and Ranipet in Vellore.

The project is an attempt to spread awareness among locals and students on the rich heritage and history of these towns. “We worked with the communities and not just the students to create awareness. We are unable to reach out to people as they were unable to claim ownership of their heritage. This is an attempt to make them understand their town,” said Vidya Sampath, Dean and Director of the school. The idea was suggested by Vice Principal Deepa, who



(Above) Guests inaugurate a standee  
(Below) Terracotta coins made by students

wanted history to be more accessible to the students.

The chief guest, His Highness Muhammed Abdul Ali Khan, the current Nawab of Arcot, expressed his happi-

ness at the inclusion of communities in the exhibition. “History cannot be changed or erased at any cost. Nobody can distort history. We need to preserve our multi-cultural, mutli-religious society. Secularism must be protected and preserved,” he said, adding that he wished for students to grow into accepting individuals by learning from India’s rich history. The guest of honour was Dr. Nanditha Krishna, the President of the C P Ramasami Aiyar Foundation.

The students’ hard work reflected in their meticulous exhibits and their presentations. One such presentation was on the Kanchanagiri Temple located near Ranipet. The temple is located on top of a hill, where all the rocks are in the shape of lingams. A rock called Maniparai makes the sound of a bronze bell when struck. “I was amazed by the sound of the rocks when we went to visit the place. However, there is a lot of dust in the temple. Our God, who gave us life, stays there and we should not pollute his temples,” said M Priyadarshini, a class 8 student of Vedavalli Vidyalaya School.

WASHED UP

