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## Fruit market to be shifted to ease traffic flow

MADURAI: Anyone navigating around Simmakkal in Madurai in the evenings would have experienced the severe traffic congestion as hundreds of trucks coming from as far as Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir slowly make their way to or from the fruit market here. Around 350 fruit shops and godowns dot the Yanaikkal, Simmakkal, North Masi and North Marret streets with hundreds of wholesale commission agents and thousands of retail fruit vendors making their presence felt. Apart from trucks of different sizes, tricycles and handcarts choke the roads, especially in the late evening, thus necessitating calls to shift the market to the periphery of Madurai city.

To reduce the traffic jam in the city, especially during night, Madurai Municipal Corporation recently passed a resolution to move the fruit market to Mattuthavani. The resolution presented by corporation commissioner stated that the fruit vendors have expressed their wish to move out of the city and the land has been identified for them near central market and the shops will be constructed for the vendors at the identified place. "The proposal to move the fruit market is a constructive one as the number of vehicles is increasing steadily, thereby causing severe traffic congestion in the city. The four streets where the fruit market is situated at present is totally chocked in the

evenings and shifting them will greatly ease the traffic woes in the heart of the city," said M Amanullah of Citizen Association For Traffic Improvement.

Apart from the flower market, other markets such as the central vegetable market and the flower market existed within the city limits till recently. They were shifted by the civic body after the need to move them to the city outskirts was felt. The vegetable market was shifted to a place near Mattuthavani and the flower market was moved to Integrated Market Complex adjacent to the bus terminal. Though, the city expanded by leaps and bounds, the fruit market remained in the heart of city adding to the traffic congestion.

"We have expressed our interest to move out of the city considering the traffic congestion caused by the market. Mattuthavani is the ideal place, since it is not far away from the city and easily accessible by the vendors," said M Sadukkani, an official of the Madurai Fruit Market Vendors' Association.

"Another tight spot in the city is the onion market in East Marret street. True relief from traffic congestion can happen only when the onion market is also shifted," Amanulla pointed out.

## MARKET THAT BORE FRUIT

\* The century-old fruit market with many vendors from the third or fourth generation carrying on with the trade

\* From 10 to 15 shops, market has flourished into 250

wholesale shops, 100 retail shops

- \* Fruits arrive from Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, Punjab, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka
- \* Guavas, oranges, banana, papayas, sweet lime and apples are received round the year, while plums, mangoes and pears are seasonal
- \* Catering to the whole of entire southern region of TN and Kerala
- \* About 600 to 1,000 tonnes handled in a single day
- \* Estimated turnover per day is around Rs 10 crore
- \* 150 larger trucks, 150 to 200 mini-trucks bring fruits and hundreds of tri-cycles are used for local operations

### Madurai Fruit Market profile

The market in its present location is believed to be more than 100 years old since many of the fruit vendors belong to the third and fourth generations

From a mere 10 to 15 shops, 100 years ago, the market has flourished into 250 wholesale shops, 100 retail shop and thousands of retailers who procure fruits

the market receives fruits from across the country like apples

from Himachal, Kashmir, oranges from Punjab, Nagpur and many other fruits from Andra Pradesh, Karnataka

one of the biggest in the state catering entire southern region with fruits sent to as far as Trivandrum, Kollam handling as much as 600 to 1000 tonnes in a single day

The estimated transaction in a day may be around Rs 10 crore

Approximately 150 larger trucks, 150 to 200 mini-trucks bring fruits and hundreds of tri-cycles are used for local operations

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