

## **Bussiness Line 20.10.2010**

### **Massive plan to resettle slums along Cooum River under way**

Unveiling plans: Mr M.K. Stalin, Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, releasing a Visual Film of Chennai 2020, at the inaugural session of 'Chennai 2020', organised by the CII on Tuesday. (from left) Ms Nandini Rangaswamy, Chairperson, CII Tamil Nadu State Council; Mr L. Mansingh, Chairperson, Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board; Mr M. Subramanian, Mayor, Corporation of Chennai; and Mr T.T. Ashok, Deputy Chairman, CII, Southern Region are also seen. —

Our Bureau

Chennai, Oct. 19

The river Cooum that flows through the heart of Chennai city into the Bay of Bengal has long been associated with stink and filth. But that is slowly changing.

Back deep in time, the river was a pleasure. Now, to restore the river to its original glory, the Cooum Restoration Project of the Government of Tamil Nadu, is proceeding in right earnest.

The first step in the politically and technologically challenging project is to resettle the hundreds of slums that dot the river sides, adding to the filth. The people of the slums have lived there for years and to uproot them would be a travesty of justice — hence a massive resettlement plan is under way.

Mr K. Phanindra Reddy, Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Urban Infrastructure Financial Services

Ltd, is the bureaucrat in-charge of the project.

He told journalists on the sidelines of a conference here on Tuesday that 22,000 tenements would need to be constructed elsewhere in the city, to resettle the slum dwellers.

At one spot, behind the headquarters of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, there are 145 hutments. The government does not intend to dislodge them in the middle of the academic year. Similarly, right in that area but on the other side of the river, is a thriving small business community – a series of automobile mechanic shops. Mr Reddy said this on the sidelines of a conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here, on the theme, Chennai 2020.

The conference, which was inaugurated by the State Deputy Chief Minister, Mr M.K. Stalin, highlighted the various urban infrastructure projects going on, all of which will have a beneficial bearing on the city life in about 4-5 years from now.

Among the others were the Chennai Metro Rail project and the airport expansion project.