



## POOJA HELD FOR CHENNAI'S CANINES

World Animal Day was an auspicious occasion, with a pooja held for resident owners and their pets ■ PG 5

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# Paws in prayer

The World Animal Day on October 4 saw a pooja being held for resident owners and their four-legged companions

**A**mid festive preparations for Ayudha and Durga pooja, an informal ceremony of an unusual sort took place for 'World Animal Day' on Monday morning at the CP Art Centre, Alwarpet.

Organised by the Blue Cross for dogs and their owners for the third consecutive year, the event saw close to seven four-legged pets circling the neem tree at the Ganesha temple in the vicinity.

Dr Nanditha C Krishnak, Honorary director of the CP Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation said, "My husband (Chinnay Krishna, Blue Cross Chairman) and I presently have 16 dogs at our home on these grounds.

So, this is a ritual that we do every morning."

However, on World Animal Day (October 4), so chosen because it is the feast day of St Francis of Assisi, a nature lover and patron saint of animals, the ritual is open to any city-owner and his furry companion

willing to make the trip.

However this year, the number of takers were minimal as the occasion fell on a working day, as opposed to previous years when it took place on a Sunday. Sathya Radhakrishnan, Joint Secretary of the Blue Cross, India said, "The surprising thing is that over the last two years on this day, we have had a small prayer function at a temple, a church and a mosque!" Upon taking off our footwear, this reporter wonders whether there has been any talk of it being disrespectful for a dog to walk the sacred space. Radhakrishnan responds, "I've observed many temples including the Kapaleswara temple in

Mylapore that allow dogs inside." In fact, he adds, "Once I was very surprised to spot a few cats resting at the mundaparam area of an Amman temple, and no one seemed to mind."

Perhaps the most endearing part of the holy walk around the deity, accompanied by furry companions on either side was the sight of a playful spotted Indian breed named 'Tripoof' racing ahead. Quite unperturbed by the handling of losing her fourth leg, amputated after a hit-and-run road accident, her prancing around gleefully certainly set the mood for a prayer of thanks.

—Small Shoney



Pet dogs attending a pooja held on World Animal Day | PHOTO: KAMR