



Mullaperiyar: Kerala blames TN of "duplicity"

Kerala government accused Tamil Nadu, in an affidavit filed at SC, of politicising the long-standing dam dispute at the cost of national security: **Page 7**



Gandhian, prohibition crusader dies

Gandhian and anti-liquor crusader Sasi Perumal died on Friday while on a protest atop a 120-foot-high mobile phone tower near Marthandam: **Page 6**



Mettur dam opening on August 9

The Mettur dam will be opened for irrigation on August 9 to enable Cauvery delta farmers take up samba and thalady cultivation: **Page 7**

PRESERVING FOR POSTERITY

IFP COMPLETES FIRST PHASE OF DOCUMENTATION OF TEMPLE ART, MURALS IN TAMIL NADU

Adding on to an unique repository

S. Prasad

The French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) has completed the first phase of documentation of endangered temple art, murals and paintings in Tamil Nadu in an effort to bring them back to life and preserve them for posterity.

A team of researchers from IFP documented the murals in Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple; Kallalagar temple i.e Alagarkovil; Chenraya Perumal temple in Adiyamankottai; Chithiraichavadi near Narasingapatti and Jain caves of Tirumalai in the first phase in collaboration with the Brit-



HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: The Meenakshi Thirukalyanam mural in Madurai; endangered temple art at Chenraya Perumal temple in Adiyamankottai, Dharmapuri and the sequences depicting the birth of Rama at Kallalagar temple, Madurai. — PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

IFP HAS NOW PROVIDED A FRESH LEASE OF LIFE TO THESE MURALS AND PAINTINGS THAT HAD BEEN CREATED USING HERBAL COLOURS AND NATURAL PIGMENTS.

N. MURUGESAN RESEARCHER IFP

ish Library. The IFP has already completed a major portion of digitisation of its photo archives which contain over 1,60,000 photographs of temples in South India and are a unique repository of infor-

mation on temple art and iconography in South India.

The documentation of temple art is aimed at enriching the collection enabling historians and researchers to carry out their work. Dr. N. Murugesan, researcher IFP told *The Hindu* that "Documentation of temple art and murals in these five vulnerable sites in Tamil Nadu should have been done at least 50 years back. Many of the sites had lost their glory

and historical importance. IFP has now provided a fresh lease of life to these murals and paintings that had been created using herbal colours and natural pigments." There are more than a hundred inscrip-

tions found on the walls, gopuras and corridors of the Kallalagar temple in Alagarkovil dating back from 11th to 18th centuries. The paintings are of high quality and depict episodes from the Ramayana.

Mr. Murugesan said that the murals in Chithiraichavadi near Narasingapatti are estimated to belong to 17th-18th century and have similarities with Nayak era murals. IFP is planning to take up documentation of 10 more sites in Tamil Nadu in the second phase.

The murals found in the world famous Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai depict Meenakshi Thirukalyanam, the celestial wedding ceremony of Goddess Meenakshi with Lord Sundareshwarar. The murals are more than 600 years old.

At the Chenraya Perumal Temple in Adiyamankottai there are five galleries that lead to the sanctum sanctorum depicting the scenes of Mahabharata, Viswarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna, scenes from the Ramayana including the life of Lord Rama and various episodes from Mahabharata and Vedas.

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