

Commemoration for Jean-Pierre Muller

Special Correspondent

PUDUCHERRY: The French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) will have a commemoration organised for its former director Jean-Pierre Muller, who died in France a few days ago.

An agronomist by training, a soil scientist and a specialist of lateritic soils and their mapping, Mr. Muller worked in many tropical countries in Africa, Asia and South America, in close collaboration with scientists and officials of these countries.

Passionate about the development of South and South-

east Asia and more specifically India, he assumed the position of director of the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), one of the main research and training institutions under the supervision of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development.

As IFP Director, from 2003 to 2008, he resolutely implemented a policy of project-based research and initiated mechanisms to enable researchers to look for finances and raise external funds.

Earlier, Mr. Muller had distinguished himself at the premier French Institute of

Scientific and Technical Research for Development and Cooperation (ORSTOM), where he created the Laboratory of Physical Soil Analysis in Bondy (1982-1985) and led the research unit "Geosciences of the environment" (1993-1997).

Key role

He also strongly associated himself with universities and students. He played a key role in the transformation of ORSTOM into the French Research Institute for Development (IRD).

As Director General of the IRD from 1998 to 2003, he set

up its new operational structures and evaluation methods.

He led the reorganisation of services at the institution's headquarters and signed a four-year development contract with the State.

Mr. Muller had settled in this city after marrying Sita and divided his time between Puducherry and Paris.

"We are expecting his wife to return to the city in a few days after which we will decide on a commemoration function," said Pierre Gard, IFP Director, who had called on Mr. Muller in Paris in June.