

Top diplomat bowled over by French institute

The Ambassador-designate sounded positive about support for the institution

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PUDUCHERRY: "Very impressive and absolutely fascinating," were the words Ambassador-designate of France to India Alexandre Ziegler repeated as he went around the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) on Tuesday afternoon.

He was awestruck looking at the manuscript collection, photo archives and Herbarium of French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP).

"I have heard about the institute many times. This has been the most impressive visit for me in India," he said.

IFP has a collection of approximately 8,187 palm-leaf bundles, 360 paper codices and 1,144 recent paper transcripts, 1,60,000 photographs of South Indian temple art and a herbarium containing more than 20,000 specimens belonging to 4000 species.

He relaxed his tight schedule that was planned at the IFP, leisurely listening and questioning the IFP staff about the various research projects conducted by the departments including Indology, Ecology, Social Sciences and Geomatics.

Mr. Ziegler seemed positive about providing support to the institute when the staff apprised him of the cut in fellowship for Indian students pursuing PhD and post-doctoral. "This is an intellectual centre and I am positive that the institute will do well," he assured.

He visited the library and met the IFP staff at the garden. Thanking the staff of



RICH LEGACY: Ambassador-designate of France to India Alexandre Ziegler goes through the manuscripts of Indology Department at the IFP. French Consul General in Puducherry Philippe Janvier Kamiyama and IFP Secretary General Didier Lemoine are in the picture. (Below) A manuscript preserved in the institute. — PHOTOS: T. SINGARAVELOU

IFP for their warm reception, he said: "I started with the Sanskrit manuscripts and ended my visit with a reality passing through Department of Ecology, photo archives and history. It is very symbolic of what you are doing here. Deeply rooted in the history of this incredible civilisation and looking to shape the future. I think it is the best of what I have seen in India. The Embassy will extend complete support to what you are doing here."

The Consul General of France in Puducherry Philippe Janvier Kamiyama and IFP Secretary General Didier Lemoine were present.

Later, he paid a visit to the



Alliance Francaise at Suffren Street and French War Memorial on Goubert Avenue.

Mr. Ziegler also met Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi on Tuesday morning and deliberated

on the on-going partnership between France and India in areas of urban planning, heritage conservation and tourism. The French Consul General in Puducherry was also present.