

'IFP Stands Out in an Age of Violence'



French Consul General Philippe Janvier-Kamiyama (centre) shares a lighter moment with Dr Pierre Grand, Director, IFP and Justice David Anousamy during the 60th anniversary celebration of French Institute of Pondicherry on Wednesday | G PATTABIRAMAN

Express News Service

Puducherry: The French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) stands out to create a niche of its own in Indology, Ecology and Social Sciences as it celebrated 60 years of its existence in Puducherry on Wednesday.

"The present, too often marked by obscurantism and violence, is when the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), by promoting intercultural exchanges through its use of reason, enlightened by the analyses of world around us and the meaning it gives to its progress, comforts us and gives us the best weapons of all: those of enlightened curiosity and tolerance," the Consul General of France in Pondicherry, Philippe Janvier-Kamiyama, said

while delivering an address at the inaugural function of the 60th anniversary of IFP.

Kamiyama said Pondicherry had provided a particularly fertile ground for IFP's activities to flourish, which one can appreciate more than ever the scientific research and also of a more political importance in the relations between France and India.

The consul general said IFP initially had three-fold purpose: language teaching, on the model of most of French institutions but also scientific research and another related to its land of birth, Indology, thanks to the first director, Dr Filliozat, who held the chair at the Collège de France.

He said IFP then refocused on what was now the core of its mission, science and In-

dology, reinforcing the first, from 1988, with a social science department that was then added to that of ecology, and in 1994, a laboratory of geomatics which came to complete the set.

He said over the years, the expertise of IFP had not only developed but was legitimised by its quality in academic circles. The Indology, of course, remained a key spearhead its research activity and the institute provided researchers with an incomparable place for meetings and exchanges between Western and Indian researchers, who confront their studies and their methods, and confluence their views on matters of greatest wealth.

Emphasising that the work on collection of about 8,500 ancient texts engraved on

palm leaves, which UNESCO has elevated to the status of Humanity's heritage, he said this has had a positive impact both on research which was able to draw from the best sources, but also for the preservation of the memory of a civilization whose pundits continue to collaborate with the institute.

The renowned centre for research inaugurated on March 21, 1955 got its presence consolidated by the Indo-French Treaty of Cession, signed a year later, on May 28, 1956 and in which Article 24 states not only that IFP is retained as the institution of higher education and research, but also that the Government of India will provide all facilities to enable the development of activities of this institution.