Symbol of knowledge
IFP celebrates its sixth anniversary in style

BY UTS' BUREAU

The French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), a financially autonomous research institution under the joint supervision of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI), and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), celebrated its sixtieth anniversary (1955-2015) in Puducherry recently. The Consul General of France in Puducherry, Philippe Janvier-Kamiyama, inaugurated the ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, Philippe Janvier-Kamiyama said, "Pondicherry has provided a particularly fertile ground for flourishing IFP's activities, which one can appreciate more than ever the scientific reach and also of a more political the importance in the relations between France and India."

"Over the years, the expertise of IFP has not only developed but was legitimized by its quality in academic circles. The Indology, of course, remains a key spearhead its research activity and the institute provides researchers with an incomparable place for meetings and exchanges between Western and Indian researchers, who confront their studies and their methods, and confound their views on a matter of the greatest wealth," he added.

The Consul General of France also lauded the achievements of IFP. "The remarkable achievements of the institute could not have taken place throughout the past 60 years without the talent of the men and women who built the edifice, obstinately and with impeccable devotion," he said.

In his speech, IFP Director Pierre Grard said, "Thanks to scientists from both India and France, throughout the decades, this unique institution has been able to produce knowledge in various fields, from classical India with Sanskrit studies, to very modern and contemporary works in the field of modeling and in the field of the carbon stock assessment." "I am very honoured to follow the work done by my predecessors, who started many collections like the Manuscript Collection. It is one of the largest collections in the world of manuscripts of texts of the Saiva Siddhanta and has been deemed a 'Memory of the World' collection by UNESCO," Mr. Grard added.

The IFP Director also talked about the documentation on temples and idols with EFEO. "It's an extremely rare collection of photographs dating back to 1956 and subsequently enhanced over the years. This assorted collection, the only one of its kind, consists of about 1,60,000 photographs, mainly in black and white. The collection focuses on South Indian religious art and iconography, and South Indian religious architecture and is also used in fighting illegal trafficking of art," said Mr. Grard.

During the function, three round table discussions were organized where eminent scientists discussed about the future of scientific cooperation between India and France and role of the IFP into this relationship. The first discussion was on "Indian studies at the crossroads" while the second was on "Past, present and future of natural resources". The third discussion was on "IFP in the research world today".

In the evening, a book entitled "The Four Hundred Songs Of Love: An Anthology of Poems from Classical Tamil: The AkanaNura", written by Prof Georges Hart, was released by the Consul General of France.

The IFP has been promoting research in the fields of Indology, Ecology and Social Sciences for the past 60 years. UTS'