

Construction work begins on ₹33-crore Porunai Museum in Tirunelveli

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CHENNAI

The Public Works Department has started work to build the ₹33.02-crore Porunai archaeological museum in Tirunelveli district. Spread over 13.02 acres, the museum in Kulavanigarapuram will showcase about 9,000 artefacts excavated at Adichanallur, Korkai and Sivakalai sites. Officials of the PWD said

the museum was being built on an area of nearly 54,296 sq.ft. and would comprise separate sections to house artefacts from each archaeological site. Besides an administrative block, single-storeyed Sivakalai gallery, Adichanallur gallery and Korkai gallery would be built with Mangalore tiled roof and sloped concrete roof. A separate structure would also be built for

crafts workshops where handicrafts from the surrounding areas would be on display for sale, officials said. The galleries and other buildings would showcase the lifestyle and culture of the people in the region. The design would incorporate architecture of the region, including stone pillars and verandahs. Visitors would get a feel of being in the rural streets of

the region and native trees would be planted, officials said.

Sources in the Archaeology Department said the artefacts from Iron age to Sangam period, which were found during the excavations in the past three-four years, would be showcased at the museum.

In the Adichanallur site, objects like bronze bowls and bronze figures of animals were recovered from

burial urns and jewellery such as bangles, rings, bracelets were found. Potsherds with Damili inscriptions and various types of beads found at the site would also be on display. These reveal the richness of the civilisation along the Than Porunai riverbank.

Moreover, carbon dating of the paddy found in one of the burial urns in the Sivakalai site revealed that the civilisation lived

along Porunai riverbanks 3,200 years ago. Black slipped ware, conch shells and silver-punch marked coins are some of the evidence from Korkai site that would be showcased at the museum. The findings revealed that the Korkai port was functioning before 8th century, officials said. The PWD is expected to complete the work by the end of next year.



Objects such as bronze bowls and bronze figurines of animals that were recovered from burial urns at Adichanallur would be showcased at the Porunai Museum. FILE PHOTO

Varanasi court orders ASI survey of Gyanvapi mosque

Press Trust of India
VARANASI

A court in Varanasi on Friday directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple in the city.

The *wazukhana* — a small pool inside the mosque where Hindu litigants claim that a *shivling* exists — will not be part of the survey, in the wake of an earlier Supreme Court order to protect the area.

The court of A.K. Vishvesh upheld the petition of a group of Hindus seeking a survey to determine if the Mughal-era mosque was built at the site of an earlier Hindu temple. The court fixed August 4 as the next date of hearing, according to government counsel Rajesh Mishra.

The mosque management's counsel, Mohammed Tauhid Khan, said it would challenge the order in a higher court. "It



The Gyanvapi mosque

is not acceptable. This survey could cause damage to the mosque," he said.

Vishnu Shankar Jain, counsel for the Hindu side, had earlier argued that the dispute can be resolved only by an archaeological investigation of the entire mosque complex.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had ordered the protection of the area around the claimed *shivling*, found when a local court ordered a video survey of the complex. Following the order, the *wazukhana* was sealed.

The mosque management has maintained that the structure was part of a water fountain.

Use any Indian language as optional medium, says CBSE

Schools must lay the foundation for multilingual learning as the higher education sector has already started to respond to the recommendations of the National Education Policy, says letter

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has written to its affiliated schools that they may consider using Indian languages as an optional medium of instruction, in addition to the other options.

The CBSE has advised using an Indian language as an option from pre-primary classes to Class 12.

"Multilingual education has been widely recognised as a valuable approach to fostering linguistic diversity, cultural understanding, and academic success among students," Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academics), CBSE, said in the letter.

Mr. Emmanuel said the National Education Policy, 2020 emphasised the significant cognitive advantages



 The NEP advocates for utilising the home language, mother tongue, local language, or regional language as medium of instruction whenever feasible

JOSEPH EMMANUEL
Director (Academics), CBSE

es of multilingualism for young learners, particularly when they were exposed to several languages from the foundational stage.

"The policy strongly advocates for utilising the home language, mother tongue, local language, or regional language as the medium of instruction whenever feasible, at least until Grade 5, but preferably extending till Grade 8 and beyond," the letter said. It further listed the challenges in the implementation of multilingual

education. "The utilisation of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction presents several challenges, including the availability of skilled teachers capable of teaching in multilingual settings, the creation of high-quality multilingual textbooks, and the limited time available, especially in two-shift government schools, as multilingual education demands additional instructional time allocation," it said.

Mr. Emmanuel wrote that one of the major steps taken now is the direction by the Ministry of Education to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to prepare textbooks in the 22 Scheduled Languages of the country.

The letter also talked about the steps being taken to introduce textbooks in Indian languages for higher education, facilitate learning-teaching processes and offer exams in Indian languages.

Since the higher education sector has started responding to this need, schools must lay the foundation, Mr. Emmanuel suggested.

The approach towards medium of instruction should be in continuity from school education to higher education, the letter added.

Portal launched to report violation of ban on e-cigarettes

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Despite the ban imposed by the Union government in 2019, e-cigarettes continue to be sold on e-commerce sites, even to children below 18, warn experts working in the area of tobacco control. Now to curb this, the Health Ministry has launched an online portal to facilitate reporting of violations under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act (PECA).

The portal, www.violation-reporting.in, will allow faster action against any reported violations, the government said.

"The ban on electronic cigarettes was introduced to protect our younger generation from a new form of toxic addiction. It's a welcome move by the Health Ministry to launch the online portal for strict enforcement, implementation and to ensure the ban is effective," Binoy Mathew, programme manager, Voluntary Health Association of India, said.

The Ministry had earlier



The Centre had cautioned the States and U.T.s about the easy availability of e-cigarettes.

cautioned all States and Union Territories about the weak implementation of PECA, leading to easy availability of e-cigarettes through online, retail, convenient stores, stationery shops and near educational institutions.

The States were also directed to review the compliance of PECA and issue necessary instructions for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act, through special drives and random checking.

"Health Ministry also issued a public notice in view of e-cigarettes ban violations and its availability in the Indian market," Ranjit Singh, advocate, Supreme Court of India, said.



Indian team bags rapid fire pistol silver at Junior Worlds

The Indian shooters failed to get among the individual medals in rapid fire pistol, but combined to bag the team silver behind China in the Junior World Championship in Changwon, Korea, on Friday. Mahesh Pasupathy did make the individual final, with a score of 578, along with six Chinese but finished sixth eventually. China beat India by 17 points for the team title. The Indian trio of Mahesh, Sameer Ghulia and Rakanwar Singh Sandhu bagged the silver 11 points ahead of France. China topped the table with seven gold, eight silver and four bronze medals followed by India (four gold, four silver and three bronze).

The results: 25m rapid fire pistol: Junior men: 1. Wang Shiwen (Chn) 29 (582); 2. Theo Moczko (Fra) 26 (577); Yoon Seoyeong (Kor) 22 (581); 6. Mahesh Pasupathy 8 (578); 10. Sameer Ghulia 576; 11. Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu 576; 19. Agneya Kaushik 568; 22. Abhinav Choudhary 565; 34. Jatin 543.