TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES DEPARTMENT

ART AND CULTURE
ARCHAEOLOGY
MUSEUMS

POLICY NOTE
2026 – 2027

DEMAND No. 29

RAJMOHAN
Minister for School Education,
Tamil Development, Information & Publicity

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Government of Tamil Nadu
2026

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND CULTURE

Policy Note

2026-2027

1. Introduction

The artistic legacy of Tamil Nadu has, for centuries, travelled far beyond its geographic boundaries—shaping diasporic identities and finding resonance in global cultural spaces.

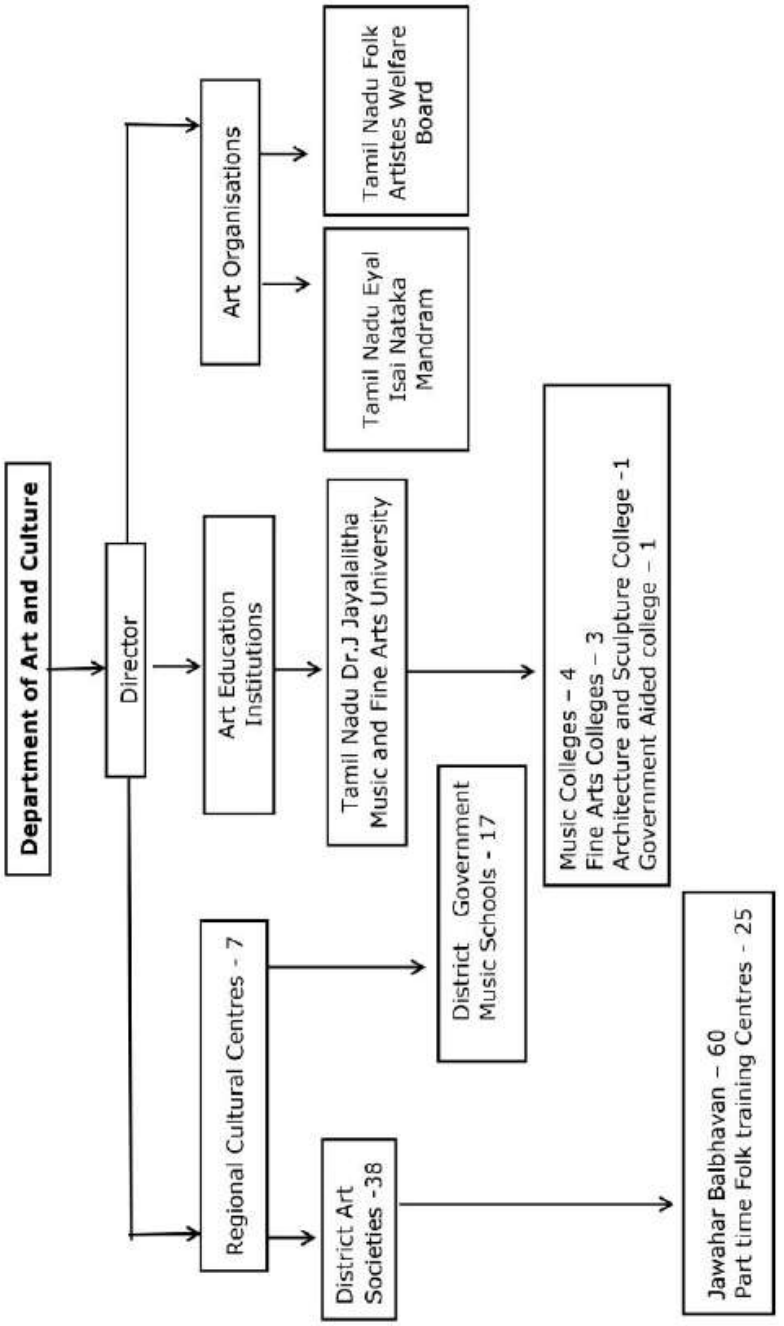
The Department of Art and Culture popularizes art forms, promotes artistic endeavors and patronizes artistes. It preserves our cultural lineage for future generations to refer, rejoice and recapitulate. The ancient art forms, folk arts and classical genre are disseminated to nooks and corners of the State by the ceaseless efforts of this Department.

1.1 Directorate of Art and Culture

The Directorate of Art and Culture is headed by the Director. The Director is assisted by a Joint Director, Deputy Directors, Regional Assistant Directors, Accounts Officer and other officials. The Seven Regional Art and Cultural Centers, The Tamil Nadu Dr. J Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University, three Government Colleges of Fine Arts, one Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, four Government Music Colleges, one Government aided college, seventeen Government District Music Schools, Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram, Tamil Nadu Folk Artistes Welfare Board, sixty Tamil Nadu Jawahar Siruvar Manrams and twenty five part time Folk Artist Training Centres are functioning under the Directorate.

- Seven Regional Art and Cultural Centres - Kancheepuram, Salem, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Tirunelveli and Coimbatore - cover all 38 districts.

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Department of Art and Culture
Director
Art Organisations
Tamil Nadu Folk Artistes Welfare Board
Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram
Art Education Institutions
Tamil Nadu Dr.J Jayalalitha Music and Fine Arts University
Music Colleges – 4
Fine Arts Colleges – 3
Architecture and Sculpture College -1
Government Aided college – 1
Regional Cultural Centres - 7
District Government Music Schools - 17
District Art Societies -38
Jawahar Balbhavan – 60
Part time Folk training Centres - 25

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1.2 Objectives of the Department

The objectives of the Department of Art and Culture are as follows:-

I. Preservation of art

II. Passing the Art to the next generation

III. Enhancing the livelihood of the Artists

IV. Appreciation of Artists

1.3 Regional Art and Cultural Centres

The Regional Art and Cultural Centres are functioning in 7 places under Assistant Directors, for highlighting the cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu and revitalising the cultural traditions in co-ordination with the District Art Societies and other cultural organisations and spreading the same among the people.

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Art functions, art competitions, art training camps, District level art awards, painting and sculpture exhibitions are organized in the districts through these Regional offices. Regional Art and Culture Centres are implementing the schemes relating to District Art Societies, District Government Music Schools, Jawahar Siruvar Manrams and Tamil Nadu Folk Artistes Welfare Board.

Sl. No	Regional Art and Cultural Centre	Districts Covered
1	Kancheepuram	Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Chengalpet, Chennai,Tiruvallur, Vellore, Ranipet and Tirupathur.
2	Salem	Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri.
3	Thanjavur	Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Kallakurichi and Mayiladuthurai.
4	Tiruchirappalli	Tiruchirappalli, Karur, Pudukkottai, Perambalur and Ariyalur.

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5	Madurai	Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Dindigul and Theni.
6	Tirunelveli	Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Kanniyakumari, Virudhunagar and Tenkasi.
7	Coimbatore	Coimbatore, Erode, The Nilgiris and Tiruppur.

On behalf of Art and Culture Department, the Regional Art and Cultural Centres are conducting cultural programmes at districts separately and also in coordination with the District Administration, Tourism Department, Information and Public Relations Department and South Zone Cultural Centre in the following festivals:-

Sl. No.	**Name of the Region and Festivals**	
1	**Kancheepuram Region**	
	Karthigai Deepam	Tiruvannamalai District
	Aadi Kiruthigai	Tiruttani, Thiruvallur District

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	Maha Sivarathiri	Kancheepuram District
	Summer festival	Yelagiri, Tirupathur District
		Javvadumalai, Tiruvannamalai District
2	**Salem Region**	
	Summer festival	Yercaud, Salem District
	Aadiperukku Vizha	Hogenakkal, Dharmapuri District
	Mangani Vizha	Krishnagiri District
	Valvil Ori Vizha	Kolli Hills, Namakkal District
3	**Thanjavur Region**	
	Sirkazhi Thamizhisai Moovar Vizha	Mayiladuthurai District
	Raja Raja Cholan Sadaya Vizha	Thanjavur District
	Aazhither Vizha	Tiruvarur District

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4	**Tiruchirappalli Region**	
	Vaigunda Ekadasi Vizha	Tiruchirappalli District
	Arulmigu Nandidevar Thirukalyana Vizha	Thirumazhapadi, Ariyalur District
	Nedungudi Maha Sivarathiri Vizha	Pudukkottai District
5	**Madurai Region**	
	Summer festival	Kodaikanal, Dindigul District
	Chithirai festival	Madurai District
	Aruvi Thiruvizha	Suruli, Theni District
	Pennycuick Pongal Festival	Gudalur, Theni District
6	**Tirunelveli Region**	
	Thiruppaavai Vizha	Srivilliputhur, Virudhunagar District.
	Saaral Thiruvizha	Courtalam, Tenkasi District.

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	Aruvi Thiruvizha	Tirparappu, Kanniyakumari District
	Kumari Thiruvizha	Kanniyakumari District
7	**Coimbatore Region**	
	Dheeran Chinnamalai Vizha	Erode District
	Summer festival	Ooty, The Nilgiris District
		Valparai, Coimbatore District

1.4 District Art Societies

The District Art Societies were established in the year 1994. These societies are functioning under the District Collectors. District Art Societies are functioning to protect and promote the traditional Tamil arts, to identify the talented artistes and to honour them with awards at the district level.

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District Art Awards are conferred to 15 eminent artistes by giving 3 awards in each category as mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	Age Group	Name of the Award	Award Amount (Rs.)
1	Upto 18years	Kalai Ilamani	4,000/-
2	19 to 35 years	Kalai Valarmani	6,000/-
3	36 to 50 years	Kalai Sudarmani	10,000/-
4	51 to 65 years	Kalai Nanmani	15,000/-
5	Above 65 years	Kalai Mudhumani	20,000/-

Identity Cards have been issued to the artistes to obtain financial assistance from the Government, to get priority to perform cultural programmes organized by the Government and also to avail travel concession. So far 86,050 Identity cards issued to the artistes.

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1.5. ART EDUCATION

1.5.1 Government Music College, Chennai

The Government Music College, Chennai was established in the year 1949. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Three year Degree Courses in Vocal Music, Violin, Veena, Bharatanatyam, Nadaswaram, Thavil, Mridangam and Flute;

II. Three year Diploma Courses in Vocal Music, Violin, Veena, Mridangam, Flute, Ghatam, Kanjira, Morsing, Nadaswaram, Thavil, Folk Arts and Bharatanatyam;

III. One year Diploma Courses in Nattuvangam and Music Teacher training;

IV. Two year Certificate Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin and Mridangam in Evening Music College.

- Government Music Colleges by year: Chennai **1949**, Madurai **1979**, Coimbatore **1993** and Thiruvaiyaru **1997**, the last also offering a Ph.D. in Music.

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V. Four year Degree Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin and Bharatanatyam during weekends.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 451 students are studying in this college.

1.5.2 Government Music College, Madurai

The Government Music College, Madurai was established in the year 1979. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Three year Degree Courses in Vocal Music and Bharatanatyam;
II. Three year Diploma Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin, Mridangam, Thavil, Flute, Nadaswaram, Bharatanatyam and Folk Arts;
III. One year Diploma Course in Music Teacher training.
IV. Two year Certificate Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin, Mridangam and

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Bharatanatyam in Evening Music College.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 174 students are studying in this college.

1.5.3 Government Music College, Coimbatore

The Government Music College, Coimbatore was established in the year 1993. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Three year Degree Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin and Bharatanatyam;

II. Three year Diploma Courses in Vocal Music, Violin, Veena, Bharatanatyam, Thavil and Nadaswaram;

III. One year Diploma Course in Music Teacher training;

IV. Two year Certificate Courses in Vocal Music, Veena and Violin in Evening Music College.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 117 students are studying in this college.

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1.5.4 Government Music College, Thiruvaiyaru

The Government Music College, Thiruvaiyaru was established in the year 1997. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Ph.D. in Music;
II. Two year Post Graduate Degree Courses in Vocal Music and Veena;
III. Three year Degree Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin, Bharatanatyam, Nadaswaram and Thavil;
IV. Three year Diploma Courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin, Mridangam, Bharatanatyam, Nadaswaram, Thavil and Folk Arts;
V. One year Diploma Course in Nattuvangam and Music Teacher training.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 170 students are studying in this college.

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Stipend

Every academic year, a monthly stipend of Rs.1500/- is being given for ten months to each student of Government Music Colleges.

- Students of Government Music Colleges get **Rs.1,500** a month for ten months; District Government Music School students **Rs.1,000**.

1.5.5 District Government Music Schools

District Government Music Schools are functioning at Tirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, Thiruvarur, Salem, Pudukkottai, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Perambalur, Thoothukudi, Karur, Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Sivagangai, Krishnagiri, Sirkazhi, Erode and Udumalaipet. In these schools, three year Certificate Courses are offered in Vocal Music, Bharatanatyam, Nadaswaram, Thavil, Thevaram, Violin and Mridangam.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 1026 students are studying in 17 District Government Music Schools.

- 17 District Government Music Schools teach three-year certificate courses in vocal music, Bharatanatyam, Nadaswaram, Thavil, Thevaram, violin and mridangam to 1,026 students.

Stipend

Every academic year, a monthly stipend of Rs.1000/- is being given for ten months to each student of District Government Music Schools.

1.5.6 Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai

The Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai is one of the oldest colleges in India, which was established in the year 1850. The following courses are conducted in this college:

- The Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai, established in 1850, is one of the oldest colleges in India; Kumbakonam followed in 1887.

I. Two year Post Graduate Degree courses in Industrial Design in Ceramic, Industrial Design in Textile, Visual Communication Design, Painting and Sculpture;

II. Four year Bachelor Degree courses in Industrial Design in Ceramic, Industrial Design in Textile, Visual Communication Design, Painting, Sculpture and Print making.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 442 students are studying in this college.

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1.5.7 Government College of Fine Arts, Kumbakonam

The Government College of Fine Arts, Kumbakonam was established in the year 1887. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Two year Post Graduate Degree Courses in Painting, Sculpture and Visual Communication Design;

II. Four year Bachelor Degree Courses in Painting, Sculpture, Visual Communication Design and Animation

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 358 students are studying in this college.

1.5.8 Government College of Fine Arts, Madurai

To benefit of the students from the southern districts and to provide fine arts training to a larger number of students, a new Government

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College of Fine Arts has been established in Madurai at an estimated cost of Rs.1.58 crore on 01.09.2025 at the premises of the World Tamil Sangam, Madurai, with the departments of Painting, Visual Communication Design and Sculpture.

- A new Government College of Fine Arts opened at Madurai on **01.09.2025** in the World Tamil Sangam premises, at **Rs.1.58** crore.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 66 students are studying in this college.

1.5.9 Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram

The Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram was established in the year 1957. The following four year Degree Courses are conducted in this college:

- The Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram dates from **1957** and teaches B.Tech in Traditional Architecture and B.F.A. in traditional sculpture and painting.

I. B.Tech. in Traditional Architecture,

II. B.F.A. in Traditional Sculpture (Stone Sculpture, Sudhai Sculpture, Wood Sculpture and Metal Sculpture),

III. B.F.A. in Traditional Drawing and Painting.

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During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 221 students are studying in this college.

1.5.10 Kalai Kaviri College of Fine Arts, Tiruchirappalli

Kalai Kaviri College of Fine Arts, Tiruchirappalli is a Government-aided college, which functions under the administrative control of the Department of Art and Culture. The following courses are conducted in this college:

I. Ph.D. in Bharathanatyam and Music;
II. Two year Post Graduate Degree Courses in Bharatanatyam, Vocal Music, Violin, Veena and Mridangam;
III. Five year Integrated Degree Courses and three year Degree Courses in Bharatanatyam, Vocal Music, Violin, Veena, Mridangam and Flute;
IV. One year Diploma Course in Music Teacher training.

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During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 232 students are studying in this college.

1.6 The Tamil Nadu Dr. J Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University

The Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University was established on 14.11.2013 through the Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University Act, 2013 to provide courses in all branches of music, fine arts and performing arts and to make provisions for research and advancement of above arts and dissemination of knowledge thereof. The University was renamed as 'The Tamil Nadu Dr. J Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University' in 2020. The University conducts the following courses:

I. Ph.D. in Performing Arts and Fine Arts
II. Post Graduate courses in Vocal Music, Veena, Violin, Mridangam,

The Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University was established on **14.11.2013** under the Act of **2013** and renamed for Dr. J. Jayalalithaa in **2020**. Nine colleges are affiliated to it, plus the **MGR** Film Institute and 40 off-campus centres.

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Nadhaswaram, Thavil, Bharathanatyam and Painting;

III. Three years part time Post Graduate Courses (during weekends) in Painting and Visual Communication Design;

IV. Diploma courses in Folk Music, Villuppattu, Music Therapy and Development of Indian Drama;

V. Two year Advanced online Diploma courses in Vocal, Veena and Mridangam;

VI. Certificate courses in Music Therapy Evolution and Performing Art Teacher Training.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 269 students are studying in this college.

Nine Colleges namely four Tamil Nadu Government Music colleges, three Government colleges of Fine Arts, the Government college of Architecture and Sculpture and Government aided Kalai Kaviri Fine Arts college at Tiruchirappalli, are also affiliated under this University.

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Further, Tamil Nadu Government M.G.R Film and Television Institute and 10 other self–financing colleges and 40 Off Campus Centers are affiliated under this University.

1.7 Tamil Nadu Jawahar Siruvar Manram

The objective of Tamil Nadu Jawahar Siruvar Manram is to impart art training and to bring out the hidden artistic talents of the children in the age group of 5 to 16 years.

Jawahar Siruvar Manrams train children aged 5 to 16 at 60 locations - 32 district centres, 26 extension centres and 2 rural centres - with 6,480 children enrolled.

Jawahar Siruvar Manrams are functioning in 60 locations of which, 32 are District Siruvar Manrams, 26 are Extension Centres and 2 are Rural Centres.

During the academic year 2026-2027, totally 6,480 children are getting training in these 60 Jawahar Siruvar Manrams.

New building to Tamil Nadu Jawahar Siruvar Manram at Mylapore, Chennai was constructed at a cost of Rs.2.41 crore and opened on 03.02.2026 for the use of children.

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1.7.1 Part time training in Jawahar Siruvar Manrams

Part time training in various disciplines such as Vocal Music, Bharatanatyam, Folk Dance, Drama, Gymnastics, Karate, Computer, Key Board, Drums, Tailoring, Drawing, Screen Printing, Yoga and Silambam are provided at the centres located at Chennai and four of the above disciplines at the District Level Centres are provided as per the willingness of the students.

Part-time training at Siruvar Manrams spans vocal music, Bharatanatyam, folk dance, drama, gymnastics, karate, computer, keyboard, drums, tailoring, drawing, screen printing, yoga and silambam.

1.7.2 District Level Summer Art Training Camps

District level summer art training camps are organized by Jawahar Siruvar Manram Centres for making the summer vacation of students useful and joyful.

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1.7.3 State Level Summer and Winter Art Training Camps

State level summer residential camps are conducted during the summer vacation at a Hill station. Similarly, State level winter residential camps are conducted during the half-yearly vacation at any one of the districts.

Winter camp for the year 2025-2026 were conducted in Kancheepuram Regional Art and Cultural Centre from 25.12.2025 to 03.01.2026. Summer camp for the year 2025-2026 was conducted at Papanasam in Tirunelveli from 17.05.2026 to 25.05.2026. 100 children of Jawahar Siruvar Manram from various districts of Tamil Nadu, enthusiastically participated in each camp and got trained in Bharatanatyam, Folk dance, Vocal music, Painting, Handicrafts, Yoga and Silambam.

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1.7.4 State Level Handicrafts Art Training Camp

State level residential handicrafts Art Training Camp is organized during quarterly vacation. In Thanjavur, Regional Art and Cultural Centre, from 27.09.2025 to 02.10.2025, training in various arts like terracotta sculpture, toy making, fabric painting, batik printing, handicrafts and candle making were given to 100 children of Jawahar Siruvar Manram from all over the State.

1.7.5 District Level and State Level Art Competitions

Competitions are conducted in the disciplines of Vocal Music, Bharatanatyam, Folk Dance and Drawing, once in a year at the district level in the age group of 5 to 8 years, 9 to 12 years and 13 to 16 years to identify and encourage the artistic talent of children. The Prizes and Certificates are awarded to the winners.

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First prize winners at District level competitions in the age group of 9 to 12 years and 13 to 16 years, participate in the State level art competitions. Three prizes are given for each age group in four fields. First prize, second prize and third prize winners get cash awards of Rs.10,000/-, Rs.7,500/- and Rs.5,000/- respectively. Total cash award worth Rs.1,80,000/- are being presented to 24 winners with medals and certificates, every year.

1.7.6 Participation of Jawahar Siruvar Manrams' Children in National Level Programmes

National Bal Bhavan, New Delhi organizes National Integration Cultural Programmes for three days as a part of the celebration of the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Children from 21 affiliated Jawahar Siruvar Manrams of Tamil Nadu are participating in the event every year.

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22 Children from Jawahar Siruvar Manrams have participated in the National Integration Cultural Programmes at New Delhi for three days, held between 27.12.2025 and 29.12.2025 from various districts in the state.

1.8 Oviya Nunkalaikkuzhu

1.8.1 Kalaichemmal Awards

The Government of Tamil Nadu honours talented Traditional / Contemporary Painters and Sculptors with 'Kalaichemmal Awards'. They are honoured with a citation plaque, a cash award of Rs.1,00,000/- and a certificate. 6 eminent artistes are awarded every year. 'Kalaichemmal Awards' for the year 2025-2026 were conferred on 04.03.2026.

- Six Kalaichemmal Awards a year honour traditional and contemporary painters and sculptors with **Rs.1,00,000** each; 39 traditional and 70 contemporary artists have received the title so far.

So far, 39 eminent artistes from traditional art forms and 70 eminent artistes from contemporary art forms have been honored with this title.

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1.8.2 State Level Art Exhibition in the category of Traditional and Contemporary Arts

State Level Exhibitions are conducted with the excellent painting and sculpture works of talented artists selected by a selection committee constituted by the Government. A cash prize of Rs.15,000/- and a certificate of appreciation are given to 30 artists in the senior category (above thirty years of age) and a cash prize of Rs.10,000/- and a certificate of appreciation are given to 20 artists in the junior category (below thirty years of age) for the best exhibited works.

- The State Level Art Exhibition gives **Rs.15,000** to 30 senior artists (above thirty) and **Rs.10,000** to 20 junior artists, with **Rs.10,000** each to ten art teachers and ten authors on art.

Further, a prize money of Rs.10,000/- is given to 10 best art teachers of painting and sculpture and a prize money of Rs.10,000/- to 10 best authors of the book on painting and sculpture.

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For the year 2025-2026, the above exhibition has been conducted from 11.07.2025 to 20.07.2025 at Chennai. 50 best painters and sculptors have been awarded with a total cash prize of Rs.8 lakhs and Rs.1.40 lakhs was awarded to best art teachers and authors.

Further, from 11.11.2025 to 16.11.2025, art exhibitions were conducted at Chennai at a total cost of Rs.6.50 Lakhs.

1.8.3 Financial assistance to artists for conducting One-man shows and Group shows

One-man shows and group shows are conducted for encouraging talented upcoming artists in the field of Painting and Sculpture. A sum of Rs.25,000/- is given for conducting one-man shows to 10 artists each and Rs.50,000/- is given for conducting group shows to 5 groups each and a sum of Rs.5 lakh is sanctioned every year for this scheme.

- **Rs.25,000** supports a one-man show for each of ten artists and **Rs.50,000** a group show for each of five groups, at **Rs.5 lakh** a year.

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1.8.4 Scholarships to students studying Fine Arts

To motivate the students studying in Government Colleges of Fine Arts, a scholarship of Rs.3,000/- each is being given to 10 outstanding students studying in final year B.F.A. and a scholarship of Rs.5,000/- each for 4 outstanding students studying in final year M.F.A. in Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai. 10 outstanding students studying in final year B.F.A. are given scholarship of Rs.3,000/- each and 2 outstanding students studying in final year M.F.A., are given scholarship of Rs.5,000/- each in Government College of Fine Arts, Kumbakonam. Totally 26 outstanding students are benefitted every year. A sum of Rs.90,000/- is allotted every year to implement this scheme.

1.9 South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur

South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture,

- The South Zone Cultural Centre at Thanjavur, established **1986**, is an autonomous body of the Union Ministry of Culture serving five southern States and three Union Territories.

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Government of India, established in the year 1986. This centre is conducting cultural programmes in 5 South Indian States namely Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and 3 Union Territories namely Puducherry, Lakshadweep and Andaman Nicobar Island.

In the year 2025-2026, the South Zone Cultural Centre in co-ordination with the Regional Art and Cultural Centres organized Triveni Sangamam Festival at Kanyakumari, Ooty Summer festival, Courtrallam Saral Festival, Dance festival at Madurai and Chennai Sangamam at a cost of Rs.49 lakhs.

1.10 Sangamam 'Namma Ooru Thiruvizha'

For the year 2025-26, 'Chennai Sangamam – Namma Ooru Thiruvizha' was inaugurated on 14.01.2026. Further, cultural programmes were conducted at 20 places in Chennai from 15.01.2026 to 18.01.2026 at a total

- Chennai Sangamam - Namma Ooru Thiruvizha was inaugurated on **14.01.2026** with programmes at 20 places in Chennai costing **Rs.8.58 crore** and over 1,500 artistes.

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cost of Rs.8.58 crore. More than 1500 artistes participated and performed in this programme.

Further, for the year 2025–2026, for conducting "Sangamam – Namma Ooru Thiruvizha" at 8 important places in Regions at a sum of Rs.3.48 Crore was sanctioned. Accordingly, the Tiruppur Sangamam – Namma Ooru Thiruvizha was organized in Tiruppur City under the Coimbatore Region on 20.02.2026 and 21.02.2026.

1.11 Part time Art training

A sum of Rs.2 crore was sanctioned to start 25 part time folk art training centres across the State to preserve folk arts and to ensure that these traditions continue to flourish in the future. These training courses are started in the academic year 2024-2025 and during the academic year 2026–2027, 1448 persons are undergoing this training.

- **Rs.2 crore** started 25 part-time folk art training centres from **2024-25** to keep folk forms alive; 1,448 persons are training in **2026-27**.

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1.12 Foreign Countries / States Cultural Programmes

Cultural Programmes are being conducted at international venues also, with a view to promote the arts and culture of the state. Accordingly, during the year 2025-2026, the following programmes were conducted.

I. "The Great Indian Summer Mela" in Mascow, Russia was organized by the Embassy of India in collaboration with Moscow. The Department of Art and Culture participated in the event and showcased the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu through vibrant traditional, classical and folk performance held on 5th and 6th July 2025. The cultural programmes were conducted at a cost of Rs.27 lakhs.

II. Devotional music programmes were conducted during the Thaipoosam Festival held in Mauritius for seven days, from

- Cultural programmes abroad in **2025-26**: The Great Indian Summer Mela at Moscow in July **2025**, Thaipoosam devotional music in Mauritius, and performances in Mauritius and Seychelles in April **2026**.

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27.01.2026 to 02.02.2026 at a cost of Rs.7.50 lakhs.

III. Cultural programmes were conducted in Mauritius and Seychelles for nine days, from 13.04.2026 to 21.04.2026, for which an amount of Rs.33.79 lakhs, has been given from Government grant.

IV. The Department of Art and Culture participated in various events such as Jaipur Lokrang Folk arts festival, Pongal festival in Tamilnadu House, New Delhi, Pongal festival in Chandigarh Tamil Sangam, Cultural festival at Bhopal Tamil sangam and Cultural festival at Hitkori, Jharkhand and showcased the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu through vibrant cultural programmes at a total cost of Rs.30.99 lakhs, through District Regional Centres.

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1.13 Encouraging Private Cultural Organizations

To encourage private cultural organizations, financial assistance amounting to Rs. 25 lakhs has been provided to 8 private cultural organizations during the year 2025-2026.

1.14 Tamil Nadu Folk Artistes Welfare Board

The Tamil Nadu Folk Artistes Welfare Board was constituted in the year 2007 to promote Folk Arts among the public, support the Folk Artistes financially and preserve these traditional art forms to future generations. The folk artistes, who are performing various folk art forms of Tamil Nadu, are members in this Board. The Government of Tamil Nadu have identified and enlisted 99 folk art forms.

So far 61,097 artistes have registered as members of the Board. A sum of Rs.304.14 lakh

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has been sanctioned as financial assistance for various welfare schemes to 11,007 beneficiaries.

The following welfare schemes are provided to Folk Artistes and their legal heirs such as education, marriage, child birth and death:-

Sl. No.	Financial assistance	Amount (Rs.)
1	Annual educational assistance (two children)	
	Girl children studying 10th standard	1,000/-
	10th Passed by Son / Daughter	1,000/-
	Girl children studying 11th standard	1,000/-
	Girl children studying 12th standard	1,500/-
	12th Passed by Son/Daughter	1,500/-
	Regular Degree Course (Son/Daughter)	1,500/-
	Regular Degree Course with Hostel Facility (Son/Daughter)	1,750/-

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	Regular Post Graduate Course (Son/Daughter)	4,000/-
	Regular Post Graduate Course with Hostel Facility (Son/Daughter)	5,000/-
	Professional Degree Course (Law, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Science) (Son/Daughter)	4,000/-
	Professional Degree Course with Hostel Facility (Son/Daughter)	6,000/-
	Regular Post Graduate Professional Degree Course (Son/Daughter)	6,000/-
	Regular Post Graduate Professional Degree Course with Hostel Facility (Son/Daughter)	8,000/-
	Technical Education Courses (Polytechnic), Industrial Technical Institute Course (ITI) (Son/Daughter)	1,000/-
	Technical Education Courses (Polytechnic), Industrial Technical Institute Course (ITI) with Hostel Facility (Son/Daughter)	1,200/-

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2	Financial assistance for Marriage to Member / Son / Daughter (Two Times Only)	5,000/-
3	Financial assistance for Delivery of Child / Miscarriage (for Women members - two times only)	
	a. Delivery of child	6,000/-
	b. Miscarriage	3,000/-
4	Financial assistance for purchase of spectacles (once in three Years)	1,500/-
5	Natural Death and Funeral Expenses	25,000/-
6	Financial Assistance to accidental death expenses	1,00,000/-

1.15 Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram

'Tamil Nadu Sangeetha Nataka Sangam' was established in the year 1955 to encourage the traditional Tamil arts and it was renamed as 'Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram' in the year 1973 to recognise all the three art forms of Tamil namely Eyal, Isai and Natakam. This Manram implements various schemes for the development

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of Eyal, Isai and Natakam. Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram is implementing various art schemes for the benefit of the artistes involved in various art forms through the grant sanctioned by the Government.

1.15.1 Cultural Activities

I. To exchange the cultural troupes between the States.

II. To implement the scheme of conferring State level 'Kalaimamani' awards to the artistes for recognizing their contribution to the field of arts.

III. To implement the scheme of conferring three All India Level Awards as follows:
- 'Bharathi' award for Literature,
- 'M.S.Subbulakshmi' award for Music,
- 'Balasaraswathi' award for Dance.

IV. To sanction financial assistance for professional drama troupes and dance drama troupes.

V. To conduct various cultural festivals and promote traditional Tamil arts in foreign countries.

- The Eyal Isai Nataka Manram confers three All India awards - the Bharathi award for literature, the M.S. Subbulakshmi award for music and the Balasaraswathi award for dance.

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VI. To encourage budding artistes by giving opportunities for their cultural programmes.

VII. To provide grants for the publication of rare books of arts.

VIII. To carry out documentation of rare art forms.

1.15.2 Kalaimamani Award

A Gold Medal of 3 sovereigns (24 grams) and Certificate of Appreciation are given to each Kalaimamani Awardee. 2,014 artistes have been conferred with this award so far.

- The Kalaimamani award carries a three-sovereign (24 gram) gold medal; 2,014 artistes have received it. Awards for **2021**, **2022** and **2023** went to 93 artists on **10.10.2025** at **Rs.3.39 crore**.

For the year 2021, 2022 and 2023 "Kalaimamani Award and All India Awards" have been conferred to 93 best artists on 10.10.2025 at a cost of Rs.3.39 crores.

1.15.3 Other Activities

I. To distribute Porkizhi worth Rs.1,00,000/- cash award to 10 senior Kalaimamani artistes who live in indigent circumstances.

- Porkizhi gives **Rs.1,00,000** to ten senior Kalaimamani artistes in indigent circumstances; aged indigent artistes get **Rs.3,000** a month and **Rs.25,000** goes to families of deceased renowned artistes.

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II. To provide an one-time financial assistance of Rs.25,000/- to the families of deceased renowned artistes as family maintenance support.

III. To sanction financial assistance of Rs.3,000/- per month to the aged indigent artistes.

IV. To provide Rs. 1.50 lakh financial assistance for the production and staging of new dramas and dance dramas.

V. To provide financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- each to 500 folk artistes and troupes for purchasing musical instruments and costumes.

VI. To recommend travel fare concession in Train and Government Buses to drama artistes and art troupes for performing in outstations.

- 500 folk artistes and troupes get **Rs.10,000** each for instruments and costumes, and **Rs.1.50 lakh** supports the staging of a new drama or dance drama.

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1.15.4 Infrastructure Development

I. The renovation works of the Theatre of Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram is being done at a cost of Rs.50.00 lakh.

II. The profiles and works of legendary artistes of Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram are being preserved and digitally documented at a cost of Rs.20.00 lakh.

1.15.5 Travel Concession

A financial assistance of Rs. 1 crore has been sanctioned per year for free travel on Tamil Nadu Government Transport Corporation buses to Kalaimamani awardees of the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram and free travel by one assistant with the awardees if they have completed 60 years of age, is being provided.

- **Rs.1 crore** a year funds free bus travel for Kalaimamani awardees, with an assistant travelling free once the awardee is over 60.

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1.16 Conclusion

The Department of Art and Culture continues to grow with a steadfast commitment to preserving, promoting, and propagating the rich and diverse artistic and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu. This department continues to strengthen the state's cultural identity through comprehensive initiatives such as arts education, welfare schemes for folk artists, documentation of traditional art forms, organization of cultural festivals and the promotion of Tamil arts at national and international levels.

The department remains committed to encouraging students to participate in arts and cultural events, safeguarding traditional art forms that are on the verge of extinction, and ensuring the socio-economic advancement of artists through various welfare schemes. The department is firmly

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committed to preserving and passing on Tamil Nadu's invaluable artistic heritage to future generations.

This department will continue its unwavering efforts not only to preserve the State's unique artistic and cultural heritage, but also to celebrate, nature and transmit its glorious artistic traditions to future generations, thereby ensuring Tamil Nadu’s rich cultural legacy continues to thrive and inspire generations to come.

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

POLICY NOTE

2026-2027

2. Introduction

The essence of Archaeology is the study of human past which deepens the understanding of the world in a more meaningful manner. The study of human past means the study of human behavioural and cognitive contexts that transformed the humanity through time period.

Archaeology is a science which methodically investigates for obtaining a complete picture of human behavioural and cognitive systems through material remains. The term archaeology has been derived from the Greek word. In Greek archaeos means ancient and logos means discussion, reason or science.

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2.1 Objectives of the Department

The State Department of Archaeology was established in 1961 to achieve the following objectives:

The State Department of Archaeology was established in **1961** to identify and conserve monuments, excavate, document inscriptions and set up site museums.

I. To identify, conserve and preserve ancient and historical monuments.

II. To conduct systematic archaeological explorations and excavations in historically and archaeologically important sites throughout the State.

III. Documenting inscriptions including stone and copper plates by copying, deciphering and publishing them.

IV. Establishing Site Museums.

2.2 Administrative Structure

The Department of Archaeology is headed by the Commissioner of Archaeology and supported by a team that includes the Joint Director, Deputy Directors, an Executive Engineer, Assistant Directors, Assistant Executive Engineers,

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Archaeological Officers, Junior Engineers, Assistant Archaeological Officers and other officials. The Tamil Nadu Institute of Archaeology and Museology was established and functions under Principal, Vice-Principal, and other officials, with 88 students on roll.

2.3 Path-breaking discoveries

I. A series of AMS ^{14}C (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) scientific dates ranging from 2172 BCE to 3345 BCE were obtained for carbon and ceramic samples collected from Telunganur, Mangadu, Kilnamandi, Mayiladumparai, Adichanallur and Sivagalai. The AMS date of 3345 BCE, one of the earliest dates so far obtained for iron in India, came from the Sivagalai excavation, which proved that Tamil Nadu was aware of iron technology as early as 5300 years ago.

- **AMS** and **OSL** dates from 2172 **BCE** to 3345 **BCE** were obtained from Telunganur, Mangadu, Kilnamandi, Mayiladumparai, Adichanallur and Sivagalai. The 3345 **BCE** date from Sivagalai is among the earliest for iron in India - iron technology in Tamil Nadu 5,300 years ago.

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II. The paddy and other millets collected from Adichanallur and Sivagalai excavations proved that Tamils were aware of both dry and wet cultivation as early as 3500 years ago.

III. More than 15,000 potsherds with graffiti signs have been documented so far from 140 archaeological sites in Tamil Nadu, ranging from the Iron Age to the Early Historic period.

- More than 15,000 graffiti-bearing potsherds have been documented from 140 sites; 90% of the signs parallel Indus graffiti and 60% match signs on Indus seals.

IV. 90% of the graffiti signs are found to be having parallels with Indus graffiti signs and 60% of them with Indus signs engraved on seals.

V. Recent scientific dates proved that the Iron Age of Tamil Nadu and the Indus Valley Civilization are contemporary.

VI. More than 1630 Tamili-inscribed potsherds were reported from 42 archaeological sites of Tamil Nadu. Highest number ever found in India.

- More than 1,630 Tamili-inscribed potsherds from 42 sites - the highest number found in India. Tamili inscriptions at Sivagalai are dated to 685 **BCE**, placing the script in the 7th century **BCE**.

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VII. Tamili inscriptions proved that Tamil society was a literate society as early as 2,700 years ago.

VIII. The Tamili inscriptions at Sivagalai have been dated scientifically to 685 BCE, indicating that the Tamili script was in use during the 7th century BCE.

IX. Out of 239 rock art sites, 46 sites with paintings/engravings were documented and published in the first phase of documentation.

X. Under Atlas project, 161 maps covering major themes from prehistoric times to pre-colonial period were prepared and are ready for publication.

Of 239 rock art sites, 46 with paintings or engravings were documented in the first phase; under the Atlas project 161 thematic maps from prehistory to the pre-colonial period are ready for publication.

2.4 Conservation, Restoration and Preservation of Protected Monuments

Tamil Nadu is known for its amazing artwork and architectural styles, as well as its rich historical and cultural heritage.

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The Government of Tamil Nadu has enacted the "Tamil Nadu Ancient & Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1966 (Tamil Nadu Act 25 of 1966) and Rules, 1971" to safeguard, maintain, and renovate the State's historical landmarks.

So far, the Government of Tamil Nadu has declared 120 historical monuments and 6 archaeological sites, totalling 126 monuments as "Protected historical monuments". Madurai Tirumalai Nayak Mahal, Ramanathapuram Ramalinga Vilasam Palace, Thanjavur Maratha Palace, Manora Memorial Pillar, Danish Fort and the Governor's Bungalow at Tarangambadi have evolved as significant tourist destinations.

- The Tamil Nadu Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains **Act, 1966** (Act 25 of **1966**) with Rules of **1971** governs protection; 120 monuments and 6 archaeological sites - 126 in all - are declared protected.

2.5 Newly Notified Monuments and Archaeological Sites

Recently, Panakudi Stone Mandapam at Panakudi Village in Tirunelveli District, Cave Temple at Azhagiapandipuram Village in

- Newly notified protected monuments include the Panakudi stone mandapam, the Azhagiapandipuram cave temple, the Keeladi habitation site and the Arumuga Kottai at Sengamadai.

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Kanniyakumari District, Inscriptions at Agaloor Village in Villupuram District, Cave Paintings at Puttur Village in Virudhunagar District, Mangammal Chathiram at Athithanenthal Village in Virudhunagar District, Rock Cut Caves at Kothayam Village in Dindigul District, Habitation Site at Keeladi Village in Sivagangai District, Rock Cut Cave (Sivan Cave Temple) at Kulalakottaiyur (K.Kottaiyur) Village in Pudukkottai District and Arumuga Kottai at Pullamadai Group of Sengamadai Village in Ramanathapuram District have been declared as Protected historical monuments.

A preliminary notification has been issued to declare the War Memorial Pillar at Thanthoni Village of Karur Taluk and District, the Megalithic cists and cairns with stone circles at Gudalur Village in Kulithalai Taluk of Karur District and Rock cut structure at Sathurvedamangalam in

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Singampunari Taluk of Sivagangai District as protected historical monuments.

2.6 Funds for Periodical maintenance of Protected Monuments

A sum of Rs.3 crore is being provided by the State Government annually as recurring expenditure from 2025-2026 for the maintenance of protected monuments and archaeological sites.

- **Rs.3 crore** a year is provided from **2025-26** as recurring expenditure for maintaining protected monuments and archaeological sites.

2.7 Conservation and Restoration of old Forts and Palaces

Heritage tourism will be given a boost by restoring and renovating old forts and palaces while retaining their originality. In this regard, Sarjah Madi at Thanjavur, Danish Fort at Tharangambadi and Tirumalai Nayak Mahal at Madurai three protected monuments are being taken up for conservation and restoration work. These works are being executed by the Public Works Department.

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The renovation of the 17th-Century Maratha period mural paintings at the Maratha Durbar Hall in Thanjavur Palace premises is being carried out by the Public Works Department at a total cost of Rs.6.95 crore and the works are in progress.

The renovation of the Governor's Bungalow at Tarangambadi in Mayiladuthurai District, as per archaeological principles, is being carried out by the Public Works Department at a total cost of Rs.3.77 crore, and the works are in progress.

Restoration of the compound wall of the Danish Fort at Tarangambadi in Mayiladuthurai District is being carried out by the Public Works Department at the cost of Rs.0.63 crore and the works have been completed.

Extension of the existing wire fencing, repair of barbed wire fencing and laying of lawns on the south and west sides of the Palace in Tirumalai Nayak Mahal is being carried out at the

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cost of Rs.0.61 crore and the works have been completed.

2.8 Ongoing works under announcement in the Financial Year 2025-2026

I. Facade lighting and improvement of infrastructure to attract tourists is being carried out at the Manora Protected Monument by the Public Works Department at a total cost of Rs.2.75 crore and the works have been completed.

II. Providing a Sculpture Courtyard with necessary lighting provisions, rainwater drainage arrangements and a modern toilet with basic amenities are being carried out in Madurai Tirumalai Nayak Mahal by the Public Works Department at a total cost of Rs.2.80 crore and the works are in progress.

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2.9 Project for preservation and documentation of unprotected sculptures and inscriptions

During 2025-2026, Construction of Pedestal and Dwarf Wall with Grill Fencing to the Loose Sculptures at the following places were carried out:

I. Kothaneri Village, Sivakasi Taluk, Virudhunagar District
II. Vedanatham Village, Aruppukottai Taluk, Virudhunagar District
III. Melamudimannarkottai Village in Kamuthi Taluk of Ramanathapuram District
IV. Perumbalai (Ronippatti) Village in Pennagaram Taluk of Dharmapuri District

2.10 Archaeological Excavations

Archaeological excavations are considered as one of the best scientific tools to reconstruct the hoary past and shed more light on the Dark Age of history. The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology makes every effort to fill the cultural

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gaps that exist in the cultural history of Tamil Nadu.

Besides material evidence, the biological samples obtained through these excavations provide valuable information on the paleo-environment, subsistence patterns, technological advancement and lifestyle changes over time.

2.11.1 Archaeological Explorations and Excavations – 2025-2026

During the year 2025-2026, the following eight excavations were carried out:-

S.No.	Site	District	Details
1	Keeladi and its Cluster site Kondagai	Sivagangai	10th Season
2	Vembakkottai	Virudhunagar	3rd Season
3	Kilnamandi	Tiruvannamalai	2nd Season
4	Porpanaikkottai	Pudukottai	2nd Season

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5	Tirumalapuram	Tenkasi	1st Season
6	Chennanoor	Krishnagiri	1st Season
7	Kongalnagaram	Tiruppur	1st Season
8	Marungur	Cuddalore	1st Season

2.11.2 Keeladi Excavation - Tenth Season

Keeladi is located in the Tirupuvanam Taluk of Sivagangai District. During the first three phases of excavations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India, (2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017), many brick structures have been unearthed. Considering this evidence, Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has been conducting extensive archaeological excavations at Keeladi since 2017 (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2024 and 2025) with an objective to uncover the comprehensive characteristics of the various dimensions of the Sangam Age.

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Three AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dates obtained for samples placed the site to 6th century BCE. It is clear from the findings of graffiti and Tamili inscribed potsherds that it was a literate society. The structural evidences suggest that Keeladi may have been an industrial town as well as a residential area.

In the 10th phase of excavation, more than 500 antiquities and more than 100 inscribed potsherds were uncovered.

Besides, a large number of artistically decorated storage jars for grain and black and red ware bowls were discovered. Furthermore a terracotta pipeline was found at a depth of 110 cm. These terracotta pipes, consisting of six interlocked sections, are neatly assembled. Well-prepared and ramped mud floors and fragments of roofing tiles are also some of the important archaeological findings uncovered in the excavations. This showcases the various activities

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undertaken by the people during the Sangam Age.

2.11.3 Kondagai Excavation - Fifth Season

In Kondagai near Keeladi, 6 urn burials were identified along with more than 10 black-and-red pots.

2.11.4 Vembakkottai Excavation – Third season

Vembakottai on the Vaippar in Virudhunagar has a 50-acre mound with deposits from the Iron Age to the medieval period; the third season's 24 trenches yielded 5,015 antiquities.

Vembakottai is a village located on the northern bank of the Vaippar River in Vembakottai taluk of Virudhunagar District. A major habitation mound extending over 50 acres locally known as Mettukadu or Uchimedu preserves continuous cultural deposits from the Iron Age to the Medieval period.

During the third season, a total of 24 trenches were excavated in the north-western sector to determine the site's extent, yielding

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5,015 antiquities, including glass beads, shell bangles and terracotta objects.

2.11.5 Kilnamandi Excavation – Second season

Kilnamandi village is located in the Vandavasi taluk of Tiruvannamalai district. During this second phase, excavations were carried out across five localities. These five localities covered burial grounds, an iron smelting site, habitation areas and areas where polished hand axes were manufactured.

Excavations exposed six sarcophagi and 23 burial antiquities, including stone artefacts and iron implements such as axes and chisels. The habitation area yielded 76 antiquities comprising stone tools, iron objects, glass and shell bangles, terracotta hopscotches, wheels, gaming objects, spindle whorls, toys and animal bones.

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The site also revealed specialised industrial zones, with an iron smelting area containing tuyeres and over 1,000 iron slag pieces and a polished hand-axe manufacturing workshop that produced more than 1,000 stone flakes along with dolerite raw material used for crafting polished hand axes. These findings establish the site as an important centre for ancient industrial and craft production.

Kilnamandi revealed specialised industrial zones - an iron smelting area with tuyeres and over 1,000 slag pieces, and a polished hand-axe workshop with over 1,000 stone flakes.

2.11.6 Porpanaikkottai Excavation - Second season

Porpanaikottai is located in Alangudi Taluk of Pudukkottai District. During the second season, 17 trenches were laid and a total of 1,982 antiquities were recovered, including glass beads and bangles, copper nails, terracotta wheel, antimony rod, carnelian and amethyst beads, bone point, copper coins, terracotta ear lobes and rubbing stones. Potteries like torpedo jar, glazed ware, black-and-red ware, red slipped ware,

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black ware and red wares. Graffiti and Tamili inscribed potsherds were also found.

2.11.7 Tirumalapuram Excavation – Tenkasi District – First Season

Tirumalapuram village is located in Sivagiri Taluk of Tenkasi District.

Across 37 trenches, two distinct burial systems were identified. Urn burials covered with cairn packing and a cist chamber burial constructed with orthostats in a rectangular arrangement. A total of 108 urn burials of varying sizes were uncovered, predominantly secondary burials accompanied by rich grave goods.

Tirumalapuram in Tenkasi yielded 108 urn burials and a rare cist chamber burial, with two urns bearing figurative depictions of humans, animals and landscape.

The site is particularly significant for its unique cist chamber burial, graffiti marks and symbolic motifs on urns created using applique and hand-drawn techniques. Two urns bear rare figurative depictions of humans, animals and landscape elements, providing valuable insights

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into the beliefs, artistic traditions and funerary practices of the Iron Age community.

2.11.8 Chennanur Excavation – Krishnagiri District – First season

The Chennanur excavation site, located in Krishnagiri district, has revealed a significant prehistoric habitation extending over 50 acres on the south-western slope of Chennanur Hillock. The site preserves continuous cultural deposits from the Microlithic, Neolithic, Iron Age, Early Historic and Early Medieval periods.

A total of 27 trenches were laid at different altitudes to delineate the site's extent and settlement pattern, uncovering microlithic tools, Neolithic celts, bone implements, Iron Age artefacts, glass and shell ornaments, iron agricultural tools and beads indicating long-distance trade networks. Three Red Slipped

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Ware sherds bearing Tamili inscriptions further highlight the site's historical significance.

Scientific dating places the Microlithic phase at around 8450 BCE and the Neolithic phase at around 2220 BCE, making Chennanur one of the earliest settled cultural landscapes in Tamil Nadu.

- Chennanur in Krishnagiri dates the Microlithic phase to about 8450 **BCE** and the Neolithic to about 2220 **BCE** - among the earliest settled landscapes in Tamil Nadu.

2.11.9 Kongalnagaram Excavation Tiruppur District - First season

Excavations at Kongalnagaram in Tiruppur district revealed an important Early Historic habitation and burial complex, comprising a 20-acre habitation mound and a burial site with cist burials, cairn circles and a menhir. A total of 21 trenches (14 habitation and 7 burial contexts) provided valuable evidence on the socio-cultural and economic life of the ancient settlement.

- Kongalnagaram in Tiruppur yielded 1,389 artefacts, three Tamili potsherds and over 500 graffiti sherds, with carnelian beads attesting long-distance trade and an ivory dice and spindle whorls indicating textile production.

The excavations yielded 1,389 artefacts, including terracotta objects, glass antiquities, semi-precious stone beads, metal objects, bone,

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ivory and shell artefacts. Carnelian beads attest to long-distance trade, while spindle whorls and an ivory dice indicate textile production and a developed socio-economic life.

Three Tamili (Tamil-Brahmi) inscribed potsherds and over 500 graffiti-marked sherds highlight early literacy and administrative practices. Burial excavations recovered ritual pottery, an antimony rod, a shell bangle and a copper/bronze bowl, reflecting distinctive funerary traditions. AMS dating of charcoal samples confirms the site's early historic chronology.

2.11.10 Marungur Excavation – Cuddalore District - First season

Marungur village is situated in Panruti taluk of Cuddalore district. A total of 10 trenches, of which 8 are in a habitation mound and 2 are in a burial site. Burial site witnessed 11 urns and 2 storage containers from the habitation site. The stratigraphical deposit of the habitation site

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ranges from the Medieval period to Early Historic period. Pottery evidence of the site is rich in red-slipped ware compared to black-and-red ware. Grey rouletted ware and black-and-red rouletted ware were witnessed along with red slipped ware. Totally 29 graffiti-inscribed sherds were collected from both habitation and burial offerings.

Antiquities obtained from the habitation site were of copper, antimony rod, Raja Raja coin, bangle, ring, Iron, nails, arrow head, knife; beads of agate, carnelian, quartz, glass and terracotta; bone points, polished stone axe; conch core; burnishing tool; legged quern and some terracotta objects. Iron swords and stone beads were from burial mounds.

2.12 Offshore Reconnaissance Survey of a Sangam Age Korkai Port

The long coast of India played a vital role in the transoceanic trade since Harappan times.

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Much of the port-based trade activities are witnessed from the time of the Early Historic period.

The Department of Archaeology had undertaken a preliminary reconnaissance survey in collaboration with Indian Maritime University (IMU) and the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) to identify the Korkai port of the mid-Sangam Age Pandyas at a total cost of Rs.1.50 crore.

An offshore reconnaissance survey with the Indian Maritime University and the National Institute of Ocean Technology seeks the Korkai port of the mid-Sangam Pandyas, at **Rs.1.50** crore.

The surveys have been extended to Poompuhar since February 2025 with sidescan SONAR coverage. A few new features have been identified from the survey.

2.13 Archaeological Excavation during the Financial Year 2026-2027

During the year 2026-2027, the following eight excavations were taken up and they are in progress.

S.No.	Site	District	Details
1	Keeladi	Sivagangai	11th Season
2	Pattanamarudur	Thoothukudi	1st Season
3	Karivalamvantha Nallur	Tenkasi	1st Season
4	Nagapattinam	Nagapattinam	1st Season
5	Manikkollai	Cuddalore	1st Season
6	Adichanur	Villupuram	1st Season
7	Vellalur	Coimbatore	1st Season
8	Telunganur	Salem	1st Season

2.14.1 Keeladi Excavation – Eleventh Season

The ongoing 11th phase of excavations has yielded more than 1,000 antiquities and over

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20 inscribed potsherds, including a gold foil, an ivory dice, a terracotta seal with a fish motif, figurines, gamesmen, hopscotches, spindle whorls, terracotta ear ornaments, glass and semi-precious stone beads and iron objects.

Excavations across seven quadrants have exposed brick structures in five quadrants at depths of 35 cm and 200 cm, along with associated postholes, artistically decorated storage jars, Black-and-Red Ware bowls, a terracotta pipeline with interlocking sections, well-prepared mud floors, and clusters of roofing tiles.

2.14.2 Pattanamarudur Excavation – First Season

Excavations at Pattanamarudur in the Thoothukudi district have revealed a significant Early Historic and Medieval coastal settlement

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spread over nearly 200 acres along the Gulf of Mannar. The site preserves extensive evidence of a flourishing shell industry and maritime trade, with abundant shell artefacts, Black-and-Red Ware, Red Slipped ware, Celadon Ware and Porcelain Ware indicating sustained commercial interactions across the Indian Ocean.

Excavations in three trenches unearthed over 3,400 artefacts, dominated by shell bangle fragments and conch cut-pieces, confirming large-scale shell craft production. Other important discoveries include a gold foil, terracotta male and female figurines, copper coins, glass beads, iron and copper objects, and a stone alignment resembling a structural wall. The recovery of imported ceramics, decorated pottery, environmental samples and faunal remains provides valuable evidence for reconstructing the site's trade networks, craft specialisation,

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settlement pattern and cultural history, highlighting Pattanamarudur as a major archaeological centre of ancient Tamil Nadu.

2.14.3 Karivalamvanthanallur Excavation – First Season

Excavations at Karivalamvanthanallur in Tenkasi district have revealed a multi-period archaeological site with evidence of continuous occupation from the Microlithic and Iron Age to the Late Medieval period. Spread across three localities a habitation area, a brick structural complex, and a megalithic burial; the site provides valuable insights into settlement planning, domestic life, water management, and funerary traditions.

The habitation area yielded pottery, glass and shell beads, terracotta ornaments, gold objects, pits, and postholes, indicating long-term residential activity and active trade networks with coastal regions. The brick structural complex

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exposed a substantial stepped structure, possibly associated with a water storage or step-well system. The megalithic burial comprised a double cairn circle enclosing an urn burial with grave goods, demonstrating sophisticated burial practices. Stratified Microlithic assemblages, including chert fluted cores, blades, and quartz tools, further establish the site's significance in tracing early technological traditions and the long cultural sequence of southern Tamil Nadu.

2.14.4 Manikkollai Excavation - First Season

Manikkollai village is situated in Bhuvanagiri Taluk of Cuddalore district. Totally 9 trenches were laid, which encountered an enormous number of monochrome glass beads, beads of various colours and sizes range from 0.1cm to 0.5cm, along with semi-finished glasses, glass chunks, glass residues on sherds and glass slags. Red ware and red slipped ware were the prominent potteries yielded from the site.

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Excavations also exposed a furnace with adhering slag, a brick structure, and bricks measuring 22 × 12 × 5 cm. Other notable antiquities include a copper coin, porcelain ware, and terracotta objects, highlighting the site's significance as an ancient glass production and habitation centre.

2.14.5 Adichanur Excavation - First Season

The first phase of excavations at Adichanur in Villupuram district revealed an important Iron Age burial complex comprising more than ten stone-circle graves and an associated habitation mound. Three stone circles are being excavated, of which two were exposed up to the capstone level.

The excavated burials yielded conches, offering pots, iron swords, iron tools, and shell ornaments, reflecting distinctive funerary practices provide additional evidence of the site’s archaeological significance and Iron Age cultural landscape. In addition, grooves were identified in and around the burial site.

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2.14.6 Vellalur Excavation - First Season

Excavations at Vellalur in Coimbatore district aim to analyse the early historical trade networks, settlement patterns and cultural dynamics situated on the southern bank of the Noyyal River along the ancient Rajakesari-peruvazhi trade route. Previous discoveries of Roman coins, ornaments, pottery, and other surface artefacts.

Six trenches were laid out in a grid pattern for horizontal excavation. The investigation aims to document and analyse the archaeological remains to reconstruct the cultural, economic, and historical development of the region.

2.14.7 Telunganur – Mangadu Excavation - First Season

Excavations at Telunganur–Mangadu in Salem district investigate an important Iron Age megalithic burial complex, following the earlier discovery of an ultra-high carbon steel sword

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scientifically dated to 1200 BCE, demonstrating advanced iron and steel metallurgy in ancient Tamil Nadu.

Currently, excavations at ten megalithic burials representing stone circles, cairn circles, cist burials, and urn burials are in progress. The burials have yielded Black-and-Red ware potteries, urns, iron swords and spears, human skeletal remains, and associated grave goods, reflecting diverse funerary traditions. Notable discoveries include a lateral human burial, a horizontally placed bisected urn with an iron sword, and at Mangadu, a well-constructed cist burial with a western porthole, shutter stone arrangement, chamber-like passage, and burnished black ware objects.

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2.15 Scientific Studies

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology emphasises a scientific approach to reconstructing the past through interdisciplinary collaboration. The integration of humanities, social science, geo-science, physical and chemical science, environmental science, material science, Ancient DNA (aDNA) and computational science is essential for a reliable understanding of human history.

The analysis of animal bones, pollen, phytoliths, archaeo-botanical remains, ancient genomes, metallurgy and irrigation systems provide valuable insights into past environments, human adaptation and technological progress.

Recognizing the importance of scientific methodologies, the Department collaborates with individual scholars, scientific institutions and universities to enhance research and analysis.

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Major Scientific Areas of Study

S.No.	Studies	Dating / Analysis
1	Absolute Chronology	AMS, Luminescence, OSL, Cosmogenic dating
2	Pyrotechnology	Study of iron, glass and ceramics
3	Archaeo-metallurgy	Elemental analysis using X-ray Fluorescence (XRF), Laser Ablation–Inductively Coupled Plasma–Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS), Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), X-ray Diffraction (XRD)
4	Isotopic Signatures	Isotopic analysis for material provenance
5	Ancient DNA (aDNA)	Genetic analysis of human, animal and plant remains

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6	Palaeoenvironment & Food Habits	Analysis of pollen, phytoliths, diatoms and shells
7	Archaeozoology	Study of animal domestication, food habits and migration
8	Petrography	Study of rocks, minerals, ceramics and crucibles
9	Physical Anthropology	Analysis of human skeletal remains and diseases
10	Geographic Information System (GIS)	Mapping landscapes and settlements

Collaborations with Indian & International Institutions

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, in collaboration with renowned Indian and International scholars and institutions, has been carrying out scientific research across a wide range of specialized fields. These institutions include Madurai Kamaraj University, Harvard Medical School, Deccan College, University

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College London (UCL), Inter-University Accelerator Centre (IUAC), New Delhi, University of Oxford, Beta Analytic (USA), University of Vienna, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, Field Museum (Chicago), Hongik University (South Korea), Agharkar Research Institute, The University of Wisconsin–Madison, Deccan College, Kerala University, Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Vellore, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, University of Chicago.

Technological Integration

By integrating cutting-edge technologies, the department aims to make research results more accurate and make authentic data available to the general public.

S.No.	Fields	Details
1	Virtual Reality (VR) and	Digital reconstruction of archaeological sites and

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	Three-Dimensional (3D) Technology	artefacts
2	Remote Sensing	Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), photogrammetry and 3D documentation of monuments, sites and sculptures
3	Geophysics (GPR)	Ground-penetrating radar for site mapping

These collaborations promote a rigorous, multidisciplinary approach to studying Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage.

2.16 Archaeological Site Museums / Museums

The antiquities discovered through archaeological explorations and excavations have been carefully preserved and are on display for the benefit of scholars, researchers and the general public at the following 17 archaeological

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site museums / museums located across various districts of the State:

Sl. No	Site Museums	Place / District
1)	Pre-Historic Museum	Poondi / Tiruvallur
2)	Arcot Museum	Arcot / Ranipet
3)	Hero Stone Museum	Dharmapuri
4)	Tirukkovilur Museum	Tirukkovilur / Kallakkurichi
5)	Coimbatore Museum	Coimbatore
6)	Chera Museum	Karur
7)	Maratha Museum	Thanjavur
8)	Rajarajan Museum	Thanjavur
9)	Gangaikondachola puram Museum	Gangaikondachola puram / Ariyalur
10)	Underwater Archaeological Museum	Poompuhar / Mayiladuthurai
11)	Danish Fort Museum	Tarangambadi / Mayiladuthurai

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12)	Ramalinga Vilaasam Museum	Ramanathapuram
13)	Tirumalai Nayak Mahal Museum	Madurai
14)	Folklore Museum	Courtallam / Tenkasi
15)	Keeladi Museum	Sivagangai
16)	Porunai Museum	Tirunelveli
17)	Keeladi Open – Air Museum	Sivagangai

2.17 Keeladi Museum at Sivagangai District

The world-class Keeladi Museum at Kondagai was built at a cost of Rs.18.42 crore. Spanning approximately 2 acres, the museum complex covers a built-up area of around 31,000 square feet.

The museum is organised into six main sections, each dedicated to a specific theme, including 1) Vaigai and Keeladi, 2) Agrarian and Water Management, 3) Ceramic Industries,

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4) Weaving and Beads, 5) Sea Trade and 6) Lifestyle. Additionally, the premises feature semi-open and open spaces designed for interactive activities such as traditional games, craft workshops and cultural performances, enriching visitor engagement.

Since its opening, it has received widespread appreciation, attracting over 2,000 visitors on weekdays and nearly 5,000 on weekends, reinforcing its role as a cultural and educational hub.

So far, nearly 11 lakh visitors have explored the Keeladi Museum. To extend accessibility, a virtual tour of the museum has been launched and integrated into the newly developed Keeladi website (www.keeladimuseum.tn.gov.in). This online platform allows individuals worldwide to experience the museum remotely, offering a comprehensive digital tour of its exhibits. Visitors can explore rare artefacts, view the 15-minute

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documentary screened at the museum theatre and engage with 2D and 3D animations displayed in the galleries.

The website has attracted approximately 42,000 visitors from its inception and has reached audiences in nearly 60 countries. Its global reach continues to expand steadily, making Keeladi's rich heritage accessible to every corner of the world.

In addition, a dedicated souvenir facility was introduced on 16.02.2025 in collaboration with Poompuhar – The Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation – to offer visitors a range of exquisite traditional handicrafts. The response to this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive.

2.18 Keeladi Open Air Site Museum at Sivagangai District

The Government had issued orders for the establishment of an open-air site museum

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covering 4.48 acres with an estimated budget of Rs. 17.10 crore. It was opened on 13.02.2026 and till now it has been visited by approximately 47,475 visitors.

2.19 Porunai Museum at Tirunelveli District

The “Porunai museum” was inaugurated on 20.12.2025 at Tirunelveli, with all modern amenities showcasing the antiquities obtained in Sivagalai, Korkai, Thulukkarpatti and Adichanallur. The antiquity of iron, high-tin bronze and the significance of graffiti marks received special attention and display.

It is built at a cost of Rs.56.36 crore approximately and spanning with an area of 55,500 square feet. The museum is with traditional architectural elements such as courtyards, pillars and corridors, echoing regional aesthetics. Till now, it has been visited by approximately 3,15,465 visitors.

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2.20 Gangaikondacholapuram Museum at Ariyalur District

Chola emperor Rajendra Chola I, established extensive trade networks and diplomatic relations, with Southeast Asian countries and notably with China. In acknowledgement of these historical achievements the establishment of the Gangaikondacholapuram museum in 4.14.00 hectares at a cost of Rs. 22.10 crore is in progress. The work has been issued to the Public Works Department and so far, 20% of the construction works have been completed.

2.21 Navai Museum at Ramanathapuram District

Government order has been issued to establish a Navai museum containing the

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archaeological antiquities found during the excavations at Alagankulam, at an allocated site in Mandapam village, Ramanathapuram Taluk, Ramanathapuram District. The built-up area is approximately 20,000 sq. ft. The museum is conceived as a thematic maritime museum showcasing Tamil Nadu's rich maritime heritage.

In 2026, the Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 34.55 crore for setting up the museum.

The foundation stone for this prestigious project was laid and preliminary works are in progress.

2.22 Noyyal Museum at Erode District

It is proposed to set up a Museum by the Department of Archaeology in Erode District. The Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 33.19 crore for setting up the museum. The foundation stone for this prestigious project was laid and preliminary works are in progress.

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The museum is designed as a thematic museum showcasing the archaeological significance of the Noyyal River Valley and the Kongu region, with special emphasis on Kodumanal and other archaeological sites in Erode district. It will highlight ancient industries, bead-making, iron production, textile activities, trade networks, and the socio-economic development of early historic settlements, reflecting the region's role as a major centre of craft production and trade.

2.23 Development of Madurai Tirumalai Nayak Mahal Site Museum

Conservation and display works for Rs. 8.27 crore for the Tirumalai Nayak Mahal, Madurai, have been approved by the Ministry of Culture under the Museum Grant Scheme with an 80:20 sharing pattern. (Central share 80% = Rs.661.76 lakh + State Share 20% = Rs.165.44 lakh). The Public Works Department has commenced the

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work. At present, the works relating to the upgradation of Palliarai, Natakasaalai and the library complex in Tirumalai Nayak Mahal are in progress.

2.24 Upgradation of Site Museums

As part of an initiative to develop three archaeological excavation sites in Tamil Nadu, specific budgetary allocations have been made, and development works are in progress at Poondi, Courtallam and Dharmapuri.

2.25 Epigraphy

Inscriptions serve as paramount source for reconstructing the history and cultural milieu of a country, constituting primary documentary evidence to corroborate legal, socio-cultural, literary, linguistic, archaeological and historical assertions. Presently, this wing maintains approximately 26,000 estampages of inscriptions sourced from all Districts, with ongoing efforts

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focused on recording inscriptions in Pudukkottai, Sivagangai and Thoothukudi districts, and 10,893 have been published across 71 volumes.

In the fiscal year 2019-2020, the Government of Tamil Nadu allocated Rs. 2 crore to initiate a special initiative aimed at expediting the process of copying, deciphering and publishing inscriptions. This project is slated for a five-year duration.

To further quicken these works, the Government of Tamil Nadu has allocated Rs. 3.50 crore for the financial year 2024-2025 as a five-year special plan.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has been allocating funds as a five-year special plan for copying, deciphering and publishing inscriptions. The deciphered inscriptions are being published district-wise under the series "Tamil Nadu Inscriptions." To facilitate this endeavour, fifteen

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experts have been engaged to decipher approximately 3,000 inscriptions annually, yielding a total of 6,200 deciphered inscriptions to date, with 4,015 inscriptions published across 19 volumes. During this year six volumes have been published.

650 inscriptions were copied during the year 2025-2026.

2.26 Tamil Nadu Institute of Archaeology and Museology

In 1974, the Institute of Epigraphy has been established and it functioned as an educational-cum-training centre located at the departmental headquarters. It was renamed as the "Tamil Nadu Institute of Archaeology and Museology" in 2021-2022.

The Tamil Nadu Institute of Archaeology and Museology offers several specialized diploma programs tailored to students with diverse

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academic backgrounds. Annually 20 students have been admitted for a two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Archaeology, 10 students for a two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Epigraphy, 10 students for a two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Heritage Management and Museology are admitted.

In 2025-2026, the Institute introduced an one-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Manuscriptology, admitting 08 students annually.

Distinguished scholars from various academic institutions provide training to students. A stipend of Rs. 8,000/- per month is given to each student.

Furthermore, students partake in field visits to UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Monuments under the purview of various governmental agencies, including the Archaeological Survey of India and the Tamil Nadu and other State Departments of Archaeology. These visits enable students to comprehend the architectural,

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sculptural, epigraphical and historical significance of Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage.

In addition to domestic field visits, students also engage in a comprehensive All India field visit to heritage sites and monuments across other States of India.

So far, 364 students have completed and obtained Post Graduate Diplomas.

2.27 Rock Art in Tamil Nadu

The Rock-Art of Tamil Nadu manifests in two principal forms: petrograph and petroglyph, each presenting distinct characteristics and contexts.

To meticulously document the Rock-Art of Tamil Nadu, the Department of Archaeology has undertaken a comprehensive survey deploying an expert team comprising 8 members hailing from diverse disciplines including Archaeology, Anthropology, Geology, Folklore and Art History.

The Department has successfully completed the documentation of first phase of the Rock Art.

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Out of 239 reported sites, 46 sites including 92 rock-shelters with paintings/engravings were documented and published in the name of Rock Art of Tamil Nadu.

2.28 Documentation and Digitisation of Graffiti and Tamili (Tamil-Brāhmī) Inscribed Potsherds of Tamil Nadu

This two-year project was launched in 2022-2023 with a grant approval of 77 lakhs to document, compile and analyse the graffiti-bearing potsherds and Tamili inscribed potsherds unearthed in archaeological excavations of Tamil Nadu and compare those graffiti marks with the Indus script to understand the cultural relationship between the two. The graffiti and Tamili inscribed potsherds were published under the title "Inscribed Potsherds of Tamil Nadu (Graffiti and Tamili) - Volumes I & II".

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2.29 Archaeological and Historical Atlas of Tamil Nadu

The project is initiated to prepare an Archaeological and Historical Atlas of Tamil Nadu from Lower Palaeolithic times down to Vijayanagara times, covering a period from 1.5 millennium years age(mya) to 1600 CE. The application of the Geographical Information System would serve as the base for preparing maps. It is envisaged to prepare the atlas through a combination of maps, photographs, drawings and texts using geospatial technology with an idea to cater to the needs of the student and academic communities and also the general public. Two volumes of the Atlas containing 161 maps, 685 images and 124 charts serving as the source book of the history of Tamil Nadu was prepared and ready for publication.

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2.30 Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre

Currently, the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre is housed at Anna Centenary Library in Kotturpuram, Chennai.

The origins of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre in Chennai can be traced back to 1869, rooted in the efforts of key figures such as Colonel Colin Mackenzie, C.P. Brown, and Prof. Pickford. Their collections are being preserved in this Library. Their collections had been categorised as Literature, History, Philosophy, Science, Regional History, Inscriptions and found in languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Urdu, Arabic and Persian.

It safeguards an extensive collection of 72,748 rare manuscripts and about 25,000 reference books, covering diverse disciplines such

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as Mathematics, Astronomy, Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, Vedas, Agama, Architecture, Music, Fine Arts and History. These manuscripts, written in languages including Tamil, Sanskrit, Marathi, Urdu, Arabic and Persian, are carefully preserved to ensure their longevity.

Additionally, over 21,00,000 pages of manuscripts have been digitised. Of these, 5,00,000 pages from 3,500 manuscript bundles are available online via the official website (www.tnarch.gov.in), enabling wider access for researchers and scholars.

2.31 State Manuscript Mission

Under the State Manuscript Mission, a specialised manuscript centre was established within the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre. So far, the mission has identified an impressive 1,00,000 manuscripts designated for preservation and digitisation, ensuring their longevity and accessibility for

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future generations. Operating across five distinct regions, the initiative has made remarkable progress in digital documentation with over 7,35,205 manuscript pages already digitised, steadily advancing towards its primary objectives. All the information collected by the State Manuscript Mission will be indexed with an international standard code and will finally be published on the website for the benefit of scholars and the general public.

2.32 Manuscripts Resource Centre

The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), functioning under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is committed to the systematic identification, collection and preservation of manuscripts across the country. As part of this initiative, it facilitates a coordinated approach to the acquisition, conservation and digitisation of manuscripts within the region. The NMM has designated the Government Oriental

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Manuscripts Library in Chennai as the Manuscripts Resource Centre (MRC) for the state of Tamil Nadu.

To date, the MRC has successfully digitised 66,110 manuscripts, which have been transmitted to the National Mission for Manuscripts headquarters in New Delhi.

2.33 Important activities in 2025-2026

I. The Department has organised a Three-day international conference titled "Recent Scientific Studies in Archaeology of Tamil Nadu" between 22nd and 24th January at Madurai. During the conference, 38 research papers were presented by national and international archaeologists and scientists. A Proceedings of two volumes titled "Recent Scientific Studies in Archaeology of Tamil Nadu" was released.

II. A four-day international conference titled "Tamil Epigraphy" was held at Chennai between 11th and 14th February 2026.

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45 research papers were presented by national and international epigraphists. A Proceedings of two volumes titled "Tamil Epigraphy" was released.

III. To trace, document, and scientifically validate the overseas trade and cultural connections of ancient tamil society through collaborative archaeological investigations in countries where evidence of Tamil presence has been identified. As part of this initiative, Officers from the Department of Archaeology participated in the excavation at Berenike, Egypt, where artefacts evidencing ancient trade and cultural exchanges between Tamil Nadu and Roman, Egypt were unearthed, documented, and recorded.

IV. Thol Thadam, Archaeological Sites of Tamil Nadu (in Tamil and English), Recent Scientific Dates (in Tamil and English), Celt Manufacturing Sites in Tamil Nadu (Case studies from Varattanapalli and Kappalvadi), Inscribed Potsherds of Tamil Nadu (Graffiti

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and Tamili) - Volumes I & II, Rock Art of Tamil Nadu, Traditional Water Management (Sluice Technology in Tamil Nadu), Tamilnattu Kalvettugal – Volumes - XXIV, XXVII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII) are released on various occasions.

2.34 Conclusion

The resurgence of interest in Archaeology and Heritage within our State has opened up significant avenues for the exploration, excavation and preservation of our rich historical legacy. This renewed focus presents an extensive scope for delving into the past, with the objectives of uncovering, safeguarding, promoting and celebrating the diverse heritage of Tamil Nadu. Through these endeavours, the department aims to contribute not only to the collective well-being but also to the advancement of knowledge, ultimately placing the history of Tamil Nadu amongst the broader global narrative.

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This department looks forward to strengthen the cultural wealth and technical knowledge of the state and finally establishing the “Cultural History of Tamil Nadu” on the world stage.

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Annexure

S.No.	Place	District	Year of excavation	Nature of Site
1	Korkai	Thoothukudi	1968-1969 2020-2021	Early Historic
2	Panchalankurichi	Thoothukudi	1968-1969	Modern
3	Vasavasamudram	Chengalpattu	1969-1970	Early Historic
4	Anaimalai	Coimbatore	1969-1970	Megalithic
5	Pallavamedu	Kanchipuram	1970-1971	Medieval
6	Karur	Karur	1973-1974 1994-1995	Early Historic
7	Panayakulam	Dharmapuri	1979-1980	Early Historic
8	Boluvampatti	Coimbatore	1979-1980 1980-1981	Medieval
9	Kovalanpottal	Madurai	1980-1981	Megalithic
10	Thondi	Ramanathapuram	1980-1981	Early Historic
11	Gangaikonda cholapuram	Ariyalur	1980-1981 1986-1987 2008-2009 2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023 2024-2025	Medieval
12	Kannanur	Tiruchirapalli	1982-1983	Medieval
13	Kurumbanmedu	Thanjavur	1984-1985	Medieval
14	Palayarai	Thanjavur	1984-1985	Medieval

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15	Alagankulam	Ramanathapuram	1986-1987 1990-1991 1992-1993 1994-1995 1996-1997 2014-2015 2016-2017	Early Historic
16	Tirukkovilur	Kallakurchi	1992-1993	Early Historic
17	Kodumanal	Erode	1992-1993 1996-1997 2019-2020 2020-2021	Megalithic & Early Historic
18	Sendamangalam	Villupuram	1992-1993 1994-1995	Medieval
19	Padavedu	Tiruvannamalai	1992-1993	Medieval
20	Tiruttangal	Virudhunagar	1994-1995	Microlithic
21	Poompuhar	Mayiladuthurai	1994-1995 1997-1998	Early Historic
22	Maligaimedu	Cuddalore	1999-2000	Early Historic
23	Teriruveli	Ramanathapuram	1999-2000	Early Historic
24	Mangudi	Tirunelveli	2001-2002	Microlithic
25	Perur	Coimbatore	2001-2002	Early Historic
26	Andipatti	Tiruvannamalai	2004-2005	Early Historic
27	Modur	Dharmapuri	2004-2005	Neolithic
28	Marakkanam	Villupuram	2005-2006	Medieval
29	Parikulam	Tiruvallur	2005-2007	Palaeolithic

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30	Nedunkur	Karur	2006-2007	Megalithic
31	Mangulam	Madurai	2006-2007	Early Historic
32	Sembiyankandiyur	Nagapattinam	2007-2008	Megalithic
33	Tarangampadi	Mayiladuthurai	2008-2009	Modern
34	Rajakkalmangalam	Tirunelveli	2009-2010	Medieval
35	Talaichankadu	Nagapattinam	2010-2011	Medieval
36	Alambarai	Chengalpattu	2011-2012	Modern
37	Srirangam	Tiruchirapalli	2013-2014 2014-2015	Medieval
38	UkkiranKottai	Tirunelveli	2014-2015	Medieval
39	Pattaraiperumbudur	Tiruvallur	2015-2016 2017-2018 2022-2023	Later Palaeolithic
40	Keeladi	Sivagangai	2017-2018 2018-2019 2019-2020 2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023 2024–2025 2026	Early Historic
41	Adichanallur	Thoothukudi	2019-2020 2020-2021	Iron Age
42	Sivagalai	Thoothukudi	2019-2020 2020-2021 2021-2022	Iron Age
43	Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	2020-2021 2021-2022	Neolithic

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44	Vembakkottai	Virudhunagar	2021-2022 2022-2023 2024-2025	Early Historic
45	Thulukkarpatti	Tirunelveli	2021-2022 2022-2023	Early Historic
46	Perumbalai	Dharmapuri	2021-2022	Early Historic
47	Kilnamandi	Tiruvannamalai	2022-2023 2024-2025	Iron Age
48	Porpanaikkottai	Pudukkottai	2022-2023 2023-2024	Early Historic
49	Boothinatham	Dharmapuri	2022-2023	Neolithic
50	Tirumalapuram	Tenkasi	2024-2025	Early Historic
51	Chennanoor	Krishnagiri	2024-2025	Neolithic
52	Kongalnagaram	Tiruppur	2024-2025	Early Historic
53	Marungur	Cuddalore	2024-2025	Early Historic
54	Thelunganur	Salem	2026	Iron Age
55	Vellalur	Coimbatore	2026	Early Historic
56	Adichanur	Villupuram	2026	Early Historic
57	Manikollai	Cuddalore	2026	Early Historic
58	Karivalam vanthanallur	Tenkasi	2026	Iron Age, Early Historic
59	Pattinamarudur	Thoothukudi	2026	Early Historic
60	Nagapattinam	Nagapattinam	2026	Historic

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DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS

POLICY NOTE

2026-2027

3. Introduction

Museums are vibrant bridges between the ancient past and the modern world. They are permanent, non-profit institutions that research, collect, preserve and showcase cultural heritage of humankind. Today, museums are not just places for preserving objects they have evolved into inclusive centres of learning that promote education, social interaction and cultural exchange.

Museums make history and science easier to understand by displaying a wide range of collections from ancient archaeological discoveries to modern scientific achievements through engaging exhibitions. The museums

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around the state play an important role in preserving cultural identity and passing it on to future generations.

By using advanced technologies such as mobile applications, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and interactive digital media, museums are extending their reach beyond their physical buildings. People can now explore museum collections from their homes, even from remote parts of the world.

These digital innovations have transformed museums from places with static displays into interactive and immersive learning environments. As a result, our rich cultural and scientific heritage is not only preserved but also made easily accessible to students, researchers and the general public worldwide. This enables people to learn about history in a more engaging, meaningful and interactive way.

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3.1 Administrative Structure

The Department of Museums, Government of Tamil Nadu, headed by the Director of Museums, administers the Government Museum, Chennai along with 23 District Government Museums across the State. The department functions under the administrative framework supported by the Assistant Director (Technical), Assistant Director (Administration) and the Chief Accounts Officer. The activities of the museums are further carried out with the assistance of Curators, Assistant Curators, Gallery Guides, Technical Assistants, and other supporting staff, ensuring efficient visitor services.

The Director of Museums administers the Government Museum, Chennai and 23 District Government Museums, with 335 employees; recent appointments of curators and assistant curators came through **TNPSC**.

In addition to the above, recently, the following appointments have been made: (1) one Assistant Director (Technical), (2) 13 Curators, (3) 3 Assistant Curators and (4) 8 Junior Assistants through the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC). A total of

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335 employees across these institutions are serving.

3.2 Government Museum, Chennai

The Government Museum, Chennai established in 1851, is the second-oldest museum in India and one of the most important cultural Museum in the country. Functioning as a multi-disciplinary museum, it presents extensive collections related to history, art, culture, natural history and science. Located in the central part of Chennai and spread across approximately 16 acres, the museum complex consists of three heritage buildings built in the Indo-Saracenic architectural style and four modern buildings, accommodating 57 galleries organized under eight major sections, Archaeology, Numismatics, Art, Anthropology, Geology, Botany, Zoology and the Children's Museum. These are supported by specialized service units such as the Chemical

The Government Museum, Chennai, established in 1851, is the second oldest museum in India - **16 acres**, three Indo-Saracenic heritage buildings and four modern ones, 57 galleries in eight sections.

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Conservation, Design & Display and Education sections.

The museum houses numerous collections of national and international importance. Among the most notable are:

I. The renowned South Indian bronze icons of the Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagara periods
II. The Amaravati Buddhist limestone sculptures
III. The Thanjavur Maratha armoury collections
IV. Inscriptions and copperplate charters
V. Rare coins issued during the reigns of Rajaraja Chola I and Kulothunga Chola I.
VI. Andipatti lead coins
VII. Artefacts from the important archaeological sites of Adichanallur and Arikkamedu
VIII. The prehistoric stone tools collected by Robert Bruce Foote.

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IX. The Bhattiprolu relic casket containing the bone relics of the Buddha

X. The 60-foot-long skeleton of a blue whale discovered off the coast of Mangalore, which is prominently displayed.

A significant milestone in museum conservation in India was the establishment of the Chemical Conservation Laboratory at the museum in 1930, the first of its kind in the country. The laboratory undertakes scientific conservation of a wide range of artefacts including archaeological materials, metal objects, sculptures, coins, paintings, manuscripts and anthropological objects. In addition to preserving the museum's own collections, the laboratory has provided conservation support to several institutions in Chennai, including the University of Madras, the Madras High Court and the Fort St. George Museum. The section also conducts exhibitions, seminars, training programmes and workshops related to conservation techniques.

- Notable holdings: Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagara bronzes, the Amaravati Buddhist limestone sculptures, the Thanjavur Maratha armoury, coins of Rajaraja Chola I, Robert Bruce Foote's prehistoric tools, the Bhattiprolu relic casket with bone relics of the Buddha and a 60-foot blue whale skeleton.

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3.2.1 Archaeology Section

In the Archaeology section, stone sculptures from the periods of the Pallavas, Cholas, Vijayanagara rulers, Chalukyas and Hoysalas are displayed in chronological order. These exhibits illustrate the various stages in the development of art. Important copper plate inscriptions from places such as Thiruvalangadu, Thiruindalur and Karandai are also exhibited here. The Sculpture Gallery, opened to the public in 1963, is housed in a separate building. It features Chola-period sculptures such as Ardhanarishvara, Nataraja and Vishapaharanar.

3.2.2 Numismatics Section

The Numismatics and Philately galleries, illustrates nearly two thousand years of Indian numismatic history, ranging from early punch-marked coins to the coinage of modern India. The displays include rare Sangam-age

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coins, Roman coins discovered in South India, coins of the Pallava, Chola and Pandya dynasties, Chinese coins, military medals, Indian currency notes and postage stamps from various countries. A rare copy of the Magna Carta is also preserved in this section.

3.2.3 Art Section

The Art Section paintings in the historic National Art Gallery, Chennai, constructed in 1906 using pink sandstone in the Indo-Saracenic style. The gallery, recently renovated with improved lighting and display facilities, houses an important collection of paintings including the renowned works of Raja Ravi Varma, along with Thanjavur, Mysore, Mughal and Kangra traditional paintings. The galleries also display rare artistic objects such as ivory sculptures, sandalwood carvings, glass paintings and temple-car sculptures. The Contemporary Art Gallery exhibits works by modern artists in different media such as oil,

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water colour, graphite and also provides space for young artists to display their creations.

3.2.4 Anthropology Section

The Anthropology Section presents with pre-history and ethnographic materials illustrating the cultural traditions of South India. These include artefacts from Adichanallur, Arikamedu and the Nilgiri region, as well as tribal objects, musical instruments, Indus Valley replicas, leather puppets, Kathakali dolls and large Chinese bells.

The galleries also display historical weapons, armour, cannons and other objects from the Thanjavur Maratha armoury.

3.2.5 Geology Section

The Geology Section exhibits fossil remains of ancient animals, a variety of rocks and minerals, meteorites and valuable gemstones such as diamonds and sapphires. Educational models, including a working dinosaur model and

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interactive displays, help explain geological concepts to visitors.

3.2.6 Botany Section

The Botany Section features a notable six-foot cross-section of a teak tree showing annual growth rings spanning five centuries, along with systematic botanical specimens, economic botany collections, timber varieties, aromatic products and exhibits related to natural dyes and traditional textile printing techniques.

3.2.7 Zoology Section

The Zoology Section presents an extensive display of preserved mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes and foreign animal specimens. Among the most impressive exhibits are the 60-foot-long reconstructed skeleton of a blue whale and an 11-foot-tall elephant skeleton collected from the Chengam forest region during the nineteenth century.

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3.2.8 Children's Museum

The Children's Museum, established in 1988 in a dedicated three-storey building, offers educational displays. The galleries feature dioramas representing the cultures and traditional costumes of different countries, interactive science exhibits, a 3D science theatre and a Science Park with 23 working models that help students understand scientific principles through play and experimentation.

3.2.9 Education Section

The Education Section regularly organizes guided tours of the galleries, lectures and internships for college students, special exhibitions, seminars, workshops and conferences for the benefit of students, researchers and the general public.

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3.2.10 Design Section

The Design Section of the Government Museum, Chennai is responsible for installing galleries and display cases not only in the Chennai Government Museum but also in district museums across the state. It also undertakes the establishment of new museums, organizes exhibitions and installs interactive display systems.

The primary objective of the Design Section is to create effective communication between the artefacts and the visitors. Rather than presenting objects merely as exhibits, the section works to interpret and transform them into valuable historical evidence and cultural treasures for public understanding.

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3.2.11 Museum Theatre

Another prominent landmark within the museum complex is the Museum Theatre, Chennai, designed by the British architect Henry Irwin in 1890. With its distinctive circular plan inspired by the Globe Theatre, London, it is one of the most remarkable heritage structures in Chennai. Recently restored and upgraded with modern facilities, the fully air conditioned theatre can now accommodate about 450 seats and serves as a venue for cultural and educational programmes such as music concerts, dance performances, dramas, lectures and seminars providing an important platform for artists and scholars.

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3.3 District Government Museums

There are 23 district Museums functioning as listed below:

1	Pudukkottai	13	Sivagangai
2	Salem	14	Tiruvarur
3	Madurai	15	Palani (Dindigul)
4	Tiruchirappalli	16	Nagapattinam
5	Vellore	17	Kanchipuram
6	Erode	18	Ramanathapuram
7	Cuddalore	19	Karur
8	Nilgiris	20	Virudhunagar
9	Coimbatore	21	Ariyalur
10	Kanniyakumari	22	Andipatti (Theni)
11	Krishnagiri	23	Tiruvannamalai
12	Tirunelveli		

New Museums are being set up in the following Places:

I. Grand Chola Museum, Thanjavur

II. Tamil Culture Museum, Mamallapuram

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III. Tamil Culture Museum, Tiruvannamalai
IV. District Museum, Villupuram
V. District Museum, Tiruppur
VI. District Museum, Thoothukudi
VII. Independence Day Museum at Humayun Mahal, Chepauk, Chennai.

Among the existing 23 District Museums, the details of certain significant Museums are as follows:

3.3.1 Government Museum, Pudukkottai

Established in 1910 by the erstwhile Thondaman kings, in their summer palace, the Pudukkottai Government Museum is located on an acre of land with a building area of 24,000 square feet. After the annexation of Pudukkottai Samasthanam with India in 1948, this museum was brought under the Department of Museums. Being the second largest museum in Tamil Nadu, It displays over 6,000 artefacts, including copperplate inscriptions describing the lineage of

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Thondaman kings who ruled Pudukkottai, preserved animals and birds, stone inscriptions and sculptures, minerals, wood fossils, herbaria, medicinal plants, koothu performing art objects, palm-leaf manuscripts, metal icons, objects used by ancient Tamils, burial urns, pottery and terracotta objects.

3.3.2 Government Museum, Salem

Think of Salem's museum as a time capsule of stone and spirit. From pulikuthi rock-cut sculptures that echo ancient heroism to Jain and Buddhist figures carved with serene precision, it's a place where Tamil Nadu's layered faith traditions converge. Add in the dramatic Gandhi portrait by Namakkal Ramalingam and that striking 10-foot tiger skin, this Museum attracts both scholarly and primitive. With its new building in Hasthampatti, Salem Museum has become a cultural anchor for the district.

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3.3.3 Government Museum, Tiruchirappalli

Housed in the Rani Mangammal palace, this museum artefacts deals with City's culture. Tiruchirappalli has always been a crossroads of pilgrims, traders and rulers and the Museum mirrors that diversity, renovated and refreshed, it's a showcase various artefacts. This Museum is a heritage palace transformed into a living gallery of Trichy's cultural DNA.

3.3.4 Government Museum, Udhagamandalam

Established in the John Sullivan's "Stone House," this Museum feels like stepping into a storybook of the Nilgiris. The exhibits are exemplary. Betel nut cutters shaped like parrots and mythical creatures, lamps blooming like lotus buds and a copper plaque narrating the Ramayana's Sethubandhanam. Ooty Museum is not only having mere objects, it is also about the artistry of tribal communities and the natural

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beauty of the Nilgiris captured in memory, metal and craft.

3.3.5 Government Museum, Tirunelveli

This Museum was established on 31st December 1992 as the 12th District Government Museum and was later shifted in the year 2000 to the historic Palayamkottai fort's east entrance and the former prison cell of the Oomaithurai, where it is functioning currently. The heritage building has been recently renovated. The museum displays a variety of archaeological artefacts obtained from excavation sites, including burial urns, sati stones, hero stones, images of deities such as Kali, Devi, Mahavira, Chandikeswara and Nandi, as well as ancient coins and various tools from the stone age period. Additionally, items used by indigenous communities such as the Kattunayakkar, Paliyar, and Kaani tribes are featured. The museum also showcases ancient measuring scales and other

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prehistoric artefacts. A touch screen table displaying the artefacts found during the archaeological excavations at Adichanallur, which was once a flourishing civilization on the Porunai river in the Tirunelveli district, has been a major attraction for visitors. The museum also houses collections and a 3D audio-visual display related to the history of Veerapandiya Kattabomman and his brother Umaithurai, with a dedicated "Oomaithurai Gallery" in the former prison cell where he was confined.

3.3.6 Government Museum, Kanchipuram

Founded in the year 1999 as the 17th district museum of the State, the Kanchipuram Government Museum is currently in a phase of significant expansion and modernization. While it has been operating from a building owned by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, a major initiative is underway to relocate the museum to a new Tourist Interpretation Centre at

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the Ekambaranathar Temple. This relocation project, valued at Rs.2 crore, involves extensive structural work by the Public Works Department to ensure a world-class facility.

The museum's collection is renowned for its diverse array of stone sculptures, intricate wood carvings and ancient inscriptions that reflect the spiritual and artistic legacy of Kanchipuram. In addition to these historical treasures, the museum also houses rare items recovered from treasure troves, as well as a dedicated section for natural history and geological specimens, offering a comprehensive educational experience for its visitors.

3.3.7 Government Museum, Virudhunagar

The Virudhunagar Government Museum was inaugurated on March 10, 2001, as the 20th district museum of Tamil Nadu. The museum was officially reopened in its magnificent new

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building on February 26, 2026. The museum's extensive collection spans various eras, featuring microliths, megalithic burial urns and early Pandya inscriptions. Visitors can explore a rich array of Jain Tirthankar sculptures, hero stones, sati stones and intricate wooden temple car carvings. Beyond archaeology, the museum offers scientific insights with its collection of diverse rock varieties from across Tamil Nadu, fossils, herbaria and preserved stuffed specimens, alongside an impressive display of ancient weaponry.

3.4 Infrastructure Works & Mega Schemes Completed Works

Sl. No	Name of the schemes	Area (in sq. ft.)	Cost (Rs. in crore)	Date of Inauguration
1.	Administrative Block, Chennai	10,532	6.84	01.08.2025
2.	Government Museum, Virudhunagar	14,420	12.43	26.02.2026
3.	Government Museum, Salem	9,838	5.00	26.02.2026

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3.4.1 Ongoing Projects

Sl. No	Name of the scheme	Cost (Rs. in crore)
1	Gandhi Memorial Museum, Madurai: To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Madurai	10.25
2	National Art Gallery, Chennai Installation of a 3D sound, light and laser show	4.56
3	Villupuram District Government Museum: Construction of a new museum building	6.62
4	Ramanathapuram Government Museum: Works are underway to establish a new museum in collaboration with the 'NAVAI' Museum	--
5	Kanchipuram Government Museum: Relocation and renovation works	2.00
6	The Grand Chola Museum, Thanjavur: At the Tamil University campus, over an area of approximately 50 acres	56.41
7	Anthropology and Pantheon Buildings, Chennai Museum Campus: Conservation and restoration works	10.00
8	Museum Information System: Development of software for the digitization of all museum collections in Chennai and all districts	1.63

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9	Vellore District Museum: Works for relocating the existing museum to a new building and creating modern galleries	2.5
10	Cuddalore Government Museum: Modernization of galleries	1.00
11	Indus Valley Civilization Gallery: To mark the centenary of the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization	34.03
12	New Bronze Gallery, Chennai: to showcase the exquisite bronze icons renowned for their artistic beauty, serenity and graceful forms	51.92
13	Tamil Cultural Museum, Mamallapuram	109.70
14	Tamil Cultural Museum, Tiruvannamalai	53.00
15	Upgradation of Galleries at Chennai Museum Campus: Modernization of the Geology, Botany, Zoology and Anthropology Galleries	4.00
16	175th anniversary of the Government Museum, Chennai, in April 2026, development works including a Sculpture Park	1.00
17	Madurai and Theni District Museums: Works have commenced to modernize galleries	2.00
18	Udhagamandalam District Museum: Restoration works have commenced.	0.50

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19	Chemical Conservation Laboratory, Chennai Museum Campus: Upgradation of the laboratory	0.50

3.5 Treasure Trove Antiquities

I. 103 ancient gold coins discovered at Jamunamarathur in Tiruvannamalai District have been added to the collections of the Chennai Government Museum as treasure trove antiquities.

II. A bronze idol of a seated goddess, discovered in Perambalur District, has been added to the collections of the Chennai Government Museum as a treasure trove antiquity.

III. The Bhudevi idol, Balakrishna idol and the associated pedestal, recovered from Anjur Village in Chengalpattu District, have been added to the collections of the Chennai Government Museum as treasure trove antiquities.

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3.5.1 Treasure Trove: Recent acquisitions at the District Museums

I. 7 stones were received as treasure trove objects in Kanniyakumari District were added to the collections.

II. 17 artefacts were received in Krishnagiri Museum.

III. Murugan, Appar and Vishnu Stone idols were received for Nagapattinam Museum.

IV. In so far as Tiruvannamalai Museum is concerned 5 Idols were received.

V. 11 Idols/Stones were received for Erode Museum

VI. A Revolver of 1851, received as treasure trove for Andipatti Museum.

VII. 15th-century Goddess idol found in Cuddalore District was added to the Museum collections

VIII. An Agastya idol, modern period found in Nilgiris District was added to the Museum collections.

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IX. A British-era inscription found in Sivagangai District was added to the collection.

3.6 Educational Activities

I. On 25.11.2025, a training programme on Epigraphy was conducted for students at the Palani District Museum as part of the Heritage Week Celebrations.

II. A training camp on the "Origin and Development of Tamil Scripts" was conducted for college students at the Andipatti District Museum.

III. A workshop on "Museum Collection Conservation" for school students was conducted at the Karur District Museum from 02.06.2025 to 10.06.2025.

IV. A seminar on "Pottery Types and Megalithic Urn Burials" was conducted on 22.04.2025 at the Nagapattinam District Museum.

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V. Training camps on "Epigraphy Workshops" were conducted for approximately 500 students at the Pudukkottai District Museum during May 2025.

VI. An on-site Sketching and painting competition was held at the Government Museum, Chennai on 19.04.2025 in celebration of World Heritage Day.

VII. "Intercultural Women's Association Endowment lecture 2025" was held in the Museum Theatre on 25.04.2025. Dr Nayanjot Lahiri, Professor of History, Ashoka University, Haryana delivered a lecture on the topic "Ashoka in Ancient India"

VIII. An Arts and craft summer camp was held at the Government Museum, Chennai from 12.05.2025 to 18.05.2025.

IX. "International Museum Day 2025" held in the Museum Theatre on 19.05.2025.

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A series of lectures and activities were held with experts from various fields and museums contributing. More than 400 students had participated in the event.

X. "World Drug Awareness Day" was observed in the Children's Museum on 26.06.2025. Students from various schools participated and took pledge to avoid illicit drugs.

XI. Children's Day was celebrated on 14.11.2025 at the Museum Theatre. Talent competitions and cultural events were held to over 450 students.

XII. "Intercultural Women's Association Endowment lecture 2026" was held in the Museum Theatre on 26.02.2026. Dr Manu V Devadevan, Associate Professor of History, IIT, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, has delivered a lecture on topic "How do Historians Periodise the Past?"

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XIII. “International Women’s Day 2026” was observed on 09.03.2026 at the Museum Theatre. Lectures, Panel Discussions and Cultural programmes were held.

XIV. In Government Museum, Palani, on the occasion of “Heritage Week celebrations”, an inscription (epigraphy) training session was conducted for the students of Arulmigu Palaniandavar College, Palani on 25.11.2025

XV. In Government Museum, Andipatti, a special guest lecture on "Origin and Evolution of Tamil Scripts" was organized for the students of the Department of Tamil, Kammavar Arts and Science College, and the Department of History, CPA College on 13.06.2025 and an Internship training programme was conducted for 23 History Department students from Vellalar College for Women from 12.05.2025 to 20.05.2025.

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XVI. In Government Museum, Karur, a training session on “Museum Objects Conservation” was conducted for college students on from 02.06.2025 to 10.06.2025.

XVII. In Government Museum, Nagapattinam, a seminar on Pottery types, Pottery Markings and types of Urn Burials (Mudumakkal Thazhi) was conducted for first year History Department students of ADM College for Women, Nagapattinam on 22.04.2025.

XVIII. In Government Museum, Pudukottai, a Short-Term Inscription (Epigraphy) Workshop was conducted for Post Graduate (PG) Students, for Sri Bharathi Arts and Science College for Women, Pudukkottai from 05.01.2026 to 09.01.2026 and an internship training program was conducted for 500 students from the Departments of Tamil, History and Archaeology of

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St. Xavier's College, STC College and Manonmaniam Sundaranar University on May 2025.

3.6.1 Training for Curators

A five day in-service training programme on exhibition of artefacts, labelling and museum maintenance was conducted for the newly recruited Curators of the Department of Museums held in Chennai from 11.05.2026 to 15.05.2026. This training featured extensive seminars covering Ancient Tamil Scripts, Principles of Museology, Basics of Preservation and Conservation of Antiquities and the Indian Treasure Trove Act.

3.6.2 Internship

Museology Internship is a specialized practical training program designed for students of History and Archaeology to gain hands-on experience in the management and operations of a museum. The primary goal is to bridge the gap between the academic theory and the practical

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realities of preserving heritage. Interns learn how artefacts are transitioned from excavation sites or private collections into public exhibits.

146 dedicated internship sessions were conducted successfully. It benefited over 5100 students and researchers from 100+ schools and colleges across Chennai and District Museums, participated.

3.6.3 Publications

Museum publications serve as a vital bridge between scholarly research and public education, effectively transforming the museum's vast collections into accessible knowledge.

These works encompass a wide range of materials from comprehensive exhibition catalogues and academic bulletins on subjects like epigraphy and numismatics to visitor-friendly gallery guides and brochures. By documenting artefacts with technical precision and historical context, these publications act as a permanent

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record of cultural heritage, ensuring information remains available for future generations. Through modern digital editions and educational monographs, the museum extends its reach globally, promoting a deeper understanding of history, art and science. Notably, the Government Museum, Chennai has published over 120 books across 10 specialized disciplines, including Archaeology, Anthropology and Zoology.

These publications are available for purchase at the Chennai Museum, 23 District Museums and through the official website.

3.7 Conclusion

The Department of Museums, Tamil Nadu is embarking on a historic leap through a new generation of mega thematic museum projects with the Government Museum, Chennai (Egmore) at the heart of this transformation. These initiatives go beyond mere infrastructure modernization, they aim to redefine museums as

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dynamic, story-driven, cultural spaces, utilizing immersive exhibitions, digital technologies and interactive interpretation.

By presenting Tamil Nadu's rich history, culture and heritage through engaging narratives and experiential galleries, the Department seeks to foster a meaningful connection between the public, especially younger audiences and their history.

Ultimately, this vision positions the museum as a vibrant hub of learning, identity and cultural pride for the state.

RAJMOHAN
MINISTER FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION,
TAMIL DEVELOPMENT,
INFORMATION & PUBLICITY

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PHOTOGRAPHS

ART AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

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On 14.06.2026, during the inspection of the Department of Art and Culture office in Madurai, the Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information & Publicity viewed the paintings of the trainees.

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- A Tamil Music Festival was held at Marina Beach on **01.03.2026** to celebrate **UNESCO**'s recognition of Chennai as a City of Music.

A Tamil Music Festival was held at Chennai Marina Beach on 01.03.2026 to celebrate UNESCO's recognition of Chennai as a City of Music.



Folk art performances were held in Chennai on 22.04.2026 for foreign visitors who had come as election observers.

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On 28.06.2026 a musical performance for Art Awareness Programme was conducted in Salem by the students of the Music School.

5



A Bharatanatyam performance was held at the Tamil Music Festival conducted in Tirupattur on 29.06.2026.

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A folk music programme was organized at the Valvil Ori Festival held in Kolli Hills, Namakkal District by the Department of Art and Culture on 02.08.2026.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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The Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information and Publicity inspected the Keeladi Open-Air Museum.

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The Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information and Publicity inspected the Jain beds and Tamili inscriptions at Mangulam.

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Aerial view of Excavation site, Brick Structure and Fish motif, Keeladi, Sivagangai District

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Aerial view of Stone Circle with capstone and Iron Objects, Excavation Site, Adichanur, Villupuram District

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Deep sea Archaeological Exploration & Excavation at Poompuhar, Mayiladuthurai District

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The Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information and Publicity visited and inspected the archaeological artefacts unearthed during the Karivalamvandanallur excavation.

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View of step well, Karivalamvanthanallur – Malaiyadippatti Excavation, Tenkasi District

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The Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information and Publicity visited and inspected the Karivalamvandanallur excavation site

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The Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, Information and Publicity visited the Porunai Museum.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

MUSEUMS DEPARTMENT

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3D sound and light Laser show, on the façade of the National Art Gallery, Government Museum, Chennai is underway.

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To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhiji's visit to Madurai, the Gandhi Memorial Museum in Madurai has been renovated.

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The stone Sculpture Gallery with Modern Technology was opened to the public Vellore District Government Museum.

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A stone sculpture of Sage Agastya, recovered from the banks of the Velleri river in Moonad village, Pandalur Taluk, Nilgiris district, has been added to the collection of Government Museum, Udhagamandalam.

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A British-era stone inscription has been added in the collection of the Government Museum, Sivagangai.

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A bronze icon of Vishnu, recovered from Keelvani village in Thalavadi Taluk, Erode district, has been added to the collection of the Government Museum Erode.

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