ASI Copies Stone Inscriptions

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has begun a project to copy stone inscriptions at the **Thalishwarar temple** in the Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu.

- **Estampage Method**: It is a technique used by archaeologists **to replicate inscriptions for analysis.**
    - The process involves **cleaning the inscribed stone** with a brush, applying **pre-soaked maplitho paper** onto the stone to transfer engravings, and then inking the paper to highlight the characters.
    - After drying, details about the inscription's location are noted on the back of the sheet.
    - These replicated inscriptions provide valuable insights into the lifestyles, economies, cultures, and administrative practices of historical rulers, allowing for a better understanding of dynastic history through corroboration with other historical sources.
- **Inscriptions Identified**: 8 inscriptions were discovered including one in **Vattezhuthu (ancient Tamil script)** from the 9th century and seven in Tamil from the 12th century. These inscriptions document the temple's construction by a Chera ruler (one of the 3 major dynasties in ancient Tamil Nadu, known for its contributions to art, architecture, and literature).
- The team recorded inscriptions from **two hero stones** (a memorial commemorating the honourable death of a hero in battle), an **Ayyanar (a popular folk deity in South India) sculpture,** and a **Nandi (bull) sculpture** near the temple.

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