

■ CM: Kalingarayan anicut will be tourist spot

Kongu chieftain to get statue in Erode

DC CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, SEPT. 19

He has been credited with laying the longest canal to connect Bhavani river with Noyyal river — a distance of 56.5 miles, in Erode region — about 730 years ago. And even to this day the canal known by Kongu chieftain's name Kalingarayan serves to irrigate about 15,743 acre in the district.

As a fitting tribute to this great chieftain, chief minister J. Jayalalithaa has announced to install his statue in Erode. Informing that a statue of Kongu chieftain Kalingarayan, would be set up in the district, Ms Jayalalithaa said Kalingarayan anicut built by him would be converted into a tourist spot. "Acceding to the request made by the local people, hailing



J. Jayalalithaa

the developmental works done by Kalingarayan in developing the region, a statue will be established at Nasuvampalayam in Erode district," the CM said.

Though it was sufficient for setting up a canal in a 32-mile-long area between Bhavani and Noyyal rivers, Kalingarayan had provided a 56-mile-long canal in order to ensure more lands were brought under irrigation, she said. At present, the canal facilitates irrigation in about 15,743 acre

land in Erode district.

In a statement, she recalled that her government had been establishing memorials to honour great personalities who built dams to facilitate irrigation. The canal runs parallel to Cauvery river. It meanders to provide water to far-flung areas. Recently, she ordered the release of water from the Kalingarayan canal to facilitate agricultural activities.

The canal, supporting one of the largest ayacuts in the state, irrigates vast stretches of turmeric, sugarcane and paddy fields. In the beginning, the canal irrigated only about 3,500 acre, as historian and traveller Francis Buchanan noted in his diary, later published as *A Journey From Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*.