The tiny, dilapidated and abandoned Siva temple in Dharmasagar mandal was once thriving with scores of devotees thronging it. What remains now are a few broken idols, grown up bushes and an eerie silence.

Thanks to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as has decided to take over some of the old temples of the Kakatiya-era to restore them to their past glory.

"The Muppirinatha Swamy temple and Munipalli Shivalayam in Dharmasagar mandal are listed initially to be handed over to the ASI," district tourism officer M. Shiva ji said.

According to him, the Kakatiya period step wells at Kothawada and Shiva Nagar in the city, and a few other step wells located in other places in the district will also be included in the list. The ASI has recently written to the district administration stating that it would take up preservation and protection of select temples and historic monuments in the district and asked the officials to list out the same.

**Post-bifurcation**

Mr. Shivaji said that before the bifurcation of the State, the ASI had nearly 130 historic monuments under its control. After reorganisation of the State, only eight monuments in Telangana have come under the ASI control, with the remaining in AP.

The eight include three monuments in the erstwhile Warangal district - Ramappa Temple, Thousand Pillar Temple and the Warangal Fort.

Now the ASI is contemplating to take up preservation and restoration of some more historic monuments.

According to local lore, the Muppirinatha Swamy Temple was built during 1116-1157 by Muppamamba, wife of Kakatiya ruler Prola II. The temple is abundant with rich carvings reflecting the architectural acumen of the Kakatiya kings.

The carvings on the temple stones feature the tales of *Panchatantra*, scenes from epics like the *Ramayana* among others.

While the temple withstood the ravages of time, the sanctum sanctorum got damaged along with the presiding deity Siva Lingam, reportedly due to drilling by unknown treasure hunters.

"It is still very beautiful and large parts are still intact. With some restoration, it can regain its glory which entails commitment and financial expenditure," Mr. Shivaji said.

The ASI to take over two Kakatiya-era temples

Muppirinatha Swamy temple and Munipalli Shivalayam to be restored to their past glory; more to follow