



Coming together to celebrate the rich and diverse heritage of Pondicherry

4th March - 27th March

Organised by

Supported by



People for Pondicherry's
Heritage



INTACH
Pondicherry Chapter



PONDYCAN!



Government
of Puducherry



Department of Tourism
Pondicherry



INTACH

Pondicherry Heritage Festival 2022

Concept of Pondicherry Heritage Festival:

Popular destinations across the world such as New York, Berlin, Paris and Sydney continue to attract a wide audience from all spheres of life and are melting pots for cultural exchanges. Pondicherry also has this quality of bringing together a diverse population of tourists and travellers looking for something to coax them into a new, exciting, passionate and yet peaceful lifestyle and environment. There is an unseen force behind how Pondicherry invites people of all cultures and yet retains its own, which expands beyond the exotic charm of its beautiful architectural heritage and sandy beaches.

Magical yet ordinary to the casual eye, the city harbours a deeper meaning and connection to the intangible realms of beauty, wisdom, tranquillity and harmony. This has led Pondicherry to become a universal platform for positive inner change and has inspired an inclusive, collective and inspiring evolution towards a future, long foreseen by the sages of yore. The marriage of spirituality and material research is a trademark of Pondicherry's excellence and uniqueness. On November 29th, 2014, the collapse of the Marie building (Town hall) of Pondicherry, which was built in 1870 to accommodate the offices for the mayor of Pondicherry, led to the realization that the need to conserve and celebrate the heritage of Pondicherry is immense.

A group thus emerged from the civil society called "People for Pondicherry's heritage" (PPH) and conceived the idea of the Pondicherry heritage festival, first of which was held in 2015 and became an annual event. The Pondicherry heritage festival is being organised by People for Pondicherry's heritage (PPH), INTACH Pondicherry and PondyCAN.

The main objectives of Pondicherry's heritage festival are:

- A) To create and strengthen this distinct identity of belonging and being Pondicherrian for all its residents,
- B) To show its unique character in all its diversity to visitors who come from all over the country and the world attracted by the idea of "Pondicherry",
- C) To create a platform for experts, historians and old residents to meet and discuss what is special about Pondicherry and how we can preserve the same.

The charm and beauty of Pondicherry presents a unique challenge to the government and civil society interested in protecting and restoring its built heritage. Unlike the monuments and national parks under the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India, the architectural heritage of Pondicherry is a melange of private and government buildings. Pondicherry has two distinct parts namely, the French and Tamil quarters. The structures in the French quarter are a fusion of European classical style and local vernacular architecture and those in Tamil quarter are built in the vernacular style of Tamil Nadu. Both have influenced one another resulting in a harmonious blend of both the styles in many buildings.

Pondicherry's unique architectural style is an inheritance of which we are but today's custodians. It is our responsibility to preserve the essence of this built heritage for the future generations. It is with this vision that Pondicherry heritage festival sought to explore the various facets of the town's culture, spiritual heritage, contributions to the world of art, literature, folk and classical music and dance, traditional and contemporary crafts and the work done by many organizations, institutions and individuals towards understanding and preserving the heritage of the town.

Evolution of Pondicherry Heritage Festival:

Now in its eight year, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival continues to celebrate the singular character of this extraordinary town and its environs. In the first year, 2015, attention was drawn to Pondicherry's outstanding architectural legacy, its spiritual heritage and intangible heritage. The following year, 2016, the festival celebrated Pondicherry's natural heritage, explored its heritage through the written word, visual arts and performing arts. In 2017, besides celebrating architectural, intangible and natural heritage, the festival focused on one of Pondicherry's most ancient heritage, at Bahour. In 2018, the festival focused on the streetscapes of Pondicherry and expanded to explore another ancient heritage of Pondicherry, at Madagadiped, Thirubhuvanai and ThiruvandarKovil. In 2019, the emphasis of the festival was about Pondicherry's splendid natural heritage, and specifically its wetlands and water bodies. This year it is all about The Talking streets of Pondicherry, Preserving our Cultural Heritage: Through the eyes of the Residence. The festival expanded in this year with several local organisations and all individuals actively involved & organising events, under the Pondicherry Heritage Festival banner and due to COVID -19 except few all events are conducting through Online. This overwhelming response made the heritage festival a four weeks event from 4th March to 27th March 2022.

“Coming together to celebrate Pondicherry's rich & diverse heritage”

The success of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival is due to the active participation of our Festival partners and new participants.



Pondicherry Heritage Festival
4rd March to 27th March 2022
Press Release

In its eight year, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival (PHF) continues to celebrate the character of this extraordinary town and its environs. Originally conceived to draw attention to conserve Pondicherry's outstanding architectural legacy, the festival has expanded its scope to embrace other aspects of heritage. It is the interplay of its diverse built environment, an idyllic seaside setting, its waterbodies and ancient system tanks and ponds, a rich spiritual and intellectual history, and fascinating combination of indigenous and imported cultural practices that gives Pondicherry its distinctive flavour.

The theme for this year is "Celebrating the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Bio Region". The Natural and Cultural heritage is as much at risk as built heritage, and often gets overlooked. This year the festival will draw attention to the acute need to preserve and safeguard this heritage, not just of Pondicherry but the Bio Region as it is all interconnected and separated only by political and administrative boundaries.

This year too we have the "Creative expression by children" but all the events will be held online. The theme for school and college student are Celebrating the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Bio Region. An attractive event is planned for students of all ages as they are the ones who will be responsible to preserve this heritage for the generations to come.

As always, the schedule will be brimming with music, dance, and book launches and an introduction to the wildlife of the bio region and workshops on biodiversity mapping. This year, the festival runs in parallel with the Waterfest 2022 and also the Local Food Systems festival. Pondicherry's and Auroville's creative entrepreneurs making the finest products and beautiful handicrafts will once again come to the Crafts Bazaar for the Made in Pondy setting up stalls, bringing their products under one roof. There are new events planned this year, to take people out to the traditional villages to experience the agrarian life and partake in their healthy food. There will be special Creole cuisine on offer and the now popular Pondy food trail too. The beautiful sunrises of Pondy can be enjoyed with a guided tour of the town's special places and heritage walks this time will include the success stories of the efforts and wishes of the People of Pondicherry thanks to which important Government buildings have been or are in the process of being restored: The old Court house, the old Light house, Calve College, VOC school, Pensionnat des Jeunes filles and some privately restored buildings too. These heritage tours will include walking, cycling and cycle Rickshaw rides. Due to the unprecedented situation in the past 2 years, the planning of this festival was left to the

last minute. But we are very encouraged to see how the events are adding up and we know they will continue to do so as we go along almost till the last day which has already been extended twice.

Since its start in 2015, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival has always been a volunteer effort, led by the People for Pondicherry's Heritage, INTACH and PondyCAN, with very valuable support from the Puducherry government's Tourism Department, the French Institute, the Alliance Francaise of Pondicherry and other festival partners organising events or hosting them along with supportive local businesses.

The organizers hope the Heritage Festival continues to strengthen the respect of Pondicherians for the traditions and treasures of this special seaside settlement, created by the confluence of cultures in a spectacularly beautiful setting. They believe that, by celebrating the heritage, it will become an important part of people's lives and Pondicherry will retain its unique character.



Organizers with Poster



Organizers while Interacting with Press

More information about the Pondicherry Heritage Festival and a schedule of events can be found at

Website: www.pondicherryheritagefestival.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PondicherryHeritageFestival/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pondicherryheritage/>

Events of this year:

1. **Inauguration:**
 - A. Pondicherry Heritage Festival -2022
2. **Music:**
 - A. Melange des Melodies Semi Classical Music Recital by Shobha Ramesh.
3. **Heritage walk:**
 - A. Heritage walk to show the restoration on like - Old Light House, Calve College, VOC School, Academic House.
4. **Food Trail:**
 - A. Pandy Food tasting trail.
5. **Book Launch:**
 - A. Sketches of Pondicherry, launch of booklet by Ar. Kamalahasan Ramaswamy.
 - B. Book launch of tree of pondicherry by Vigneshwaran followed by a tree walk at 5:30pm.
6. **Discussion:**
 - A. Wildlife in the Bio Region talk with visuals by Aurosyllle and Tim
7. **Workshop:**
 - A. Yoga Workshop for women (ages 16 - 60)
8. **Design Show:**
 - A. Made in Pandy(MIP) Design show.
9. **Tour :**
 - A. Tamil quarter walking tour (Morning) & French quarter walking tour (Evening)
 - B. Sadhana Forest Tour,flim and dinner
 - C. Thengaithittu lagoon biodiversity and sailing
 - D. Kizhur village tour with optional lunch at Chez Pushpa
 - E. A day in the village with High Tea in a Franco- Tamil home
10. **Academic competition in online :**
 - A. Heritage Quiz
 - B. Art activities for school children
11. **Movie:**
 - A. Introduction to the Marathi film with subtitles"Pondicherry"
12. **Creole cuisine:**
 - A. Pondicherry creole cuisine - 48Hr Prior Reservation Required - Minimum 4 Guests
13. **Camp:**
 - A. Indigenous Knowledge & Forests
14. **Colour Play:**
 - A. Festival closing ceremony with Anita Ratnam and friends present :Colour Play



Participant enjoying in lunch and working with pottery wheel

10. Academic competition in online:

A. Heritage Quiz:

On the month of May, a Heritage quiz was organised by Dr. Kannan and Pondicherry Heritage Festival organisers. Heritage quiz was held at online, with the support of Education Department, Pondicherry. It had requested all the schools of Pondicherry to take part which included both Government and Private Schools.

The topic for Quiz competitions was about preserving the natural, cultural and built heritage of the Pondicherry bioregion.

- Senior level entry was V grade to VIII Grade
- Supersenior Level entry was IX grade to XII Grade

Quiz was conducted in both Tamil and English for both the levels.

Competition	Number of Participation
Seniors Tamil	40
Seniors English	70
Superseniors Tamil	20
Superseniors English	60

B. Art activities for school children:

On the month of April we hosted various programs for School children to ignite the young minds about their Heritage and make them participate and celebrate the Heritage of their own town through online. The program also made them understand the importance of heritage and the need to preserve them. Painting, sketching, collage, letter and poem writing, power point, photography, solo and group dance competitions were conducted under the theme cultural heritage of Pondicherry. The program was hosted by Dr. Kannan and his team with the support of INTACH-Pondicherry and Department of tourism, Pondicherry. The Government of Puducherry School of Education department had accorded permission to conduct the programs and a circular to this effect was sent to nearly 500 schools by India Post and email. Invitations were sent to all Government, Govt. aided schools and Private schools of Pondicherry Urban and Rural areas and to Cuddalore and Tindivanam.

The topic for all competitions was heritage (Cultural / Spiritual / Natural) and History of Pondicherry.

- Junior level entry was VI grade to VIII Grade
- Senior Level entry was IX grade to XII Grade

Competition	Number of Participants
Program for KG Children - ONLINE	
Short Story	120
Role Play	150
Art out of the waste	100
Finger art	150
Program for School children Fine arts - ONLINE	
Painting	75
Pencil Sketching	60
Short film	20
Photography	50
Creative writing	100
Open mike	70
Block and tackle	70
Dancing	20
Singing	30
Program for College - ONLINE	
Fine art	60
Literary	50
Music and dance	40

It was a huge logistical nightmare but thanks to volunteers from INTACH-Pondicherry – their office staff, architects, Interns.



The organizers of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival 2022 would like to acknowledge, with gratitude all those who were involved in making the festival an Immense success.