

METRO PLUS

## Tales of a lake, told by the lakeside

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### The Pondicherry Heritage Festival celebrates the city with stories, performances and Nature tours

Kanaganeri, a lake in Puducherry, is among the highlights of this edition of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival. The lake, according to the festival's co-founder Sunaina Mandeem, "is a beautiful jewel in the middle of town. The town has grown all around it."

As part of the festival, on February 10, children, senior citizens, and people living around the lake will come together to walk around it and share stories about it. "The highlight this year is 'natural heritage,'" explains Sunaina.

Now in its fifth year, the Pondicherry Heritage Festival is all about celebrating the city and its diverse culture. The ongoing festival, spread throughout February, features photo exhibitions, dance recitals, tours of wetlands, an exhibition of locally-made products, among other events. Kakoli Banerjee, co-founder, explains that they've involved children in a lot of their events this year. Sunaina talks about a particular event. "It will focus on reclaiming our streets for children to play," she says.

Traffic on Eswaran Koil Street – between Mission Street and the Grand Canal – will be blocked and the street will be open for children of all ages to come and play.

Apart from culture and heritage, the festival will also celebrate people's love for the city. Shivan, a musician who came to Puducherry in 1969, will talk about how the city has changed over the years, apart from treating listeners to his music. With World Wetlands Day falling on February 2, there will be events focussed on the city's other waterbodies as well. Photographs of wetlands taken by visitors and the people of Puducherry will be on display along Beach Road.

*For details, visit [pondicherryheritagefestival.org](http://pondicherryheritagefestival.org).*