Chola site plays backdrop for Pondicherry Heritage Festival

Music, dance, drama and talks to be part of the month-long event in Bahour

The Pondicherry Heritage Festival 2017 opened with celebrations, fittingly, in one of the ancient places in Puducherry.

The first day of the festival on Sunday, organised in Bahour, a place dating back to the Chola period, paid tribute to two legendary sisters ‘Bangari and Singari’.

Sunaina Mandeen, one of the organisers of the festival, said the third edition of the festival, organised by INTACH, PondyCAN and People for Pondicherry’s Heritage and supported by Departments of Art and Culture and Tourism, began with a dance drama on the siblings ‘Bangari and Singari’ that revisited the history of Bahour
The legendary sisters were instrumental in diverting water from the Thenpennai River to the Bahour Lake, when Bahour region was reeling in water shortage, the organiser said.

The siblings devoted to the Bahour Moolanaadha Swamy Temple funded the construction of ‘Bangari canal’ that brought water from Thenpennai to irrigate the lands in and around Bahour.

The Mulanathaswami Temple was built even before Thanajvur temples were built by the Cholas. Students of Salangai Cultural Academy, Puducherry, performed a dance drama.

The month-long festival has a wide range of programmes, including music, dance drama, talks, interaction on the heritage of Puducherry.

**Guided walk**

People can participate in the guided walk in Bahour to celebrate Puducherry’s ancient and natural heritage.

Next weekend, the festival begins with a talk by Dr. Nallam at the opening of ‘10 years in Puducherry’ — local life and architecture in photos by Dr. Veeren Koneru — on February 10, followed by another dance drama ‘The birds of paradise and the dancing girl’ by Chandrakalabhoomi dance troupe, Anegudi heritage village on February 12.

Ashok Panda of INTACH said a dance drama performed in an ancient temple local and rural setting drew a huge crowd, never seen in Puducherry.

“It is a wonderful experience,” he exclaimed.

Bahour MLA N. Danavelou and Raj Bhavan MLA K. Lakshminarayanan were present at the inaugural function.

*The third edition of the festival with a dance drama that revisited the history of Bahour*