PUDUCHERRY

Heritage walk through sacred groves today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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It will start from Keezhputchupattu Ayinnar temple on East Coast Road

Aura Journeys, under the auspices of the Sri Aurobindo Society, is organising a walk through sacred groves of Keezhputchupattu near here on Saturday as part of the Pondicherry Heritage Festival.

Though located in Villupuram district, the Keezhputchupattu grove was chosen for the walk because of its proximity to the boulevard, its diversity and size. The sacred groves harbour rich biodiversity, including rare and endangered species. They are self-sustainable ecosystems, which reinforce scientific reasons for conservation.

Rich biodiversity

According to organisers, as per Environment Information System (ENVIS), Pondicherry, there are at least 108 sacred groves notified in Puducherry and very close surrounding areas. The department conducted a study on the Marakkanam–Puducherry–Cuddalore stretch and identified 163 sacred groves only in this small area. In the 15 samples out of 163 groves, the study reported of 252 plant species belonging to 176 genera and 62 families; out of these, 136 taxa and six lianas were reported. The groves were such diverse and hosts species of some of the last remaining repositories of critically endangered tropical dry evergreen forest.

The walk is scheduled to start at 9 a.m. from the Keezhputchupattu Ayinnar temple on ECR. Entry is free and an 8.30 a.m. pick up and drop back by 10.30 a.m. at Aura is on offer. For details, call 9789424750 or mail to aura@auroservice.com.