Date 14.09.2022

In the past few days many news articles have appeared about a number of "idols" found and seized in Auroville. We would like to clarify that these "idols" belonged to two French nationals who left Auroville 3 years ago. The "idols" were purchased by them as 'reject' pieces from various shops in Mahabalipuram. At the time of leaving Auroville to return to France, they wanted to take these pieces with them. Following the regulations, the shipper sought permission from the Department of Antiquities in Chennai, as per the law. This request for permission to export the figures was granted for several items  but was rejected for some, which were left here, either outside in a garden, or inside the house.

When law enforcement agents came to look for these items they were duly guided to the location. After inspection these antiques were seized by the concerned department.

There was no intention by the original owners to ship these items to France after they were rejected for shipment by the Department of Antiquities. Hence all talk of attempted smuggling of antiques is without any basis. Auroville residents respect the laws of the land and are always ready to cooperate with authorities.

The Working Committee selected by the Residents' Assembly

End of Media Release.