Date 20.09.2022

In the past few days many news articles have appeared about a number of ‘idols’ found and seized in and around Auroville.

In addition to the clarification that was sent via a press release on the 14th of September (see attached), we would like to clarify the following points:

1. The shop in which idols were found and seized on the 16th of September was wrongly reported to be an Auroville shop when in fact it is a private enterprise near Bommaiarpalayam village. It was reported that a French national named ‘Dana Auro’ was exporting idols. But there is no person with this name either living now or in the past in Auroville.
2. Regarding the most recent report about statues being seized from an Auroville unit, please see the statement below.

In February 2022 an application was made to the Archaeological Department in Chennai to ask permission to export a metal statue at the request of the owner of the statue who is a resident of Pondicherry.

This was refused on the grounds that the statue may be an antique. This statue was not the property of Maroma, and so the statue was given back to the owner in Pondicherry.

The Idol Wing department of Tamil Nadu came to Maroma on Friday, 16th September, at 5.30 PM just as the office was closing. They explained that they were following up on applications made to export statues.

They wanted to see the statue. As it was in possession of the owner in Pondicherry, they were taken there to see it. They also noted during the visit to the residence some granite statues.

On Monday, 19th September, the same team came back to Maroma at 8.30 AM and asked us to bring the metal statue and the granite statues from Pondicherry and hand them over. This was done.

At all times there was full cooperation extended from the Maroma executives and staff.

We request that all such reports are checked for accuracy before publishing in order to avoid maligning the name of Auroville.

End of Media release.