| **MEDIA RELEASE**10th November 2022 | **General information:** media@auroville.services**National press:** +91 95857 10457  |
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| **Auroville residents regret that Shri R.N. Ravi, Chairman of the Governing Board, yet again ignores requests to hear concerns** |
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*Since the appointment of a new Secretary of the Auroville Foundation in 2021, the development of Auroville has come to a standstill due to intimidations and a takeover of Auroville institutions, resulting in several court cases brought by Auroville residents. Residents hoped that the newly appointed Governing Board and Chairman would help resolve the deadlock. On 19th October the Chairman of the Governing Board and Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri R.N. Ravi, had met with the duly selected Working Committee of the Residents’ Assembly, and intimated that there was hope for respectful collaboration between the Auroville Residents’ Assembly and the Governing Board. However after his visit to Auroville on Monday 7th November residents had their hopes dashed, resulting in dismay and disappointment at the continued takeover.*

Auroville residents hoped that Shri R.N. Ravi would help to restore a sense of security and stability in Auroville. They hoped he could facilitate the resolution of the issues at stake and put Auroville’s harmonious development back on track. The meeting called by the Chairman on 7th November 2022 at the Auroville Unity Pavilion was attended by more than 600 who had expected a space to interact and bring forth their concerns, questions, and suggestions for a way forward.

Sadly, Mr Ravi spoke on unsubstantiated claims that Auroville is “grossly deficient”, repeating the same narrative that the Secretary Dr Jayanti Ravi has been spreading as a pretext to take over the control of Auroville from its Residents. After his speech, the Chairman refused any questions, suggestions or requests made by the residents, only inviting comments by email. In the past year, hundreds of residents and their duly selected representatives have already sent email communications to the Governing Board and its Chairman, including collective letters and statements signed by over a thousand residents. None of these have been acknowledged to date. So far, attempts to harmonise differing views and to move in collaboration have been repeatedly ignored by the Secretary and her followers, who pursue with their authoritative grip over the affairs of Auroville.

The following day, on 8th November, Auroville residents met at the Banyan tree next to the Matrimandir for a collective meditation on the way forward. Members of the Governing Board were invited but did not join.

Aurovilians and well-wishers from all over India and worldwide are dismayed that the development of Auroville will continue to be stalled by the Office of the Secretary and their authoritarian rule, instead of finally moving forward in collaboration with the residents as aligned with the ideals and values of Auroville.

### **Context**

For over 50 years, voluntary workers have come from all over India and the world to create a gnostic society manifested in the form of the Auroville International Township. Aurovilians are committed to the ideals set forth by the Mother and by Sri Aurobindo, and outlined in the Auroville Charter.

For over 50 years, land was purchased with funds donated by well-wishers, devotees, and residents from all around the world. Auroville has been taking shape, progressively emerging from a barren plateau thanks to the efforts and dedication of all its residents and volunteers. Infrastructure has been created per needs and available human and financial resources. The city has considerably developed in various fields, including education, economy, sustainable living, and more. All of this and much more has been carried out by the residents through Karma Yoga as an offering to Mother’s dream, with very limited assistance from external agencies or public funds.

However, for the past year, the development of Auroville has come to a standstill under the administration of Dr Jayanti Ravi, the new Secretary of the Auroville Foundation. Existing assets - trees, communal buildings, individual houses and even roads - have been torn down and bulldozed, without following any due process and without any suitable alternatives.

Hasty, non-sustainable and non-participative ‘development’ is currently being used as a façade to take authoritarian control of all the organisational entities and systems set up over the years by the residents themselves. Work has been outsourced to the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) in complete contradiction to the sustainable plans prepared by the many Auroville experts and architects, including the internationally lauded Auroville Dreamweaving process for development. In order to take control of the existing infrastructure and tangible achievements of Auroville, the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation is repeatedly using intimidation tactics in an attempt to silence and divide the Auroville residents. The residents have created plans for a collaborative development of Auroville, and have identified key priorities for growth. Actionable proposals have been formulated, but when presented to the Secretary these were brushed aside.

The residents of Auroville are fully committed to the material and spiritual growth of Auroville. A false narrative of “resistance to the city project” continues to be propagated in the media by the Secretary and her followers in order to undermine the efforts and dedication of Auroville residents, and to ease the takeover of the Aurovilian institutions.

### **Pictures**

**Download pictures:** [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cSoM5O9UUideA9ivJCBRjTwEhyL3jm2y](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cSoM5O9UUideA9ivJCBRjTwEhyL3jm2y?usp=share_link)

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