| **MEDIA RELEASE** 8th November 2022 | **General information:** media@auroville.services  **National press:** +91 95857 10457  or tejaswini@auroville.media |
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| **Idols of Nataraja, Amman and Chandrasekhara were taken by Idol Wing officers from a man’s home without producing a warrant or providing receipt of seizure.** |
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Three bronze idols were seized from the residence of a German national in Auroville by the Idol Wing Police CID without producing a warrant to the occupants before entering, without providing a receipt of seizure and without showing any credentials or official identification.

The German man and his Indian wife were questioned about possession of any antiques. They cooperated fully and took the Idol Wing officers around the house. The three idols in question were located in the first floor bedroom of the occupant. Idol Wing officer Ms. Indra refused to acknowledge that this was his bedroom and insisted it was a showroom. A false narrative of concealment has been created in the media by using the term ‘attic’ to describe what is, in fact, the man’s bedroom.

The seized bronze idols of Nataraja, Amman and Chandrasekhara were expertized ten years ago by Devasenapati Sthapathy (Rajan) of Swamimalai, who holds the world record of creating the biggest Nar-nari in two different metals; according to Mr. Sthapathy, the said idols were about 80 years old. He could even identify the sculptor by name as he was famous for facial details. The Idol Wing left the premises without leaving a copy of the seizure report. They refused to wait for an Auroville Working Committee member to arrive for which there is video evidence. The residents hope a proper seizure receipt will be swiftly provided.

The idol Vishnu was purchased in 1970 for rs. 400 on Barathi Street in Pondicherry. Nataraj was purchased in Pondicherry and the original bill from 1978 was produced. Amman, a hollow statue, was purchased in 1989 in a shop in Mahabalipuram.

The German national was present at the inauguration ceremony of Auroville in 1968 and had the privilege to place German soil in the Urn at its founding ceremony. He has been staying continuously in Auroville since 1970. He has in fact, been the architect for the upcoming Tamil Heritage Center, which aspires to preserve, educate and provide research facilities for the archaeological heritage of the area in which Auroville is located, which he has studied extensively.

**Media Contact**

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