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| **Dangerous mob cuts rare tree species in Auroville** |
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In regards to the ongoing work at Darkali Forest being carried out by hired workers, it seems clear there is no due process being followed for this work and there is once again complete opacity on the side of the Office of the Secretary and the Aurovilians recognized by her Office. The situation is as follows:

* This morning around 7 am, a hired masked mob equipped with chainsaws arrived on site in Darkali to cut the trees. These individuals refused to say who they were working for and it seems confirmed they are not working for the CPWD nor officially employed by the Auroville Town Development Council ('ATDC') recognized by the Governing Board.
* Instead, it seems confirmed that this mob has been hired from Bommayarpalayam by a resident closely supporting the Secretary.
* Some members of this hired mob are reportedly drunk, while they are manipulating chainsaws and dangerous machinery.
* The 'ATDC' members present onsite refused to explain how they are complying with the Joint Committee report. It is unfortunate that mature rare and valuable species such as Red Sanders are being cut and there are no signs of tree transplanting so far.
* Furthermore, the clearing again affects an ecologically sensitive zone, the water catchment that prevents flooding of the villages while providing fresh water for the area.
* The 'ATDC' members present also refused to disclose any work orders, any contract or subcontract. These are mandatory documents which are normally made public, as per standard operating procedure for public works.
* There has been verbal aggression and manhandling of the residents, including women, who came onsite to ask these most elementary questions.
* Some Auroville residents who do not represent the interests of the majority of the community are onsite to carry out and coordinate the clearing, while this work was contracted to the CPWD. This suggests a potential conflict of interest between them, as representatives of several groups constituted/recognized by the Office of the Secretary, and the contractor(s)?

All questions remain unanswered, due processes are flouted, and the dangerous actions of these individuals can only lead to disastrous human and ecological consequences.

Issued by the Working Committee selected by the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation

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