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## **Auroville Bulletin 60**

### **Change of venue for RA TDC meeting, Allegations made by AVFO staff member, Darkali timber sales**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Friday, 31st March 2023

*Note: There are important actions to take at the end of each Bulletin, if you are reading on your phone you may need to click 'see more' to view the entire bulletin.*

**Please find a glossary of acronyms and terms used in this bulletin [here](#).**

## **Urgent actions needed**

- **Attend the RA TDC meeting:** There has been a **change in venue & timings** for the RA TDC meeting which is now being held on **Saturday 1st April 6pm-7:15pm at Kalabhumi**
- **BCC calls for support for Aurovilians on bridging maintenances:** 25+ Aurovilians working for Auroville have been moved onto bridging maintenances without warning. Please see [here](#) for more information, and email BCC on [bccoffice@auroville.services](mailto:bccoffice@auroville.services) or [bccauroville@gmail.com](mailto:bccauroville@gmail.com).
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you can donate towards legal and delegation fees, please email [evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com). Please see [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil :** Please participate! For nearly 8 months the community has held a 24/7 vigil in the AVC room in Town Hall. **More people are needed** to ensure the round-the-clock presence. Please contact [avcouncil@auroville.services](mailto:avcouncil@auroville.services), WhatsApp 94430 03617 to sign up. See [here](#) for more information.
- **Join the Wednesdays for Auroville meetings:** There is a weekly community meeting held at the Tibetan Pavilion, every Wednesday 5:00-6:30 pm.

## Hot Topics

### RA TDC Meeting 1st April - Change of Venue

The TDC meeting on Saturday April 1st will now be held at **Kalabhumi from 6-7.15 pm**. A light dinner will be available after the meeting, as well as after the Youth Choir that is performing at Kalabhumi at 7.30pm.

*Auroville*  
**GENERAL MEETING**

**Saturday 1.4.2023**  
From 6:00- 7:15pm

**At Kalabhumi**

Light dinner will be available after the meeting. For those who want to go to the Youth Choir at Cripa (7:30pm), food will be available after the concert as well.

Please park at the Gaia Frisbee Field, not at CRIPA due to the concert.

 The RA TDC invites the whole community for an update on progress made for planning Auroville.  
Looking forward to seeing you there!

**ஆரோவில் பொதுக் கூட்டம்**

**சனிக்கிழமை 1.4.2023**  
மாலை 6:00 முதல் 7:15 மணி வரை

**கலாபூமியில்**

கூட்டத்திற்கு பிறகு எளிய உணவு ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது. Cripaவில் 7.30க்கு நடைபெறும் கூட்டு பாடல் நிகழ்வுக்கு செல்ல விரும்புவோருக்கு அந்த நிகழ்வின் முடிவிற்கு பின்னரும் உணவு வழங்கப்படும்.

உங்கள் வாகனங்களை கயா பிரிஸ்பீ மைதானத்தில் நிறுத்தவும். Cripaவில் பாடல் நிகழ்வு உள்ளதால் அங்கு நிற்பாட்ட வேண்டாம்.

 RAவின் நகர அமைப்புக் குழுவானது (TDC) ஆரோவில் திட்டப்பணிகளின் விவரங்களை பகிர அனைத்து குடியிருப்பாளர்களையும் அழைக்கிறது. அனைவரையும் சந்திக்கும் ஆவலுடன்

IMPORTANT:  
CHANGE OF VENUE  
AND TIMING!!!

முக்கிய அறிவிப்பு  
இடம் மற்றும் நேரம் மாற்றம்

## AVFO insider - allegations against the Secretary

Dev Mohanty, an AVFO staff member working under the Secretary, sent an [email](#) to the Minister of Education and other notable persons making serious allegations about the direction and working practices at the AVFO.

Mr Mohanty, who is a Project Coordinator at the AVFO, stated that he has been unhappy in his position for some time and had attempted to resign in October 2022. The Secretary had persuaded him to stay however after months of no discernable change he started putting his queries in writing, soon after which he was fired for “misconduct”. He claims that no clarity or proof regarding the claims of his misconduct were brought to his attention before or after his notice being served.

Amongst other allegations, he claims that the minutes for the 59th, 60th & 61st Governing Board meeting were redacted in places, in particular to remove the name of the law firm representing the AVF at the National Green Tribunal. The Secretary’s son-in-law is a partner at the law firm which “presents to be a very clear case of Conflict of interest.” He also stated that he had questioned why “RTIs replies were being sent out [with] inaccurate and misleading data? And... how certain people were being appointed to certain positions that did not justify lacking the relevant industry experience or the qualifications to justify their position.” He states that a few days after sending an email that questioned the events at the Youth Centre in December 2021 he was fired.

Mr Mohanty also shared his opinion about the Secretary on [Auronet](#), soon after her [promotion](#) to Additional Chief Secretary to Government in February 2023. He stated “when one has been here almost two years and does not have a meter of the Crown Rd to show but only destruction in the wake of it, one cannot quite call it a stellar performance”.

## Darkali Timber Sales

The trees felled at Darkali at the beginning of March have now been cut into smaller pieces by contractors and the wood is being removed. The wood includes timber from 19 endangered Red Sanders trees, which, according to Rule 9 of the [Tamil Nadu Timber Transit Rules](#), can not be moved except with a special permit issued by the District Forest Officer.

Much of the wood, in particular from the Kaya trees, was taken to a sawmill in Kottakarai. A report by Satprem indicates that this valuable timber was sold to an associate of Jothi Prasad of the AVFO's 'ATDC' for less than one lakh, while the estimated value of the wood is around 20 lakh. In an email exchange included in the report, Jothi Prasad claims that the deal was done in this way so that the money can be used for his [Unity Farm project](#). In the exchange, other AVFO 'Working Group' members called for a more transparent process, however the issue of the clear conflict of interest was not raised. The sale of this wood has not followed any of the established norms surrounding the sale of timber from Auroville's forests, as in the past 10% of the value would be given to the forest fund and a portion would go to offset monies spent by the steward of the land for cutting and maintaining the forest.

You can find Satprem's report (which includes the email exchange) [here](#). You can find his email to the Chairman of the Governing Board outlining the issues [here](#).

A further report by Satprem on the importance of Darkali can be found [here](#), as well as an Auroville Today [article](#) on the topic from February 2022.

## AVI Letter to Dr Jayanti Ravi

As [shared](#) by the RA WCom, the Auroville International (AVI) Board sent a letter to the Secretary expressing several concerns. Amongst other issues, they raised concerns about the ongoing visa threats, the curtailing of the freedom of expression particularly citing the takeover of News & Notes and they urge the completion of the RoR as soon as possible. You can read the full letter [here](#). This is the second letter the AVI Board has written recently, in February they [wrote](#) to the Governing Board to register their disquiet about the Leave India Notice that was received by RA WCom member Maël.

## Other updates and Information

## Land Stewardships ‘redefined’

On 18th March, the AVFO’s ‘FAMC’ & ‘ATDC’ [announced](#) that they were ‘redefining’ land stewardships stating that “going forward all ‘land stewardships’ that were given or as understood in the past, especially in the City Master Plan area no longer hold validity in the context it was practiced.” As per their remit, the stewardships of both forest and farm land have always been allocated by the green/forest/farm groups. This would be done in consultation with the group members who would ensure that any new steward was committed to maintain forests and farms, and would, if appropriate, offer an apprenticeship period for a new steward. The concern now is that the AVFO groups will continue implementing development plans without consultation with the concerned stakeholders, and may appoint new land ‘stewards’ who do not have the necessary knowledge in forestry or farming.

Island Lescure, who is the steward of Espace and a member of the RA TDC, shared [an article](#) in News & Notes which used Espace as an example to demonstrate the type of work involved in stewarding an area of forest. He and one other Aurovilian look after the land for which they receive no budget and no maintenance. The soil is not suitable for farming therefore it has been developed over the past 20 years from a monocultural cashew plot into a multi-species [Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest](#). He outlines the responsibilities involved in managing the forest and questions how this could be managed by the AVFO groups in the future given their lack of budget, competence, training, management plans, and maps.

## Revelation cycle path work

On March 18th, Revelation stewards reported that CPWD contractors started work on the cycle paths in Revelation Forest, which the AVFO ‘ATDC’ intends to brickline. Similar work has been ongoing in Gaia Forest, where existing cycle paths have been dug up and lined with uneven poorly laid brickwork, which in some places are already buried by mud after the light rains that fell recently. At Revelation, workers arrived with a JCB to clear a path into the forest opposite the Youth Center gate. When asked by the stewards to show maps for the work to be done, it became apparent that they were clearing the wrong area and therefore the work was stopped. The new planned path mostly follows the existing cycle path that Revelation Forest stewards previously created and maintained, however the proposed widening and bricklining of the pathways may then encourage motorised traffic into the forest. It would also create a link between the Crown Road and the proposed Outer Ring Road which, if it goes ahead as is now proposed, would cut through large areas of Auroville forest, including sensitive animal sanctuary areas.

## Land exchange - promises not honoured

[An Aurovilian who was evicted](#) from their place of work due to an exchange of land has still not been compensated as promised by the AVFO and their 'Working Groups'. Since 2009, Murthy has had a school/workshop on Auroville land near the Moratandi Tollgate. He was forced to move after the land was suddenly exchanged by the AVFO's 'Land Board' for land near Upasana. He was assured at the time that he would be compensated with a new space to work and live including electricity, fencing, and a water connection, as Murthy had himself funded the infrastructure at the Moratandi site. While some land has been allocated to him, there is no necessary infrastructure and as a result he has been unable to work for the past six months.

He is currently staying at Aurobrindavan while he waits for something more suitable to be made available. In the past, Murthy has been the recipient of a National Award from the Central Government of India for his craft as a Stonecarver.

## Auronet no longer moderating divisive content

Auronet, which is now moderated by unknown administrators appointed by the AVFO, allows targeted and vitriolic content, including content that incites division along racial lines. Additionally, several Aurovilians who have spoken out against the practices of the AVFO continue to be blocked from posting or commenting, and recently more people were blocked from the platform. The 'red button' option, which allowed users to make people 'invisible' so that it was possible to use the site for checking events or news without seeing certain postings is no longer functioning, meaning that users have no control over the content they see.

Examples of recent comments include [messages](#) such as "Mother got the Europeans here to do the work on the ground, material, physical plane [...] Instead the European mind is made to posture around, strutting its limited mentality, and the Indians work as labourers and at best passive mentality unable to apply and impart its greater mental strength to the European mind." A resource person for the AVFO's 'WCom' has rewritten 'To be a true Aurovilian' into '[To be a true Auropean](#)'. When questioned, he [responded](#) by stating that it is okay to target Europeans as 'colonialists', because "As a vet, what do you do, when your patient goes rabid? Putting the fatally infected ones down is an act of kindness. No?"

The usual monitoring of discourse on Auronet has allowed disrespectful and personal attacks to go unchecked. As one Aurovilian succinctly put it [in his blog](#): "I think one of the worst consequences of the present turmoil in Auroville is that we are dehumanising each other. By this I mean that we are ceasing to view those who hold different views from us as rounded, complex beings brought here by Mother, and seeing them simply as one-dimensional cut-outs, representatives, of a point of view."

## Errata from Bulletin #59 - 60th GB minutes

Bulletin #59 stated erroneously that the 60th Governing Board meeting minutes had not been shared with the community. The minutes have now been uploaded to the AVF website. You can find them [here](#). The minutes from the 62nd meeting, which took place in December 2022, have not yet been published.

## Media & Other Links

- **Key Ideas from Sri Aurobindo that the Society needs today:** [Online panel discussion](#) that took place on 25th March
- **Bhavishyate IV:** [Youtube talk](#) by Deepti Tewari
- **Urban Forestry in Auroville:** [News & Notes article](#) about Urban Forestry by Island Lescure

## About us

We are a group of Aurovillians who are actively involved in understanding the current crisis situation in Auroville in order to find a way forward together.

We stand for:

- Respecting our community processes for decision-making
- A collaborative approach in developing Auroville using integrated methods such as the Dreamweaving initiative
- Transparency and fairness in the organisation of Auroville
- Creating unity with our diverse voices

Please note that the website <https://standforaurovilleunity.com/> contains a great deal of information and a detailed timeline.

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing, social media, film editing etc - you are welcome to write to [evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com).

We hope this has been helpful. Let's keep working to find a way to bring us closer together to the beautiful dream of human unity in Auroville. We can do it... together.

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