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Auroville Bulletin 61

Vastu Shilpa collaboration, Unity Pavilion RA TDC meeting under threat of legal action

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Saturday, 8th April 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

- **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 or bccauroville@gmail.com.
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you can donate towards legal and delegation fees, please email 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, 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

TDC meeting - Vastu Shilpa collaboration



The RA TDC held a general meeting for the community at Kalabhumi on Saturday 1st April. They revealed that an anonymous donor has offered to fund the next steps in town planning in collaboration with the Dreamweaving process and Vastu Shilpa. The first step is to create a Masterplan 2025-2050, as the current Masterplan is in need of revision and expires in 2025. The aim is to develop the city in a truly integrative way, whereby both the concept and ground realities are taken into account.

Vastu Shilpa is enthusiastic to work on this project, held by the Dreamweaving team as the 'centre ground' of the community. Those present showed enthusiasm for this way forward with a nearly unanimous show of hands.

The TDC strongly emphasized that they are "committed to respecting the independence of the Dreamweaving core team, and are happy to see their offer to 'approach diverse segments of Auroville to investigate the possibility of designing and ultimately implementing an inclusive participatory planning process, whilst building on the lessons learned from the Dreamweaving 2022'."

You can view a [recording of the full meeting](#).

A shorter report prepared by the RA TDC [can be found here](#).

An announcement by the RA TDC outlining their approach [can be found here](#).

Unity Pavilion cancels RA TDC meeting and threatens legal action

The RA TDC meeting at Kalabhumi on 1st April was originally planned to be held at Unity Pavilion (UP). TDC members had booked the UP more than a month prior and had communicated the time and venue to the community through various channels. Less than a week before the meeting was due to go ahead, the UP team received an [email](#) from the AVFO's 'ATDC' with the subject line "program organised by an illegal entity", claiming that the RA TDC are an "illegal representation" as they are not a GB body gazetted by the Gol. The email stated that since the UP is an Auroville entity, if they went ahead with hosting the event then the UP team "will be liable for prosecution." Upon receiving this threat of legal action, the UP team contacted the RA TDC and cancelled their booking.

Note: [Under Section 19.3](#) of the Auroville Foundation Act, the Residents Assembly is directed to "establish such committees as it may consider necessary which shall represent it in relation to the functions to be performed by the Governing Board". The RA TDC was [selected](#) via the Residents Assembly Selection Process that was held in June 2022, and can therefore not be labelled "illegal".

Crown road works update

Satprem released another [report](#) updating the current status of the Crown road works. During the AVFO's 'Working Groups' [meeting](#) held in January, Sindhuja from the AVFO's 'ATDC' stated that 'phase one', the entire 2.1km stretch of road between PTDC and Youth Centre, would be completed by 31st March 2023. According to Satprem's report by this date "only 47.05 m of precast RCC slabs have been badly laid", whilst 1423 m of existing road, which was previously in good condition, has been destroyed. Having surveyed the current position of the road that has been laid by Youth Centre, he claims that "the radius of the road does not seem to be 690m... its centreline [is]~ 2m away from its theoretical position thus having a radius of more than 692m".

[Pictures](#) included in the report show that a large number of the newly laid slabs have already been damaged and the road does not have a regular [slope](#), which may affect drainage. The report also highlights that there are still 19.11 acres of lands which are in private hands and Satprem questions the legality of building roads on private lands with government funds. Satprem again called for the road works to be paused while two audits, one financial and one technical, are completed.

AVFO's 'FAMC' announcement - BCC response

The 'FAMC' appointed by the AVFO has made [an announcement](#) regarding changes to the financial system, including:

- Changes to the contribution system to “help [them] monitor this very important income support for BCC.”;
- Aurovilians receiving a (partial) City Service (CS) maintenance are no longer allowed to make extra income with commercial units insofar as they would be exceeding a CS maintenance;
- Changes for those who take higher maintenances than the standard CS maintenance.

In response to this announcement, and the [AVFO's 'BCC' interim report](#), the RA BCC has highlighted:

- Concern that the wages of Auroville workers have not increased this year, as they usually are each year;
- Noting that in the current reality where Auroville is not meeting everyone's basic needs, the restrictions on maintenances only makes it harder for those with less financial means to be a part of this community;
- Noting that individual contributions are not meant as a tax, and that the previous BCC had a subgroup dedicated to collecting and waiving of individual contributions, taking into account financial hardship and other forms of contribution.

Please take the time to read the full reflections of the RA BCC [here](#).

AV Council asks the News and Notes editors to step down

Since December 2022, the News and Notes (N&N) has not published announcements from the RA Working Groups, except for a handful that had the RA working group's signature removed. This decision was made by the editors due to the direct orders of the Secretary and her 'Working Groups' [under threat](#) of legal action. There were negotiations and a petition from the community to request that notices from all viewpoints would be published. These were without success. Finally, in mid-February the AV Council [asked](#) the editing team to step aside, so that a new inclusive and impartial team could be put in place. As there was no clear response from the editing team, a resolution was put forward by the AV Council to remove the editors.

This week, the N&N team [published](#) a note from the AVFO's 'WCom' asking them "not to succumb to unwarranted pressure" and to stay in place as editors. Roy, a member of the current N&N editing team, [wrote](#) that the editors had been "startled" to receive the "astonishing and sobering" message from the AV Council. He added that "the underlying reasons behind the restrictions imposed upon the N&N ... is a dispute that exists between our governing groups of Aurovilians... One would think this dispute would be resolved at some point, but hasn't and as it turns out publishing articles by RA selected groups would be in defiance of the AVFO demands which, no doubt, would result in some dire consequences." He stated that he would be willing to step down and train a new editor, however, no change in the publishing policy has been announced.

Other updates and Information

Y20 visit to Auroville

From Tuesday 4th until Thursday 6th of April, the AVFO hosted a Y20 event, a G20-related initiative providing a platform for youth from the G20 countries. About 150 youth delegates were announced to visit Auroville for this occasion. Those who attended were reportedly mostly of Indian origin. Apart from the initial welcome talk, Auroville youth and the rest of the Auroville community were not invited. Most only learnt of it through [an article published in the Hindu](#), based on a press note from the AVFO. The event was only announced by the AVFO 'WCom' on the day that the Y20 summit was set to start. The schedule included a Crown Road "marathon" walk, during which seven 'Supramental Action' trees were [planted](#) alongside the road by the delegates. These saplings will require a lot of care due to being planted at the wrong time of year, additionally this variety of tree is not really suitable for a roadside as it does not give much shade and also discards large, hard fruits which could potentially injure road users and damage vehicles.

Other scheduled events included lunches at Solar Kitchen and Solitude and the last morning was dedicated to a trip to Sadhana forest. You can find [the full schedule of the events here](#).

The RA WCom sent out [a massbulletin](#) about the summit, relaying their regret that "while 'youth' are the focus of this event, the Office of the Secretary has systematically targeted youth in Auroville over the past year". They also noted the lack of invitation extended to the Auroville youth to meaningfully participate.

Aurovilian visa dependent on being able to recite Mother and Sri Aurobindo quotes

New Aurovilians, some of whom have been waiting for up to two years to sign the B-Form, have been asked by a member of the Foundation Office staff to write down quotes by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo when they visit the office to sign the form. Additionally, in at least one case, an Aurovilian who went to collect their five-year letter of (LoR) recommendation was asked to recite quotes known by heart, and when they did not do so, their LoR was reduced from five years to one year. This person was told that the reduction was because "they did not know enough about Sri Aurobindo".

HT cabled laid by AVFO's 'ATDC' "meanders" around private land

In another recently released [report](#), Satprem shows that the HT cable that was recently laid between Auromode & Darkali does not appear to follow the Galaxy Plan, instead “meandering” to follow the existing mud roads looping around private lands. He states that “the cable zigzags a lot: it is sometimes outside of the right of way of the road, sometimes in the infrastructure corridor ...it is obvious that this cable will have to be removed later, when the service road will be built. Thus, occasioning again wastage of funds, risk to damage the cable, delays and odd works”. He therefore questions why there has been such a rush to lay this cable.

[Pictures](#) included in the report also show that the cable has been tightly bent in places, which he states “is in total contradiction with the argument that the then ATDC gave in 2021 when they argued for the relocation of the HT cable of the Crown Road passing through Bliss Forest”. At that time, the ATDC stated that “this cable cannot be bend [sic] like that”.

Media & Other Links

- **Auroville Media Liaison** : [Where is the wood going?](#)

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.

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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