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Auroville Bulletin 63

Launch of RA News & Notes, New court cases

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Saturday, 29th 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

- **Sign the RA statements:** Please sign the two statements prepared at the recent General Meeting. The first, [linked here](#), is to reject the removal of an Aurovilian from the Register of Residents. The second, [linked here](#), is to express disagreement with the recent takeover attempt by the AVFO.
- **Sign up for the RA News & Notes:** If you did not receive a copy of the new RA edition of the News & Notes, please subscribe via [this link](#).
- **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

News & Notes - RA Edition launched

Auroville NEWS & NOTES

No 972 - A weekly bulletin for residents of Auroville

27 April 2023

RA EDITION



PONDERING

“There can be no real freedom of thought where a padlock is put upon freedom of speech.”

- Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle: The Peril of the World-State*

An RA edition of the News and Notes (N&N) has been launched. The publication contains all of the information in the old N&N, including notices from both the RA working groups and the AVFO 'working groups'. Those receiving the old N&N by email previously ought to have received a copy of the RA N&N on 27th April, if you did not and wish to subscribe, you can do so via [this link](#). Paper copies will initially be limited to public spaces such as the library and restaurants. The new editing team are requesting to "Please make sure that all articles, notes, reports, announcements are sent to the new email address: newsandnotes@auroville.services". Please note you will need to use a non-auroville.org.in email ID in order to communicate with and receive the RA N&N.

In the first edition, the AV Council shared a [detailed timeline](#) outlining the steps that led up to the resolution to remove the editors of the News & Notes (N&N) in March 2023. The report, which shares links to the relevant communications, shows that the Council was in close communication with the editing team (Roy and Agnijata) for several months leading up to the resolution being passed. A number of different options were offered to the team to continue as editors publishing communications from both the RA and the AVFO groups. These options included an offer from the RA working groups to reword any notices that the N&N team felt may be contentious. It appears however that the editors did not feel able to go against the demands laid out by the Secretary, who insisted that the RA notices should no longer be published.

Many of the communications sent by the AV Council were not replied to by the N&N team, there was also no official response from them regarding the resolution and they have continued to work as normal. This situation led to a new publication being put together to enable information from the RA groups to reach the wider community.

AVFO continues attempted takeovers

Since mid-April the AVFO and their 'working groups' attempted to take over a number of well-functioning units and services in Auroville. Online meetings between the Secretary's office and executives and managers were requested at short notice. Those who were able to attend were informed that they were being dismissed and replaced.

An [Office Order](#) dated 12.04.23 was circulated this week naming Aurovilians who would allegedly comprise the 'new teams'. The Order stated that "Auroville is at that inflection point ... The intent of the team composition changes is to bring in greater accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness including upholding the compliances of the laws of India and suggested operational processes and practices." No negative feedback was previously given to the existing teams about their functioning. The new team members appear to be mostly those who are directly allied with the AVFO, including some who are already members of other AVFO-endorsed groups.

Several Aurovilians who were named on the Office Order as new executives were unaware or had already refused the roles. In one case, an Aurovillian who was named has been ToS for several years. A separate [Office Order](#) for the Visitors Centre was also circulated.

The RA WCom released a [massbulletin](#) outlining the advice that they had shared with the affected managers and executives. They stated that for any takeover to follow the correct processes as outlined by the AVFO in their own [Standing Order](#) which was Gazetted last year, several steps must take place which are not currently being adhered to. These steps include trust resolutions and 'FAMC' resolutions, the latter of which must be signed by the Joint Secretary, Finance Advisor to the Ministry of Education, as he is the only 'FAMC' member with decision making rights.

So far, two 'FAMC' resolutions have been shared, for the [Visitors Centre](#) and [Auroville Arts Service](#), however as they were signed only by the Aurovillian 'FAMC' members Chandresh and Torkil, it would appear that they are not valid. As the correct processes as laid out by the RA WCom in their recent massbulletin have not been followed, so far the attempted takeovers have not been completed.

As outlined below, the RA WCom has now filed a legal case to quash the Office Order dated 12.04.23, and the case has been accepted by the judge.

Legal update

New case - Quo Warranto - The RA WCom approached the Madras High Court again with a 'writ of quo warranto', which was admitted by the judge on 25th April. The Quo Warranto writ is a legal request to the 7 persons claiming to be the Working Committee (Anu, Arun, Joseba, Partha, Selvaraj, Srimoyi and Tine) to prove in court the basis for their claim to be members of the Working Committee. The RA WCom sent out a [massbulletin](#) on 26th April to inform the community about the case, and a follow-up [massbulletin](#) on 28th April with more explanations.

New case - Office Order quash - As was also shared by the RA WCom in their [massbulletin](#) on 28th April, a case to quash the 12th April Office Order discussed above was filed at the Madras High Court. The judge accepted the case and will serve a notice to the Secretary's Office.

Hearing of AVFO appeal of the Madras High Court judgment of 12th Aug - The case was listed on 24th and 28th April, but was not heard due to lack of time.

RA TDC member - visa issue

A member of the RA TDC, Allan, has had his recommendation letter withheld by the Secretary's Office since October 2022. At the beginning of April he received a notification from the Delhi Bureau of Immigration that his visa extension application was denied. Allan is a qualified town planner who has extensively supported the work of the Dreamweavers in the 2022 Crown exercise.

Allan posted on Auronet explaining that "In a recent meeting with the Secretary, I asked her what would be expected of me in order for her to provide me with a positive letter of recommendation. Her reply was to the effect that I should demonstrate my commitment to the development of Auroville by working with the ATDC endorsed by the Governing Board." In light of this, and hoping that planning "can be used as a tool for collaboration and harmony", Allan decided to withdraw from his role in the RA TDC and has offered to join the AVFO 'ATDC'. With this action, he hopes to be able to continue living in Auroville with his pregnant wife. The AVFO 'ATDC' hasn't yet formally replied to Allan's request. You can read his public announcement on his position [here](#).

Other updates and Information

Statement to reject RoR removal

Maël, who was given a Leave India notice for the 1st of March allegedly due to his critical views about AVFO actions, has apparently been removed from the Register of Residents (RoR). The [official circular](#) from the AVFO has since been posted on Auronet and in this week's News & Notes. The circular that was publicly shared by the AVFO contains Maël's passport number, an infringement of his privacy.

At the recent General Meeting (GM), the organisers introduced a statement to reject the removal of Maël from the RoR. The statement notes that "The removal of a person from the RoR is the sole responsibility of the Residents Assembly (RA)." A more generally worded statement which does not specifically name Maël is now being circulated and can be signed [here](#). If you already signed the statement at the GM, you are invited to sign again.

General Meeting report

On Saturday 22nd April, a General Meeting was held at Unity Pavilion. The meeting had been called by a group of concerned residents and was attended by approximately 250-300 individuals. The aim was to provide information and updates, and have an open discussion related to recent events in the community.

There was a focus on how the RA can more effectively fulfill its role and functions as defined in the Foundation Act, the relevant parts of which were read out. This was followed by a discussion on actions to be taken by the RA including the new and pending list of RADs, as well as the Entry and Exit policy.

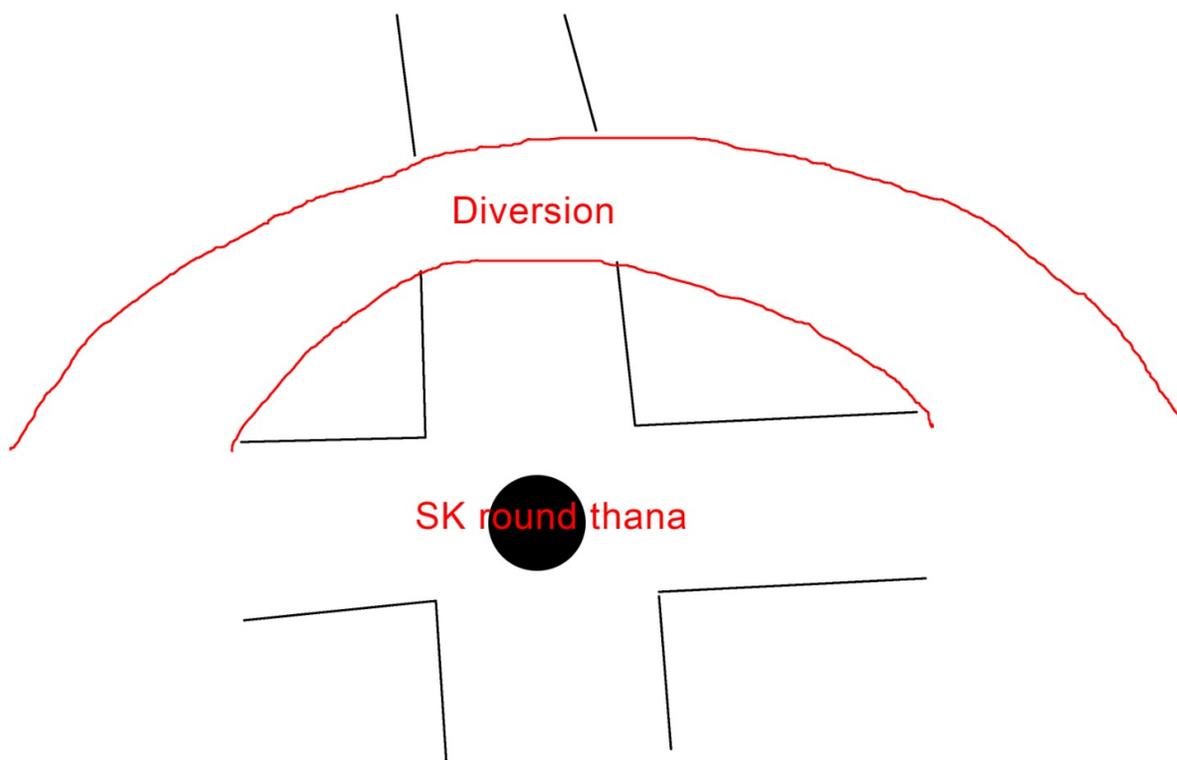
A topic which was extensively discussed is the attempted takeover of services and units, which is still ongoing (see above). As a response to the attempted takeovers, a collective statement was prepared by residents and signed by over 100 residents. The formulation of the petition has been fine-tuned and residents can sign it by clicking [here](#).

This was followed by a report on the recent work done on finalizing the Entry and Exit policies. It was agreed by a show of hands to call for a Residents' Assembly Meeting to ratify the new policies. Finally, the list of pending RADs was presented and a new list of RAD topics was introduced, for which sufficient signatures were collected.

Crown Road update

Despite the slow progress on the Crown Road, with less than 100m completed after nearly 10 months of roadworks, which are of substandard quality according to Satprem Maini's reports, the AVFO 'ATDC' and their contractors continue to demolish functioning areas of the road. Moving around the centre of Auroville has become increasingly difficult in recent weeks, in particular since a [large trench](#) was dug at the Grace end of the Crown, meaning that road users must travel on the unfinished Crown itself, currently consisting of only an uneven gravel layer. Several accidents and injuries have already occurred on this unfinished stretch of road. In his most recent [report](#), Satprem stated that he witnessed an older cyclist fall from his bicycle whilst attempting to access the road via a steep pathway.

This week the AVFO 'ATDC' announced the removal of the Solar Kitchen roundabout with a diversion through the Solar Kitchen parking area. The work was announced via a massbulletin including a hand drawn 'map'. The notice stated "no heavy vehicles or trucks are allowed" but did not inform road users of possible alternatives.



Media & Other Links

- **ThePrint:** “[British-era censorship did not spare Aurobindo’s letter from being circulated in his magazine](#)” An article regarding the censorship of Sri Aurobindo in colonial-era India

About us

We are a group of Aurovilians 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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