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## Auroville Bulletin 64

### **Bulletin on summer break, Under Secretary Suspended, Darkali Trees Transplanted**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Monday, 15th May 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 closing TODAY:** 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 of many units and services.

**The deadline for signing the letters is today, Monday 15th May**

- **Sign the letter to Aurinoco:** Residents affected by the recent internet outages due to the Crown Works have written a letter of complaint to BSNL. You can [find and sign the letter here](#).
- **Donate funds to support the Community edition of the News & Notes:** The Community edition of the News & Notes does not currently receive any budget. Financing is needed for printing costs, if you are able to help please email [newsandnotes@auroville.services](mailto:newsandnotes@auroville.services) or donate directly to FS account No. #252150.
- **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

## NOTICE: EVOLVING GALAXY BULLETIN ON SUMMER BREAK

**The Evolving Galaxy Bulletin team will be taking a summer break for the coming weeks.**

In the meantime, please stay updated by subscribing to the **Massbulletin** by writing to [avmassbulletin@auroville.services](mailto:avmassbulletin@auroville.services) and subscribe to the **Community News & Notes** ([newsandnotes@auroville.services](mailto:newsandnotes@auroville.services)) by clicking [here](#).

### AVFO Takeover update

Despite the case filed with the Madras High Court to quash the recent [Office Order](#) replacing executives and members of services, units and trusts, the AVFO and their 'working groups' have been pushing forward with taking over some of the services named in the Order. In particular, the Visitors Centre (VC) is under pressure to hand over control to the new 'executives'. Many of the long term executives and workers have reported feeling extreme distress at the sudden change. However, in a [tweet](#) sent by the Secretary on 10th May, she stated that there had been a "smooth transition of Visitors Centre Leadership".

On 6th May a silent [Unity Walk](#) was organised in support of the VC executives and workers, as well as the executives and workers of other places currently under threat. Around 150 people attended and the event was covered in a [local newspaper](#) (please see [here](#) for an English translation of the article). A threatening [massbulletin](#) was sent out by the AVFO 'WCom' one day prior to the event stating that "inciting or fomenting unrest or agitations from others by Aurovilians propagating these unfounded fears will be followed up for necessary reprimand".

While the massbulletin stated that "For the Visitor Center specifically, none of the units and executives have been changed or contemplated", this statement contradicts the most recent [AVFO 'FAMC' report](#), as well as the reality at the Visitors Centre. In a [massbulletin reply](#), the RA WCom highlighted their concern that "most messages sent out by those impersonating the Working Committee are repeatedly filled with threats, and with provable lies. Contrary to what is being pretended, the Visitors Center compound is currently pressurised by a change of management and executives that does not follow any established process".

### AVFO Undersecretary Srinivasamurthy is suspended, Sathyanarayan now in-charge

Mere months before his retirement was due, the Undersecretary of the Auroville Foundation, Mr. Srinivasamurthy, was suspended by the AVFO. It is unclear what the charges are. Mr. Srinivasamurthy has been the Undersecretary for almost 3 decades and lives with his Aurovilian wife in Promesse community.

Since his suspension, a new letterhead of the Auroville Foundation (see below) appears to indicate that B.S. Sathyanarayan, who is also the AVFO Accounts Officer and member of the AVFO 'FAMC', is the new Undersecretary-in-Charge, now fulfilling a triple role within the Secretary's administration. As was noted in Bulletin 55, it is highly irregular for an Aurovilian to work directly for the AVFO, presumably receiving a salary instead of an Auroville maintenance.

B. S. SATYANARAYAN  
UNDER SECRETARY - IN CHARGE



## Tree transplanting in Darkali

The transplanting of sensitive trees in Darkali by the AVFO is ongoing, as per the directions of the NGT's Joint Committee report, which singled out 36 trees to be transplanted as close to the site as possible. The trees are being brought to a plot behind Buddha Garden, almost 4 km away from Darkali. Community member Satprem has written a report on the ongoing transplanting, which you can find [here](#). The report notes that the transplantation work is not being done properly, and will likely result in the death of the transplanted trees.

One of the main issues mentioned in the report is the fact that the trees are being transplanted in the middle of summer, a tough climatic condition for transplantation. It also seems that the size of the root ball kept intact is not enough to ensure survival of the trees. Moreover, the trees are being pulled out by a crane, instead of dug out and lifted from the root ball, resulting in severe breakage of the root systems. According to the report, the trees are being transplanted to a largely barren plot without use of compost or any other support for the tree to take root in its new home.

## Youth Centre budget cut by AVFO 'FAMC'

Due to being positioned partly on the Crown Road, the Youth Centre has been in the eye of the storm since December 2021. Despite important community areas being destroyed to make way for the Crown Road, the YC team has continued to host workshops, events, pizza nights, and fairs as well as house a community of youth. On Tuesday 25th April the AVFO 'FAMC' informed the Youth Centre team that their budget would be cut for the 2023-2024 financial year, "until a new vocational training center in the planned location has begun. The current activities should be stopped and a new team formed [...]".

The Youth Centre responded to this email calling for collaboration and reminding the AVFO 'FAMC' of the contributions of the YC team, expressing their goodwill to continue their work to create a Vocational Training Centre for Auroville's youth. You can find the correspondence between the AVFO 'FAMC' and the YC Coordinators [here](#).

The YC team organised a community meeting and a showing of the recent YC documentary on Saturday 6th May to share their precarious situation and to reiterate their willingness to serve the youth of Auroville.

## Legal update

**New case - Quo Warranto - Madras High Court** - The RA WCom has approached the Madras High Court with a writ petition called a '[quo warranto](#)', which was admitted by the judge on 25th April. The RA WCom sent out a [massbulletin](#) on 26th April to inform the community about the case. You can now find the official court order [here](#), which notes that the respondents (the 7 members of the AVFO 'WCom' plus the Secretary) are to respond by June 7th.

**Appeal of the AVFO to the NGT Order - Supreme Court** - The AVFO appeal to the outcome of the National Green Tribunal case was listed on Tuesday 9th May. It did not come up for hearing. A new date will be communicated shortly.

## Other updates and Information

### Aurinoco Internet cables cut during crown road works

Aurinoco, the Auroville internet service run by Chandresh of the AVFO 'FAMC', is currently not able to provide internet for about 300 residents. During the first two weeks of May, several cables were broken by JCBs working on the Crown Road. It is reportedly unclear who is responsible for fixing the cables, leading to a current inaction in fixing the problem. This is especially problematic for communities in the City Centre who often have no alternative service provider.

Residents issued a complaint form to BSNL, in which they ask BSNL to intervene and provide direct internet connections with their cheaper and more reliable service. If you are a customer of Aurinoco and have similar concerns, you can [find the letter here](#).

## **Kalabhumi Borewell**

At the beginning of April 2023, the residents of Kalabhumi community were informed by the Water Service (AWS) that their borewell would be closed "because of the Crown Road construction". There had previously been no information given to the users of the well about plans to close it off.

Kalabhumi residents [replied to the email](#) requesting more information about the plans, however most of their questions, including queries about the legitimacy of the AVFO 'ATDC', went unanswered. They were informed that once the well - which supplies water to Kalabhumi, Existence, Cripa and Dehashakti - was closed, their only option for receiving water into the communities would be to connect to the AWS city water supply, which would incur a monthly charge. The borewell had originally been funded by Kalabhumi residents however they were told that there would be no financial compensation.

The well is in very good condition, and according to the residents is "the most operational and effective borewell in the Cultural Zone". The only contact with residents by the AVFO 'ATDC' has been a [brief email](#) sent at the beginning of May with no detailed plans or timeline. It is also unclear how the AVFO 'ATDC' intends to continue with the road works in that area in a manner that ensures that they do not pollute the aquifer.

## **Non-Aurovilian Varun K. allocated housing in Vibrance**

Varun K, a member of the team who took over the Auroville Archives for the AVFO in June 2022 and a person who has no Auroville status after his Friend of Auroville (FoA) application was rejected, has moved into an Auroville asset in the new Vibrance apartment block. This is a breach of the Auroville Housing Policy, which stipulates that one needs a valid Auroville status to be given the stewardship of a housing asset. Varun K.'s application for FoA status was rejected by the Entry Board after multiple negative feedbacks were received by them.

## RA WCom bi-monthly report

The RA WCom shared their [report](#) for March and April 2023. Additional topics include a recent [clarification letter](#) sent by the Auroville International (AVI) Board in response to a [statement](#) by the AVFO 'WCom' in the News & Notes, that claimed that "AVI [are] not in a collaborative space". The AVI letter corrected the factual inaccuracies in the AVFO 'WCom' statement. The RA WCom expressed thanks to "the AVI Board and AVI Centers for their continued support, and for engaging actively with Auroville and its struggles".

Also included is the Tamil New Year cultural event held at Bharat Nivas on 13th March 2023. Several attendees of the event reported to RA Wcom that the event felt 'hijacked' by the AVFO and their 'working groups' for their own presentations.

The 12-page RA WCom report covers several other topics. Please read the [full report](#) for more information.

## Car crashes into SK roundabout

On the evening of Saturday 6th May, a car drove into the ditch where the Solar Kitchen roundabout used to be. The car was travelling from the direction of Aha Kindergarten towards Certitude. The lack of clear warning signs, diversions or substantial barriers and poor lighting for night driving during the road works has been raised with the AVFO 'ATDC' a number of times however safety measures remain poor and inadequate during the extended road works. Reportedly, other car accidents have also taken place near the Solar Kitchen roundabout site due to the ongoing road works.



## **AV Consulting - Report on Auroville's carbon sequestration**

This new report outlines the carbon sequestration potential of Auroville and notes that Auroville's forests are offsetting 84% of Auroville's carbon footprint, making it close to carbon-neutral. The report also highlights that Auroville's forests sequesters 14.55% more carbon per hectare compared to the average of Tamil Nadu forest areas. Suggestions for becoming carbon neutral include switching to emission-free transport and densifying existing forested areas. You can find [the full report here](#).

## **Matrimandir Lake extension questioned**

Jan Imhoff, the Aurovilian engineer supervising the Matrimandir's test lake, has shared an [open letter](#) on Auronet addressed to the Matrimandir Executives, warning them about their decision "to stop all the ongoing work at the Test Lake in favour of starting the next section of the Matrimandir Lake". According to Jan, "there are a number of technical reasons why going ahead with the next section of the lake before completing the test phase of the first section is a folly". You can read more about these technical reasons in the open letter.

## Community News & Notes #974

You can find the latest version of the N&N including the announcements of the RA-selected groups, dated 13-5-2023 [here](#).

# 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 [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@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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