

View this email in your browser



Auroville Bulletin 72

**Satprem's 'removal' from RoR, Matrimandir lake update,
Visa extension linked to contribution**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Saturday, 14th October 2023

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

Urgent actions needed

- **Assist with the documentation of tree-cutting:** Instances of tree-cutting are happening every week across Auroville. It is important to document where and when this is happening; If you are available and willing to help with documentation, please get in touch with evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.
- **MM Neem Tree Vigil:** Residents have taken up a vigil to protect one of the old neem trees in danger of being cut to make way for the Matrimandir Lake. If you are willing to assist them in keeping their watch, please reach out to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.
- **Support for Maintenances:** An increasing number of Aurovilians have been cut off from their Maintenance, and are in need of support. For more information, please contact the BCC: bccoffice@auroville.services. If you wish to support the Farm or Forest Group as a whole, please contact us at evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com and we will redirect you as needed.
- **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 4:30-6:00 pm.

Urgent Topics

Satprem 'removal' from RoR

Satprem Maïni of the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI), who was given an Exit Permit in June 2023 after the Secretary withdrew her visa letter of recommendation, has now been removed from the Register of Residents according to a [circular](#) sent out by the AVFO 'WCom'. The AVFO actions came after Satprem shared a large number of critical technical reports on the ongoing Crown Road works.

The [circular](#) from the Undersecretary-in-charge, Sathyanarayan, indicated that because of Satprem's Exit Permit, "his name be removed from ROR and access to AuroNet, Auroville emails etc to be revoked with immediate effect." As noted by the RA WCom in their [massbulletin](#) on 13th October "admission and termination of residents in the Register of Residents (and from the Master List) is the exclusive prerogative of the Residents' Assembly as per the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988" The Office of the Secretary is tasked with merely 'updating' the RoR.

Subsequently, Joseba from the AVFO 'WCom' sent [an email](#) to Otto from the Financial Service asking him to block all of Satprem's Financial Service accounts. Satprem was also [removed](#) as the Executive of the AVEI by the AVFO 'Working Groups', citing his 'removal' from the RoR.

Matrimandir lake update



On 30th September 2023, a [legal notice](#) was sent by the lawyers of the NGT petitioners to the Matrimandir (MM) executives regarding “willful and wanton violation of the judgment of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal”. Prior to this, the MM Executives had received several notices in the form of [letters](#) and [reports](#) from the RA TDC, highlighting that the current expansion of the lake construction is in violation of the NGT. A [communication](#) from June 2023, sent by one of the MM executives stated “my suggestion was to ignore totally [the RA TDC] and thank God finally that is what was decided”.

The MM executives responded to the legal notice by releasing an [announcement](#) stating: “This [legal notice] is in violation of the Auroville guideline ... that Aurovilians do not resolve their differences by going to the courts”. A response to the MM executive's announcement was subsequently shared via [massbulletin](#). The respondents noted that “There have been numerous attempts of dialogue... these have failed due to a refusal by the Matrimandir executives to listen and have open discussions”. The AVFO ‘WCom’ also followed up with a [response](#) of their own, stating their “full support for the Matrimandir Team”.

At the General Meeting held at Kalabhumi on 19 September 2023, several Aurovilian experts including Jan (lead engineer and overall supervisor of the test lake), Giulio (geologist and member of Auroville's Water Group) and Narad (who was given the task of designing the MM gardens by the Mother) voiced their opinions on the present situation and looked at some of the potential concerns for the future development. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed [here](#). After the meeting, feedback forms were shared with the community.

The [results of the feedback](#) were collated and shared with the Matrimandir executives and the community on 9th October. Feedback was received from 273 people (264 Aurovilians). Over 80% of the respondents shared two main concerns regarding the lack of water management planning and, and the second phase going ahead prior to the test lake being completed. You can find the full results and conclusions of the feedback [here](#). Additionally, on 10th October, an [open letter](#) by a group of residents was sent to the MM Executives.

A [follow-up meeting](#) with Michael Bonke was held on 10th October at Savitri Bhavan since the first meeting on 2nd October was cut short. This time the presentation and discussion continued for 4 hours. Michael Bonke delivered a [presentation](#) which answered some of the questions raised at the previous meeting, for example giving a potential solution to the concerns raised regarding fixing future leaks in the lake. However, other questions remained unanswered - for instance, no clear reply was given as to how the lake will be filled, which is crucial to understanding potential environmental impacts.

When asked what his official relationship was with Auroville and specifically the MM, Michael Bonke [stated](#) "As to what concerns the work, especially for the Matrimandir, I am proud to say that it is absolutely deregulated. I have no title, no contract, I am not an Aurovilian, I am absolutely nobody and that's why I can do what I want." Concerns of a potential conflict of interest regarding his role as both the main donor of the project, the deciding party, and the main executor, have yet to be addressed.

Legal update

Madras High Court - Appeal of the AVFO against the 12th August 2023 judgment (Working Committee case): The case was heard on Wednesday, 11th of October for 40 minutes and was then adjourned until Wednesday 18th October.

Supreme Court - National Green Tribunal: The case was listed for Friday 6th of October but was further adjourned to 18th October.

Visa extension linked to contribution

As noted in [Bulletin #71](#), the extension of visas has now been linked to whether or not the Aurovilian in question has paid their monthly contribution. In an [Auronet announcement](#), the AVFO 'WCom' noted that this step has been introduced by the Auroville Foundation, and that "all visa applications will be passed via the BCC office to check if the monthly FS city contribution has been paid or for any other financial irregularity. In case of any pending payment the visa process will be paused until the pending payments are updated." In some cases, several years of back pay are being requested, even when the Aurovilian was out of station for that time due to unavoidable personal circumstances or covid restrictions.

As [noted](#) by the RA BCC, in the past, Aurovilians who did not pay the contribution often did so because they were not receiving a maintenance whilst still working full time for the community. In some cases, the BCC granted a waiver from the contribution for individuals who had invested a large amount of their own funds in buying Auroville lands, or developing projects for Auroville, and who did not have access to outside funds. The new policy appears to target only non-Indian Aurovilians who rely on a visa to stay in Auroville.

Other Updates and Information

Tree cutting in Anitya community

Members of AVFO 'Land Board' have been 'pruning trees' for the Outer Ring Road in and around the Anitya community, just north of Edayanchavadi. Photo documentation shows that trees are completely cut, rather than pruned. In addition, [a report](#) overlaying the maps of the Master Plan and the current area being prepared shows that the road is being adjusted and pushed into Auroville by about 20 meters. No process has been followed for adjusting the Outer Ring Road and allowing it to deviate from the Master Plan, which appears incongruous with the arguments often used by the AVFO 'ATDC' to allow no deviation for the Crown.

The Outer Ring Road was supposed to cut through a part of Anitya that had been left undeveloped precisely for the future road to be built. The new trajectory of this road is now set to cut through the Thamarai educational centre within the Anitya community. This Thamarai campus services 30 students from the nearby Edayanchavadi village to study every evening. Neither the Anitya community members nor the Thamarai project holders have received any communication from the AVFO 'ATDC' about their future plans.

Farm Group September 2023 report

The Farm Group shared their [report](#) for September 2023. It includes information about the current situation after all of the farmers' maintenances were cut off by the AVFO 'FAMC' at the start of the month. They share that many farmers "are surviving on savings (in one case using money saved up for children's education) and/or making money for living expenses by doing non-farming activities."

Regarding the proposed VIP road and car park, which will affect Buddha & Siddhartha Farms, they state that there is a lack of clarity about the situation but "it seems that no financial help will be forthcoming to take any positive decisive action such as moving the farm". They also shared that they had not yet received any information or updates about the progress of the Gratitude Farm project which was [announced](#) by the AVFO 'FAMC' in August 2022.

Self Education Program

From the presentation of the Dreamweavers, a new initiative called the 'Self Education Program' was launched on 12th September. 20 participants split into 5 groups are learning and sharing for 7 weeks about 5 major and often ignored topics of urban design, namely: spatial justice, values and urban forms, art and culture, connectivity and access, and density and diversity.

The aim is to later present the findings to the community, and the learnings of the group are to be weaved in with the other Dreamweaving initiatives. The Self Education group has recently shared its [first report](#) on the on-going program, part of the Dreamweaving phase 2. To access the report, please click on this [link](#).

Changing the narrative

In June 2023, the RA WCom shared [via massbulletin](#) their [response](#) to the AVFO 'WCom' [Annual Report](#) August 2021 - August 2022. The report contained a number of often-repeated narratives that continue to be spread by the supporters of the AVFO to justify the ongoing takeover of Auroville's assets. As the RA WCom notes "With the benefit of nearly 12 months of hindsight since the end date of this report, it is clear that many of these erroneous statements do not reflect the reality of the situation, however, we still continue to hear many of these narratives being repeated." The response addressed numerous errors in the AVFO 'WCom' annual report, the most common of which will be shared in upcoming editions of the Bulletin.

The original statements from the AVFO 'WCom' are presented in italics, followed by the RA WCom responses.

Aurovilians broke from SAS which led Aurovilians astray from the true ideals of Auroville

"As Auroville was a barren plateau, it is understandable that the first generation of Aurovilians concentrated on making the area livable. Simple houses were constructed, basic amenities established, and top soil preservation took place with bunding and planting. But from the very beginning an attitude developed that Auroville belonged to the Aurovilians, especially when Mother was not in her physical body anymore. Aurovilians took matters in their own hands which had quite some consequences especially with the breakage from the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS). Taking matters in their own hands lead to several situations where the results and attitudes went astray from the Auroville Charter, The Dream and the True Aurovilian"

"This statement is in total denial of Auroville's history and more importantly with the reality lived by the Aurovilians at the time, some of whom were violently aggressed and physically hurt by thugs hired by the SAS. Furthermore, the conflict with the SAS led to the Indian Government intervening, and eventually to the creation of the Auroville Foundation Act, which the Parliament of India itself approved. To claim that this was a mistake, and that it damaged Auroville, is a great insult to the Indian Government. We invite you to discuss this again with some of those who were present at that time for a deeper and more accurate understanding of the history of Auroville."

Media & Other Links

- **AV News Podcast 5:** The 5th episode of the AV News Podcast is available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [YouTube](#) and on [this page](#) of the Auroville Media website.
- **Pitchandikulam Newsletter:** Please see [here](#) for the 2023 newsletter from Pitchandikulam Forest.

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

If you wish to know more, the website <https://auroville.media/> contains a great deal of information on the current situation.

Please note that our previous bulletins can be found at this link: <https://linktr.ee/evolvinggalaxy>

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing, social media, film editing etc are welcome to write to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. Also feel free to share with us information, questions or suggestions.

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.

You receive this email because you have joined the newsletter **Evolving Galaxy** With the address evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

[Unsubscribe](#) to no longer receive emails from us.