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Auroville Bulletin 73

**Satprem asked to exit India, Emergency RAD on the RoR,
last day to vote 29th October**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Saturday, 28th 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:** For over one year the community has held a 24/7 vigil in the Auroville Council 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 given notice to exit India

Satprem was given an Exit Permit by the FRRO in June 2023 after the Secretary of the AVFO removed her recommendation for a visa. He has now been given a notice to exit India at the latest by 31st October 2023. As clarified by the RA WCom in a [massbulletin](#), this is not the same document as the Leave India Notice that was given to Maël in February 2023.

Residents have organised an open house event at the Auroville Earth Institute on Monday 30th October at 4:00-5:30 pm to honour Satprem's services and commitment to Auroville, prior to him leaving India.

Satprem recently circulated a [timeline of events](#) from June-October 2023, cataloguing how the AVFO and their 'working groups' have targeted him and the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI), its executives, and its staff through actions such as blocking the AVEI's bank accounts, removing Satprem and Ayyappan as executives of the AVEI and blocking Satprem's personal Financial Services account.

Emergency RAD on the RoR

The RA WCom launched an emergency Residents' Assembly Decision (RAD) on 23rd October 2023, which will run **until midnight on Sunday October 29th**. The RAD is about approving or rejecting the AVFO's decision to remove any Aurovilian, such as Maël and Satprem, from the Register of Residents (RoR). In addition, the RAD mentions Ayyappan, who was removed as an executive of the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI), by the AVFO 'Working Groups' who cited as a reason that he was not on the RoR. The full text of the resolution, in English, Tamil, French, Italian, Korean, Russian and Spanish can be found [on this email](#) and on [this page of Auroville.Media website](#).

Voting can be done in two ways:

VOTE ONLINE

Use your personalized voting link sent by the Residents' Assembly Service (RAS). If you didn't receive the link, please check spam or promotions folders. If still not there, kindly visit RAS polling stations or send an email to raservice@auroville.services.

VOTE IN PERSON

RAS will be happy to help you to register your decision in person:

- **SATURDAY (Oct. 28th) @ Solar Kitchen: 3 pm - 5 pm**
- **SUNDAY (Oct. 29th) @ Solar Kitchen: 11 am - 1 pm**



On 25th October, the AVFO 'WCom' released an [announcement](#) on Auronet stating that “a video is circulating to campaign for votes based on incorrect information”. Their announcement did not address the central concern of the RAD, which is that Aurovilians are seemingly being removed from the RoR without any consultation. Instead they claim that “Ayyappan Thulukkanan of Earth Institute was not removed from the ROR, he did not update his ROR”. This is in contradiction to their previous statement that Ayyappan was removed from being an executive of the AVEI *because* he was not on the RoR. The RA WCom responded via a [massbulletin](#), asking “Why does the AVFO 'WC' now say that Ayyappan was not removed from the RoR if this is the reason given for removing him as an executive of the Earth Institute?” The RA WCom’s massbulletin also clarified other incorrect statements made by the AVFO 'WCom’.

AVFO makes a final call to update the RoR

On 18th October 2023, the AVFO 'WCom' released a [circular](#) from the new Deputy Secretary/ Director of the AVFO K. Swarnambika, requesting that all Aurovilians who had not completed the form to update the RoR do so within ten days, stating that "any application received after that will not be entertained". A later [communication](#) clarified that the last day for submission would be 3rd November 2023. The AVFO 'WCom' also [released](#) a list of names of people who they claim have not submitted their forms.

The AVFO process of updating the RoR began in May 2022, nearly 1.5 years ago, with an [announcement](#) by the Officer on Special Duty Dr Seetharaman. This was the pretext for the attempt to "pause any decisions taken by the Residents' Assembly" that came at the beginning of the AVFO administrative takeover. The legitimacy of the RA-led processes was recently [reaffirmed](#) by the Hon'ble Madras High Court, when it was confirmed that, as a statutory body, the RA cannot be restrained from functioning.

Legal update

Madras High Court - Appeal of the AVFO against the 12th August 2023 judgment (Working Committee case): The case was heard on Wednesday, 18th of October. For now, the discussion focused on the issue of the appointment of the TDC, as there are contradictory rulings regarding the validity of the appointment of the TDC via Office Order. This same matter will be discussed again on Monday, 20th November. The issue of the Working Committee may be taken up at a later stage.

Supreme Court - AVFO appeal against National Green Tribunal ruling: The next hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, 8th of November.

National Green Tribunal - Miscellaneous application*: The application to the court noting different violations of the NGT order by the AVFO is scheduled for Thursday, 30th November.

* a Miscellaneous Application (MA) is a legal procedure that allows parties involved in an ongoing case before the NGT to seek various types of reliefs, directions, or clarifications related to the main case. These miscellaneous applications are typically filed to address specific issues or concerns that may arise during the course of the main case or after a judgment has been issued.

Djaima, Hermitage, Aranya - potential exchanges

After the news that Forecomers and a part of AuroOrchard might be up for exchange created strong misgivings in the Auroville community and beyond, the AVFO is now canvassing other Auroville communities for land exchange potential.

A plot at Djaima (near Kuilapalayam) was recently cleared of undergrowth, reportedly to prepare the piece for land exchange. AVFO 'WCom' and Land Board also announced and made site visits to Hermitage (located is on the far side of the Tindivanam highway next to Sadhana Forest) and Aranya (located closer to Ousteri lake, to the East of Pondicherry). They met with the stewards and verbally noted that they were looking for underdeveloped parts of these communities to exchange. Hermitage and Aranya are among the oldest Auroville lands, bought with the Mother's blessings before the inauguration of Auroville. Both areas have been re-afforested and contribute today to a fragile yet essential ecological balance and biodiversity.



AVFO reprimanded over RTI requests

Several Right To Information (RTI) requests addressed to the Auroville Foundation have gone to appeal due to incomplete or no answers from the AVFO. The Information Commissioner (IC) has in all these instances expressed "severe displeasure" over the conduct of the AVFO's Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) for not responding, giving incomplete replies or responding outside of the stipulated time frame.

Concerning the Governing Board minutes, the IC also observed that the CPIO was obliged to ensure it is published for the public through the internet, in an easily accessible electronic format.

Other Updates and Information

Activity around Evergreen/Abri/Ami encroachment

The case around the PKS (encroaching party) land grab in Evergreen and on the Ami/Abri corner has still not been resolved in the courts. During the latest hearing on 18th October, PKS' lawyers convinced the Madras High Court on appeal to appoint an Advocate Commissioner to survey the land and define the proper boundaries of the plots. You can find [the relevant court order here](#).

On 21st September, PKS came and installed video cameras on the property contradicting an earlier injunction against him entering the property. Afterwards, PKS and his men came and put pillars down to mark the line of the encroachment. Evergreen residents are kept uninformed by the AVFO-appointed Land Board on the unfolding situation in the courts; they have also not received answers to their queries on how to respond to these actions of PKS.

Visa update - continued harassment of visa holders

The AVFO continues to update its webpage on 'visa statistics' with information that implies there is no issue for foreign residents of Auroville to obtain visas. You can find a link to their visa information page [here](#), clearly stating that '0' visas are rejected and only 2 are pending for the 1,392 requests processed by the AVFO.

These numbers are belied by a daily reality in which many individuals and families are not able to access visas, as other administrative means are applied by the AVFO to exert its control on the foreign population deemed 'non-compliant' with its wishes. Some examples include:

Reduced visas

Since the Secretary's appointment, 6 people received a 6 months visa, while 7 people received only 3 months. On top of that, over 70 people who were due for their 5 year visa only received 1 year visas. This includes elderly community members who no longer have ties to their home countries.

Leaving Recommendation Letters pending indefinitely

In some cases, such as in the case of an active RA WCom member and one former Council member, Letters of Recommendation (LoR) are pending for more than a year. Another 7 people are affected. That means that these individuals cannot leave the country or move around; upon leaving the country, they may not be able to get back in.

Another means employed is to target children of families waiting for visas abroad. By refusing a LoR to only one child in a family, it is impossible for the entire family to come back as it will mean abandoning one of the children abroad. In this way, statistically only '1' visa has been left pending, while 4 or more individuals are impacted and unable to return to Auroville.

Another 18 visas are pending in the Foreigners Registration (FRRO) online system for no discernable reason, in one case for more than 18 months.

Extending LoRs claiming that the person has been 'blocking development'

A number of individuals have received a Letter of Recommendation (LoR) that comes with a note stating that the person in question has been 'blocking development' ("It is being brought to your notice that the above applicant has been obstructing the work progress as per the Master Plan approved by the Governing Board and gazetted by the Government of India.") They are then recommended for a one year visa, instead of the regular five years.

The FRRO in Pondicherry is following up on cases by visiting the affected persons and completing the visa application process with the reduced visa term. However, these letters are in many cases unusable for those who are abroad and need to get back to India, as Indian Embassies are unlikely to understand the reason and context for these notes and may subsequently refuse to grant the visa.

'Leave India notices' to individuals who question the AVFO

The well-published cases of Satprem (Earth Institute) and Maël (RA WCom) show that even without 'refusing' a visa, the withholding of the Letter of Recommendation, or supplying an LoR with negative remarks on it combined with complaints to the FRRO can result in individuals being given a 'Leave India' or 'Quit' notice.

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If you have visa issues, please make sure to inform the RA WCom at workingcom@auroville.services, to help them keep track of all ongoing visa issues.

“Auroville Community Updates” on Whatsapp

A new “Auroville Community Updates” Whatsapp broadcasting channel was [announced](#) this week as an initiative endorsed by the RA WCom. This group will be used to share massbulletin announcements, copies of the community edition of the News & Notes, updates from Auroville Media Liaison and more. To join this group please use [this link](#). Alternatively, you can also join the Massbulletin channel [on Telegram](#).

Media & Other Links

- **AV News Podcast 6:** The 6th episode of the AV News Podcast is available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [YouTube](#) and on [this page](#) of the Auroville Media website. A [Tamil version](#) of the episode is also available.
- Vote on [RoR Video](#)

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.

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