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## **Auroville Bulletin 77**

### **Emergency RAD, Supreme Court stay on NGT, Mass land clearance underway**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Friday, 22nd December 2023

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

## **Urgent actions needed**

- **Participate in the Emergency RAD:** Look for your personalised voting link in your email or vote in person at locations and timings listed below. The RAD will run until Sunday 24th of December. Please see below for more details.
- **Sign the Petition regarding the unauthorised actions by the AVFO 'FAMC':** Sign [this petition](#) to register your discontent with the unauthorised actions of the AVFO 'FAMC'. Please note that the number of signatures NOT the names will be shared to avoid any possible retaliatory actions from the AVFO. This petition is only open to Auroville residents
- **Assist with documenting tree-cutting and clearing:** In light of the recent Stay Order placed on the NGT verdict by the Supreme Court it is particularly important to continue with documentation of tree cutting and land clearing. If you are available and willing to help with documentation, please get in touch with [tdc@auroville.services](mailto:tdc@auroville.services).
- **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](mailto:bccoffice@auroville.services). If you wish to support the Farm or Forest Group as a whole, please contact us at [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@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 [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@gmail.com). Please see [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil :** For nearly 1.5 years 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 4:30-6:00 pm.

## Urgent Topics

### Termination Committee Emergency RAD

The RA WCom has called for an emergency Residents' Assembly Decision, asking the community to either confirm or reject the newly constituted Exit Review Group (Termination Committee). In [an announcement](#), they note that Entry and Exit is solely the responsibility of the Residents' Assembly as specified in the Foundation Act and outlined in the Admission and Termination Regulations gazetted in 2020.

After a 3-day feedback period, voting is now open. The nine following candidates who have been nominated by the RA WCom directly: Ashesh JOSHI, Auradha MARKUS, Buvanasundari SUDHARSEN, Ramesh Rao ACHANTA (Bunty), Dhandapani SELAKANNU, Ganesh KALIAPPAN, Rakhal VENET, Rakhee KANE, Tineke SMITS. You can find a profile of each of the candidates via [this link](#). Residents are now requested to approve or disapprove the constitution of the whole group. The RA WCom also sent out a massbulletin answering some Frequently Asked Questions, which you can find [here](#). Additionally, they released [a 3-minute video](#) to explain what the Termination Regulations are.

The RAD will run until Sunday 24th of December. In-person voting can be done at the following timings:

SATURDAY (Dec. 23rd) @ PTPS Aspiration: 10 am - 12 pm

SATURDAY (Dec. 23rd) @ Solar Kitchen: 3 pm - 5 pm

SUNDAY (Dec. 24th) @ Solar Kitchen: 11 am - 1 pm

**Please vote in the RAD either in person or online, with your personalised voting link. If you have not received a voting link in your email inbox, please reach out to [raservice@auroville.services](mailto:raservice@auroville.services).**

## EMERGENCY RESIDENTS' ASSEMBLY DECISION

### APPOINTMENT OF THE EXIT REVIEW GROUP

(aka Termination Committee)

#### CAN FEEDBACK STILL BE SUBMITTED?

The feedback period ended on the 10th of December. Since no feedback was received about any of the nominees, this RAD is to approve their appointments.

#### CAN INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES BE APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED?

The decision being asked from community members at this time is whether they approve or disapprove of the whole group of 9 residents that has been nominated.

#### WHY IS THIS GROUP IMPORTANT?

The Residents' Assembly has a legal requirement and a community responsibility to take in hand, as a collective body, the function of reviewing the status of residents of Auroville as and when needed.

#### WHY IS THIS GROUP BEING CONSTITUTED?

The primary reason for constituting this group is to ensure that the Residents' Assembly's statutory (legal) functions are fulfilled in a respectful and reasonable way and are not left unattended. The constitution of an Exit Review Group is not ill-willed against any specific resident and is not intended to escalate the current disharmony.

#### IS THERE A POLICY OR PROCEDURE TO GUIDE THE GROUP IN ITS WORK?

The Exit Review Group will function strictly within the framework of the Admission and Termination Regulations (2020). We will soon be sharing a brief overview of this document in video format so keep an eye out!



VOTE OPEN:  
**15 - 24**  
**DECEMBER**  
**2023**

**MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.AUROVILLE.MEDIA/RAD](http://WWW.AUROVILLE.MEDIA/RAD)**

## NGT Order Stayed by Supreme Court

On Wednesday 13th October, the order from the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which was appealed by the AVFO in the Supreme Court, was partially stayed by the same court. This stay will be in force until the final verdict, which is listed for January 2024. The stay effectively removes the protections granted by the NGT, which instructed the AVFO to seek Environmental Clearance and proper township planning *before* continuing the development of Auroville. The news was shared by the RA WCom via [a massbulletin](#) and by the AVFO 'WCom' through [an Auronet post](#). As outlined below, large scale tree cutting and land clearance has been taking place across Auroville both before and since the Supreme Court placed a partial stay. Areas where actions have recently taken place include Gaia, Anitya, Shambala & Buddha Garden, Revelation and Centrefield. As underlined by the RA WCom, the need for environmental impact assessments is embedded within the Master Plan: Perspective 2025 document itself, and the Residents' Assembly had voted to pause development on the Crown, Radials and Outer Ring Road, but this does not seem to stop in any way the AVFO from clearing the land.

## **Mass tree and land clearing across Auroville**

Both before and since the Supreme Court stayed the NGT verdict, land clearance including tree-cutting and transplantation is taking place across Auroville. Three mature [Kaya trees](#) and one large Neem tree that were previously integrated into the Crown Road were severely pruned and removed for transplantation this week, as well as one tree next to Kalabhumi. The Kaya trees that were incorporated on the Gaia stretch of the Crown were planted 43 years ago by members of the Gaia Community. These trees were purposely planted 8-10 meters apart in hopes that one day they would bring shade to the Crown Road area.

The trees were removed and taken to Auroville land near Kalvapraksha, where a number of [transplanted trees](#) taken from Darkali have also been replanted. Earlier this year, a total of 27 trees were taken from Darkali. From this group 5 trees are clearly dead, others show some signs of regrowth but their long term survival is still uncertain.

More tree cutting and land clearing recently took place at Shambala & Buddha Garden to make way for the VIP road, close to [Anitya](#) (Joy of Impermanence), in the [Youth Centre](#) and inside [Bliss Forest](#) on private land owned by Michael Bonke. Inside Revelation Sanctuary, fences were removed without warning by JCBs under the order of CPWD.

At Anitya, an area approximately the size of two football fields has been cleared. Although no information has formally been shared about the purpose of the clearing, residents at Anitya were told in person that it was for a large visitor car park. The car park and the VIP road are not elements of the Auroville Master Plan. Most of the above actions began prior to the Supreme Court placing a stay on the NGT verdict.

Since the stay, clearance has begun in earnest in other areas of Auroville. Beginning on Monday 18th December, JCBs accompanied police along with a group of Aurovilians who are allied with the AVFO to the [Centre Field area](#). They commenced clearing undergrowth and uprooting trees. In the following days, land was also cleared in the [Service Area](#) (near the post office).

The RA WCom sent out a [massbulletin](#) informing the community about the work and “request[ed] Aurovilians to remain calm and to avoid any confrontation or provocation, while peacefully documenting and reporting”. Those interested in helping with documentation can write to [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@gmail.com) and/or [tdc@auroville.services](mailto:tdc@auroville.services).

## **Matrimandir Neem Tree cut down**



The lone 50 year old Matrimandir Neem tree that had been protected by residents over the last few months as a living symbol, was cut down by the Matrimandir Executives on 21st December. Residents arrived on site and created a temporary earth memorial in remembrance of the tree.

## **Pebble Garden - Auroyali approval rescinded**

The AVFO 'ATDC' [approval](#) for Auroyali to take a piece of Pebble Garden land for their workshop [has been rescinded](#) by the AVFO 'ATDC' after the feedback period. The Auroyali project would have threatened Pebble Garden, one of the flagship ecological restoration projects of Auroville, [stewarded since 1994](#) by Deepika and Bernard. Thanks to all concerned residents who took the time to give their feedback!

NOTE: The situation at Pebble Garden is developing rapidly, an update will be included in the next Bulletin.

## **Other Updates and Information**

## “Realignment of work” by AVFO ‘working groups’

Two weeks after many Aurovilians were told that they would lose their maintenance starting from December 1st 2023, an [email](#) was sent by the AVFO ‘BCC’ to those affected Aurovilians outlining a new [policy](#) for stopping financial support as the AVFO ‘BCC’ and ‘FAMC’ deem necessary. In this policy, the AVFO ‘BCC’ and ‘FAMC’ state “If the affected persons come by themselves to seek another work opportunity and are ready to try a new work avenue, they will continue to be supported in the subsequent months in their new work assignment. Those who don't approach BCC/HRT after receiving the note of realignment will not be continued with maintenance after one month.” This effectively gives authority to the AVFO ‘BCC’ and ‘FAMC’ in regards to assigning individuals to Auroville workplaces.

## MM Lake Task Force

The RA WCom has endorsed the creation of a task force to review the design of the Matrimandir lake. In their [announcement](#) on 12th December 2023, they stated that “the review of the present design of the lake is being undertaken to prepare a revised concept as an offering to the community of Auroville”. The aim of the group is to formulate a proposal for the Lake addressing areas of concern such as the source of water to fill the lake, size of the lake, the movement and re-use of excavated earth. The task force will update the community via a regular bulletin and invite feedback from the community regarding the Matrimandir Lake design and implementation. The revised concept will be presented to the community on Auroville’s birthday, 28th February 2024.

## SAIER and Arts Service cuts

At the request of the AVFO 'FAMC' and 'BCC', SAIER have been "prioritiz[ing] the maintenance and budget 2024-25 of all SAIER sub-units" which has led to a number of artistic and cultural units and activities having their budgets and maintenances cut. Those affected have [been informed](#) that from April 2024 they will no longer receive any financial support from City Services and will instead need to find new sources of funding, such as seeking donations or charging for their services.

Some performance artists were told that their maintenances would be cut if they did not commit to performing at Bharat Nivas next year. The Bharat Nivas team recently underwent extensive changes and most of the Executive and operational teams, including Aurovilians who have been working there for many years, were either dismissed by the AVFO or resigned.

## **AuroOrchard Clarification & Errata**

In Bulletin 76, it was stated that around a quarter of AuroOrchard, 10 acres, was exchanged for plots in the city area of Auroville. This is not the case however, as only 7.5 acres were in the city area and 6.5 acres were in the greenbelt of the Masterplan area. The new landowner of the AuroOrchard plot has, additionally, retained 1.5 acres in the city area behind the elephant tank.

In the same edition there was also a short film about the AuroOrchard land exchange which included some footage of the Mother. The film received [criticism](#) from the AVFO 'WCom' as "attempt[ing] to mislead people" into believing that the Mother visited AuroOrchard. Aravinda from the Auro Orchard team [clarified](#) that "The Mother walking in the short video was not on AuroOrchard land and is not meant to convey that ... what it conveys is Her presence".

## **Media & Other Links**

- **AV News Podcast 9:** The 9th 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.
- **Are you curious to understand the Auroville Termination Regulations better?** A [3-minute video](#) made by the RA Working Committee to explain “how the first Exit Review Group of Auroville will operate, deciding on cases of persons who may no longer be Aurovilians”.

## 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 websites <https://auroville.media/> and <https://standforauroville.org/> contain 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](mailto: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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