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Auroville Bulletin 79

Privatization of Auroville's Health Sector, Results of Two RADs and Legal Update

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Wednesday, 7th February 2024

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

How can you help?

- **URGENT - Support for Maintenances:** The funds collected to support individuals cut off from their maintenances are quickly running out and more help is needed. 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 these groups via evolvingalaxy@gmail.com
- **Assist with documenting tree-cutting and clearing:** In light of the recent Stay Order placed on the NGT verdict 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.
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you can donate towards legal and delegation fees, please email 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, 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 4:30-6:00pm.
- **Share information confidentially with the RA WCom via email workingcom@auroville.services.** The RA WCom is collecting information regarding the various interactions with the AVFO and their appointees. This information is necessary in order to protect the RA and will remain strictly confidential.

What is happening now

Legal update & new cases admitted at the Madras High Court

On 23rd January, the Madras High Court [admitted](#) three new cases, two of which were filed by the RA WCom, and one of which was filed by an individual resident. These three cases challenge the recently gazetted AVFO Regulations about Admissions & Terminations, and about the Selection of the Working Committee (see below). As [reported](#) by the RA WCom on 2nd February, the matter was heard on 1st February, following which a second hearing is scheduled on 9th February.

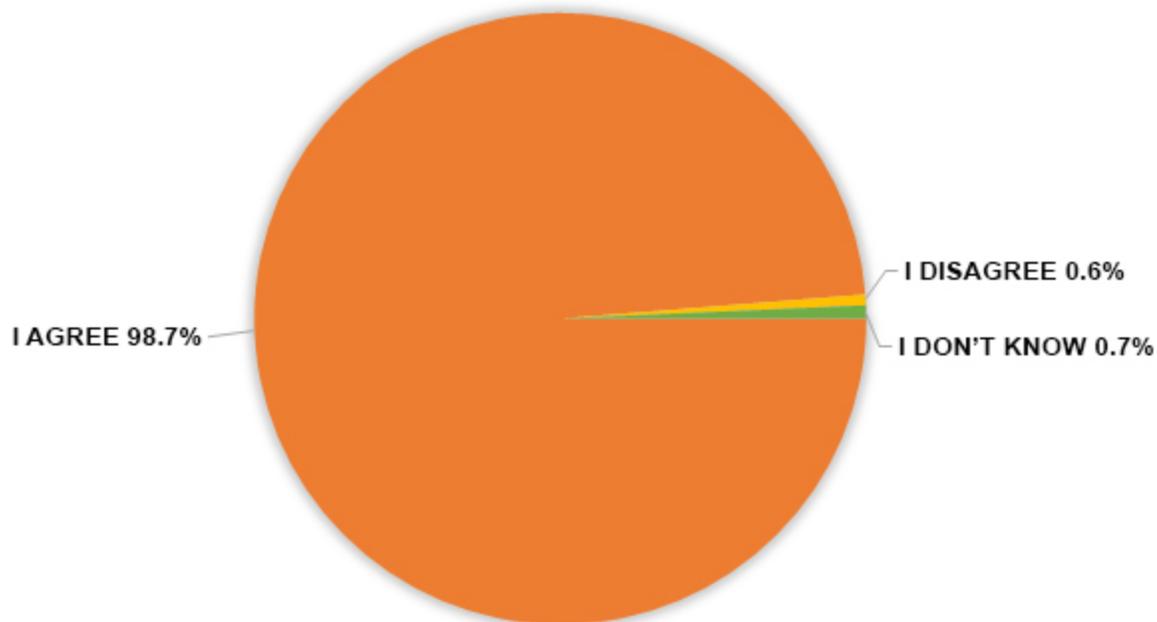
In an [Auronet posting](#) dated 24th January, a resident aligned with the AVFO addressed the members of the RA WCom, questioning and challenging these new cases. The RA WCom replied with [an open letter](#) on 26th January, to clarify some of their misleading statements. The RA Wcom emphasised that the cases were not against the Government because “Officers of the Auroville Foundation are not equated to the Government of India”. They stated that the purpose of the cases is to uphold a law voted by the Parliament of India. Among other points, the RA WCom also stated that they “are acting under the authority of the Residents' Assembly as the Working Committee selected by it, and ... have been striving to uphold its decisions and its functions”. The full letter is available [here](#).

In parallel, cases challenging the membership and legitimacy of the AVFO ‘TDC’ and AVFO ‘WCom’ were heard on 29th and 30th January. Follow-up hearings are scheduled on 8th February for the TDC case, and 22nd February for the WCom ‘quo warranto’ case. As for the Evergreen/Abri/Ami land grab by PKS, court-appointed surveyors visited the site recently and the next hearing is scheduled for 12th February.

Entry Service takeover and RAD results regarding AVFO Admission & Termination Regulations

On 4th January 2024, the AVFO published new [Admission and Termination Regulations](#) for Auroville in the Gazette of India. These regulations state that the Governing Board (GB) has the sole power to nominate a committee to decide who can become Aurovilian as well as the power to expel any Aurovilian from the community. These regulations are in direct contradiction to the Auroville Foundation Act, which states that admission and termination is a matter to be decided by the Residents Assembly (RA), see [here](#). In response, the RA WCom launched an Emergency RAD on 14th January stating that these new regulations are an overreach by the GB. The RA WCom also organised a General Meeting followed by questions at Kalabhumi on 18th January, attended by approximately 300 residents. Their [presentation](#) illustrated the key differences between the new Regulations and the previous ones, showing how the new Regulations contradict the Auroville Foundation Act and other relevant documents.

After a voting period of 7 days, the [results of this Emergency RAD](#) were published by the RAS on 23rd January. 710 residents participated in the emergency RAD with 98.7% (701 participants) voting in favour of the resolution.

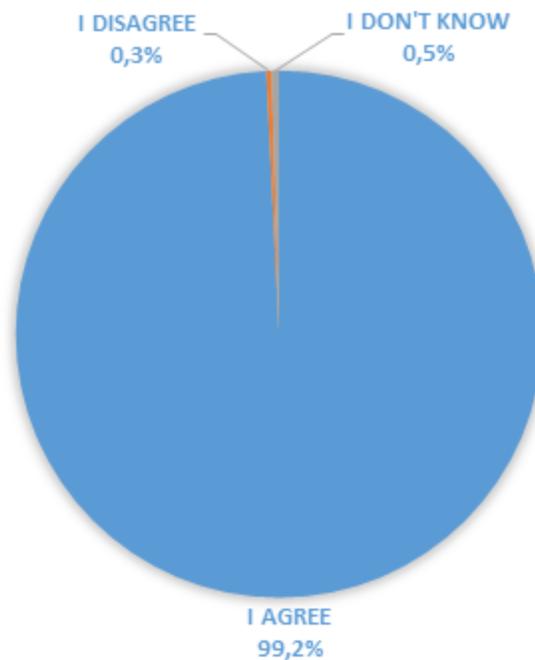


Despite the RAD Results, the Entry Service and Board received [a mail](#) from the AVFO 'FAMC' on 1st February at 9pm, ordering that "the Entry Board & Entry Service operations are to be stopped immediately." In an [Auronet post](#), the AVFO 'WCom' also mentioned that "Once the ATSC [Admission and Termination Scrutinising Committee] is formed, it will start scrutinizing the applications for Volunteer/ Newcomer/ Resident both for admission and also for termination."

RAD Results on the new AVFO Working Committee Regulations

Through a petition signed by over 300 residents, the community called for an Emergency RAD (E-RAD) on the new “[Auroville Foundation \(Framework for Selection of Working Committee\) Regulations](#)” gazetted by the AVFO on 12th January 2024 [see [Bulletin 78](#)]. This E-RAD challenged the new Regulations, affirming the role of the RA in appointing representatives for its Working Committee. You can read the RAD Resolution in [English](#), as well as in [Tamil](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Italian](#), [Korean](#) and [Russian](#).

After a voting period of 7 days, the [results of this Emergency RAD](#) were published by the RAS on 5th February. 647 residents participated in the emergency RAD with 99.2% (642 participants) voting in favour of the resolution.



Privatization of Auroville's Health Sector

On 30th January, the AVFO published on its website (and then in The Hindu) [a notice](#) inviting private hospitals to share their “expression of interest” in operating and managing “the hospital in Auroville”. The notice stated that a pre-selection would be made, after which the shortlisted hospitals would be required “to submit their technical and financial bid” to the AVFO. The proposal is “to set up a fully functional Allopathic clinic inside Auroville”. The plans mention expected clinic facilities with an exact number of doctors, workers, pharmacists, lab technicians, and watchmen. The notice adds that “Auroville will provide a building to run the hospital”, and that “the health facility will be set up in the existing building of Auroville and there will be no requirement for construction of any new building for this purpose”.

It is not mentioned which assets would be repurposed for the occasion, however sources indicate that some members of Sante and Arka have already been approached, and that Mahalakshmi Home and the Health Center could also be earmarked.

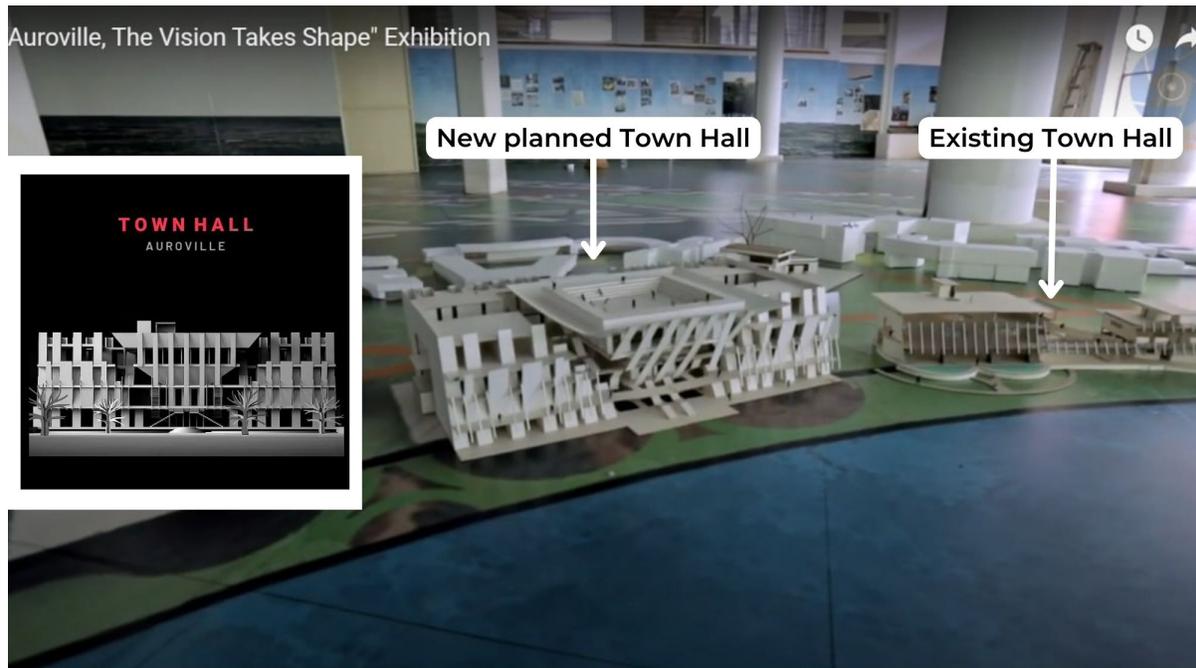
This move is the first of its kind in privatizing the health sector in Auroville and outsourcing activities related to the health of Aurovilians to a private clinic. It is also a move away from integrated health care as is currently offered to Aurovilians seeking a balance between allopathic medicine and holistic approaches.

Intense tree clearing continues for new Town Hall building, Outer Ring Road and other areas

Tree cutting in the Town Hall area



Tree clearing around the Town Hall parking lot took place last week, on 26th January, a national holiday. Many mature trees, including Neem and other endemic species, were felled in order to make way for a new and larger Town Hall. A [picture](#) and a [3D model](#) of the planned building were published by AVFO appointees, with our current Town Hall seen to the right of the 3D model. This new building is estimated to be more than triple the size of the existing Town Hall building. The RA was not informed or consulted prior to planning this new construction, and there is no clarity as to where its funding is coming from.



Tree cutting for the Outer Ring Road near Sharnga

On 2nd February, tree cutting started for the planned Outer Ring Road at the back of Sharnga on the Sukhavati side. As with other instances of recent tree clearing, there are no markings, no surveyors, and there were no warnings that the work would begin.

Tree cutting in other areas

Tree cutting has also continued in other areas of Auroville, such as in the Southern service node, in Bliss forest behind the Youth Centre, on the planned radials, and in the location of the planned 'Line of Goodwill'. Help with documenting tree cutting is still needed, and if you can participate, even occasionally, please reach out to tdc@aurville.services.

Auroville Safety & Security suspended by AVFO

In an ongoing move by the AVFO to suspend and takeover Auroville community-initiated services and administration, the AVFO have suspended the Auroville Safety and Security team (AVSST). On the 19th of January, 5 out of the 6 Aurovilian members of AVSST received a mail from the AVFO 'BCC' informing them that they will no longer receive maintenances for their work, based on their policy for "Realignment of Work for Aurovilians". In a [message](#) addressed to the community, the team stated that their emergency telephone number (9443090107) will no longer be available and have shared a list of [relevant emergency numbers](#). Aurovilians have no community emergency first responders or security service for the time being, meaning that any dispute needing intervention would require police presence, a contravention to the Mother's wishes for Auroville.

Other Updates and Information

39th GB Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

The [39th Meeting Minutes](#) of the GB's Finance Committee were recently made public. Although these minutes are not dated, their contents indicate that the meeting took place sometime between August and December 2023. These minutes include many elements that concern Auroville as a whole without consulting the residents. In item 39.06, an approval is included to take a loan of 132.1 crores (15.8 million USD) for housing development in Auroville, which would need to be refunded "by future residents of Auroville through their monthly maintenance scheme". There is no clarity as to the possible consequences of this loan if future residents are unable to repay it.

A compilation of extracts from these 39th FC Meeting Minutes, together with a summary of the key points and some additional observations, is available [here](#).

63rd, 64th and 65th GB Meeting Minutes

On 29th January, the RA WCom published via [massbulletin](#) the Minutes of the [63rd](#), [64th](#) and [65th](#) GB Meetings. These Minutes had been kept in secrecy for months. As noted by the RA WCom, "there are a number of topics and decisions made in these meetings that are deeply disturbing". One decision mentioned is the approval for the budget for a barbed-wire fencing "boundary wall" to be erected around the Auroville city center area, which would effectively cut it from the Greenbelt and neighbourhood. Additional observations on the 63rd, 64th and 65th Minutes will be shared shortly, and included in an upcoming issue of the Bulletin. In the meantime, the RA WCom has invited anyone who "would like to share their own thoughts and observations to do so by writing to workingcom@auroville.services". In doing so, you can also add evolvingalaxy@gmail.com in copy.

Miscellaneous news

- **Meetings called by AVFO and their appointees:** The AVFO ‘groups’ organised a meeting of their “community coordinators” on 26th January, for which they invited many individuals through emails and personal phone calls. It was attended by about 60 people. Reportedly, false information was given in this meeting, such as a claim that no maintenances had been cut - which is factually untrue as about 160 individuals have been affected by maintenance cuts.
Another meeting has also been called by the AVFO only for “ the Residents entered in the RoR” on three consecutive days, between 7th and 9th February.
- **RA WCom about Visas:** In a [massbulletin](#) on 1st February, the RA WCom reminded “all those who have had or are having difficulties getting a letter of recommendation for new visas or for extensions of existing visas” to contact them at workingcom@auroville.services.
- **Over 100 students from across India in Auroville for “week-long exposure tours”:** On 29th January, a [Press Release](#) posted by the Indian Government’s Press Information Bureau revealed that Auroville was hosting a one-week programme under *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*, an official educational curriculum of the Government of India. The Press Release mentioned that “the emphasis of the initiative [was] on exposing the youth to spirituality and Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy”. The same day, the news was relayed by [The Hindu](#). Residents of Auroville were not informed of this initiative and programme, nor invited to participate in it.
- **Ayodhya Sri Ram temple replica in Bharat Nivas:** On 5th February, Bharat Nivas team [announced](#) that a “miniature replica of the Sri Ram temple, Ayodhya which is made from pure silver” will be displayed at Kalakendra in the Bharat Nivas compound.
- **More closures at Visitors Centre:** On 20th January, the AVFO-appointed Visitors Center ‘executives’ closed two venues with a two-hour notice and dismissed their managers. You can read more in the [message](#) sent out by the Visitors Center cafeteria team.
- **Meeting of the AVFO ‘Farm Service’:** On 23rd January, the AVFO ‘Farm Service’ [called for](#) a meeting of all farm managers to discuss “desired changes in Management/ Procurement/Sales Procedure” of farms. The meeting was headed by Mr Balagandhi, a retired agricultural director from Pondicherry. Among other points, payments for Auroville food produce would soon be paid to the Auroville Foundation rather than to the farms and Auroville farms are now advised to grow produce that has a higher market rate in order to be profitable. The AVFO appointees also insisted that Auroville farms should not do experiments in farming because any information needed can be found on the internet. Following the meeting, the AVFO ‘Farm Service’ requested the farmers to send them detailed information on their farms, such as assets details, soil test reports, etc.

Media & Other Links

- **“Open letter to the community”**, a massbulletin published by the RA WCom on 6th February 2024.
- **Nouveau Monde**, 25th January 2024, [Mille français persécutés en Inde à Auroville, mais Macron s'en fout](#): A short video in French by Aurovilian and ex-journalist François Gautier, about Auroville and the current situation.
- **VoiceofPondicherry on YouTube**, 20th January 2024, [“More than 100 of trees deforested for the road development project, Auroville”](#) (video, 48 seconds)
- **The Destruction of Auroville (4) by Rod Hemsell**, 17th January 2024: A blog article about the new AVFO Regulations regarding the Selection of the Working Committee, and the ongoing takeover of Auroville by the Governing Board.
- **The Hindu**, 16th January 2024, [Auroville Foundation to form panel for selection of members for its working committee](#)

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
- 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. 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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