

Auroville Bulletin: a summary of what is happening in Auroville now

20th January 2022.

Dear Community Members,

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

We created this mailing list in response to several community members asking for a way to be updated regarding the ongoing situation. Your name has been added as someone who may be interested in these updates.

We understand how difficult it can be to stay updated on the existing platforms of Whatsapp/Telegram and AuroNet due to the high volume of posts and messages each day. For this reason we aim to summarise the latest news in a factual manner with a regular email, and link any relevant information that may be of interest. We'll also share the latest calls to action where your participation is required. We hope this will be helpful. If you do not want to be on the list, please unsubscribe by clicking the link at the bottom of this letter. If you know of someone who may wish to be added who has not received this first email, please let us know by replying to this email.

We are aware that this email is very long, but events are happening quite literally on a daily basis. All the information in here is important because these events affect all Aurovilians and people who truly love Auroville!

The most important action needed right now is to **vote in the RAD** (Residents Assembly Decision-making process) that is ongoing until Sunday 23rd January. If you have not already voted, **please do so**.

We attach a flyer with general information about the reasons why it is important to vote and the three ways you can vote. This flyer is available in three languages ([English](#), [French](#) and [Tamil](#)) and can be shared if you wish. [This announcement from the RAS](#) (Residents' Assembly Service) also provides more information on how to vote. Alternatively, you can search your email inbox for the email from the RAS which contains your personalised voting link. Please vote AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. If you have any problem voting, inform us immediately by replying to this email.

Regarding the circulating belief that the RA process is illegal because (as some have said on WhatsApp and other forums) the “RA has no authority to oppose directly the Governing Board's role of Master Plan implementation:” Several key points should be noted:

1. This RAD, like every other, is an expression of collective opinion. It is one of the principal methods by which the RA satisfies its legal duty (under section 19 of the Auroville Foundation Act 1988) to make recommendations to the Governing Board.
2. The 1988 Act places no restrictions on the RA in terms of how often it exercises its right to take decisions. It is entirely wrong to now suggest that the RA is prohibited from doing so two decades after it took a decision upon a similar (but not even identical) issue. In short, ***if the RA had the power to act in 1999, why should it not have the power to act now?***
3. The RAD which is concluding on 23rd January does NOT seek to oppose the GB’s “role of Master Plan implementation.” At no point does it deny the statutory role of the Governing Board in relation to activities concerning the master plan. It merely affirms the RA’s statutory right of consultation with, and right of recommendation to, the Governing Board. This in no way undermines the statutory role accorded to the Governing Board.

Recent events update:

- **Declaration letter:** Since Jan 7th, the Foundation Office has been asking for a new form to be signed, as a condition for receiving the letter of recommendation for a visa from them. Foreign Aurovilians renewing their visas, and Newcomers becoming Aurovillian have been asked to sign the form. [This form](#), (with a second version [here](#)) unlike the previous declaration form (which is approved by the former Governing Board and the Ministry of Human Resource Development), states that the Foundation office can take “any action necessary” if anyone hinders or obstructs the manifestation of the Master Plan. In introducing a new declaration form in this way, the office of the Secretariat to the Foundation is once again bypassing Auroville’s agreed internal and external processes, as well as creating a fear in foreign Aurovilians that they do not have a right to express their views about the development of Auroville. We hope you will join us in whole-heartedly condemning this divisive action (Please see at the end for a link to a relevant statement petition).
- **FRRO Visits:** The FRRO is following up on a complaint that was filed against over 30 Aurovilians who (they have been informed) were present at the protests at Bliss, Youth Centre and Darkali. They are visiting the persons listed. In fact, the FRRO has even visited some persons who were TOS and not present during the events in early December!
If summoned by the FRRO regarding this complaint, inform the Working Committee (workingcom@auroville.org.in - bcc evolvingalaxy@gmail.com) and Renu (9943465736, contact person at present) so that we can track this issue. Please do not be alarmed, remain calm and answer their questions politely, reiterate that it was a peaceful protest.

- **Statements to the RA & GB from Chali, Hemant & Sauro:** 3 members of the Working Committee placed a statement on Auronet regarding a 'serious breach of trust' by the other 4 members. Read the statement to the RA [here](#), also their statement to the GB [here](#).
- **Secretary meetings at Matrimandir gardens:** The Secretary of the Auroville Foundation has been calling meetings with selected Aurovilians and working groups at Matrimandir gardens. The Matrimandir area is a space for concentration and not the appropriate place to hold such meetings. We suggest writing to the Matrimandir executives (matrimandir@auroville.org.in) to kindly request them to keep it as a peaceful and silent area, free of these activities.
- **National Green Tribunal (NGT) update:** 17th January was the last official hearing. Now, there is one day left for further written submissions and then the arguments will be reviewed, after which the judgment will be officially made in the coming days. Until then, the status quo stay order continues. We are feeling that, depending on the verdict, action by the Auroville Town Development Council (ATDC) and the Foundation Office could well be taken immediately and with full force. We anticipate that continued peaceful protest may be necessary.
- **Update on ATDC's stand:** In their most [recent letter](#) on Auronet the ATDC reiterates their stance that they will not comply with any Residents Assembly Decision, and will only follow the NGT verdict. Auroville Council sent an [email response](#) to the statement from ATDC which was also published on Auronet.
- **RAD petitions:** More RAD petitions will follow in the next months, as outlined in the SAWCHU/Kalabhumi meeting (Dec 4th and 5th). Several more will be submitted, as the situation develops. The Residents' Assembly Decision-making process (RAD process) is our legal right, upheld as our community process and protected under the Auroville Foundation Act (1988). Links to all the RAD petitions and statements can be found below.

List of ongoing petitions for reference and links to sign:

RAD petitions:

- **"To stop all development work on the Crown until further notice from the RA":** this petition has been through a full RAD process and is now coming to its end, with the current voting period (which ends on Sunday 23rd of January). The proposal has been reworded and is now requesting for a pause "in order to enable the community to define a way forward for Auroville's development". Voting in this RAD takes about two minutes, is anonymous and perfectly legal (contrary to an information circulated by few individuals). Please participate if not already done!

- *“Vote of no confidence in / call for a new selection of the current Working Committee team, given their failure to ‘assist’ and ‘represent’ the Residents’ Assembly as stated in their mandate”*: this petition has received the needed number of signatures required and has been submitted to the RAS. We await that the RAS now takes action on it by organising the first RA Meeting on the topic. If you haven’t done so, you can always sign the RAD petition: <https://forms.gle/MxBKuMeNDS4gnp6D8>
- *“RAD on the Selection of ATDC”*: this petition has received the needed number of signatures required and has been submitted to the RAS. We await that the RAS now takes action on it by organising the first RA Meeting on the topic.
- *“Call for a RAD to direct the Secretariat of the Auroville Foundation to vacate the gag order on Auroville Outreach Media, with immediate effect”*: this petition has received the needed number of signatures required and has been submitted to the RAS. We await that the RAS now takes action on it by organising the first RA Meeting on the topic.

Collective statements:

- Statement on Peace in Auroville: <https://forms.gle/WRkXun3koJwbZ9FF6>
- Statement on media and press releases: <https://forms.gle/cx5QRBTy8SF4bm578>
- Support the RAS to continue their work: <https://forms.gle/P9t2RfhV8TdRdJuXA>
- Against the new Declaration form: <https://forms.gle/veaohWoBo6v5tXTx5>
- Change.org petition, “SOS from Auroville”:
https://www.change.org/p/prime-minister-of-india-sos-from-auroville-the-city-of-dawn-needs-your-help-urgently?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=d40343e0-5a75-11ec-9972-93dd67c73b4c

We are very happy to announce that this change.org petition has crossed over 51,000 signatures and is still increasing daily.

Writing actions to take:

- Voice your opinion by writing to the Auroville Council and Entry Board regarding the violence enacted by Aurovilians at Youth Center (emails: avcouncil@auroville.org.in, entryboard@auroville.org.in).
- Write to the Working Committee, kindly requesting them to find out more about the complaint that the RRO is acting on (email: workingcom@auroville.org.in).
- Write to the Matrimandir executives, alerting them that the Matrimandir gardens is not the appropriate venue for meetings and discussions with working groups and others (email: matrimandir@auroville.org.in).

A selection of recent news articles:

- *“Auroville and the Crown road project: Conflict in paradise”*, by Sarosh Bana, published on 18th January 2022 in National Herald India:

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/environment/auroville-and-the-crown-road-project-conflict-in-paradise>

- *“Bulldozers, violence and politics crack an Indian dream of utopia”*, by Hannah Ellis-Petersen, published on 16th January 2022 in The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/16/bulldozers-violence-and-politics-crack-an-indian-dream-of-utopia>
- *“Bulldozing a dream? Auroville’s importance as an experiment in alternative living”*, by Ashish Kothari, published on 9th January 2022 in the Wallstreet International magazine: <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/68234-bulldozing-a-dream>
- *“Why Auroville Needs to Be a Model of Exemplary Development Practice”*, by Lakshmi Venugopal and Tejaswini Mistri-Kapoor, published on 24th December 2021 in The Wire: <https://thewire.in/urban/debate-auroville-master-plan>

Other references:

- Dreamweaving - [links to video recordings of the sessions](#)
- [Recent letter](#) from the AVI Board (3rd letter)
- [IAC’s Statement](#) to the Governing Board

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.

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.