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Auroville Bulletin 13

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

15th of April, 2022

Recent Events update:

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED AT THE RA
MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 20th APRIL!**

2nd RA Meeting on the Working Committee: Following the RA Meeting that took place on the 4th of April (click [here](#) for the report of this meeting), the RAS has announced the second Residents' Assembly Meeting on the topic "*Vote of no confidence in/call for a new selection of the current Working Committee team...*". This 2nd RAM will be held at the Unity Pavilion on **Wednesday the 20th of April, 4 - 6pm**. It is important that we all gather as a community to

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Please also participate in the feedback process on the petitioners' proposal, which [has been announced](#) by the RAS and will run **until TOMORROW the 16th of April**. Giving your feedback takes about 5 minutes and it is important that as many community members as possible participate, especially given the attempt by certain sections of the community to discredit and undermine the Residents' Assembly. To give your feedback, [click here](#).

For more information, you can re-watch the video that was prepared by the petitioners' coordination team in view of the previous RA Meeting (available in [English](#), [Tamil](#) and [French](#)). You can also read the "Short overview on the concerns of the petitioners" (available in [English](#), [Tamil](#) and [French](#)) and the extensive background document (available in [English](#), [Tamil](#) and [French](#)).

59th Governing Board meeting:

59th Governing Board meeting: The 59th Governing Board meeting was held on 12th April. It did not include any joint meeting with the community, which is concerning since the new Governing Board has not met with the Residents' Assembly since November 2021, and hasn't heard the residents' concerns regarding the events that began in December 2021.

Nevertheless some working groups were invited to give presentations to the Governing Board. These presentations have been [posted on Auronet](#) by the Working Committee and can be found [here](#).

In addition to these presentations, the Working Committee also shared two documents addressed to the Governing Board: a series of ["Observations and questions regarding GB Minutes of 58th meeting"](#) as well as a [note on the current Visa situation](#). The latter stresses that Auroville is "facing a situation of grave concern regarding repeated discrepancies with the approved [visa] policy" and requests the GB to "do everything in its power to normalize the situation". We hope that this will help resolve the many pending visa cases.

Urgent statement to GB and IAC:

In light of the lack of interaction between the Residents' Assembly and the Governing Board, an urgent email outlining some of the most pressing concerns has been sent to all members of the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council. Among other important elements, the email advocates that "Aurovilians are eager to build the city, following the right

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RA Decision on a new Selection methodology:

The vote on a new selection methodology for working groups (AVC, Entry Board, FAMC, TDC, WCom) will run **until Sunday the 17th of April**. You can either vote using your personalised voting link, sent to you via email by the RAS, or vote in-person at Solar Kitchen on Sunday, April 17th, 11am - 2pm.

One of the key elements of [the new proposal](#) is the creation of a "Selection Group" which would be composed of 40 residents chosen randomly from the Master List, who would be introduced to the working groups' mandates and trained to recognize bias as in the Citizens Assembly process. Their role would then be to assess the candidates for every working group and select them through consensus. This is a major change from the Selection Process which is currently in place and uses voting as a selecting tool, which led to a tempering of ballot boxes and some lobbying in 2021. Another major change is that the ATDC would be included in the new selection methodology, while it was excluded from the previous one.

The upcoming Selection Process, which is scheduled for this summer, will take place either with the new selection methodology or with the previous one, depending on the outcome of this vote.

Graffiti at Town Hall:

In the past week, graffiti has appeared three times on the wall of Youthlink's office in town hall - the [first tagging](#) read 'Auroville has to become Independent Nation NOW!', and the [second](#) 'He did his part for freedom, Now its your turn - Earthly Alien'. Vikram Ram capitalised on the events via his Facebook page, making claims that the graffiti was evidence that Auroville's true agenda was to become 'like a Vatican in India, free of taxes and a free nation. It's the best kept secretive agenda so far, a Kashmir in the making'. The Aurnet moderation team [asked](#) that people refrain from making further posts on Aurnet regarding the graffiti.

The third tagging, shown [here](#), reads 'Truth Love Beauty' and appears very different in both style and message. It was therefore possibly done by a different person, although no evidence has emerged as of yet.

In response to Vikram Ram's recent postings and his fallacious claims on

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tract” from Auroville Files, run by Vikram Ram. They pointed out that over the past few years, Vikram Ram has made numerous false accusations, spread misinformation and slander against Auroville - “direct and deliberate falsehood” that is dangerous to the work and lives of so many who have dedicated themselves to Auroville. They expressed concern at Vikram Ram’s new role in Auroville, through the Foundation Office. Based on his past and present behaviour, they requested that the Secretary not permit him to continue deliberately spreading falsehoods.

ATDC & RAS Membership changes:

It was announced [here](#) by the Auroville Council that although Elaine resigned from the ATDC in December 2021, she has “withdrawn her resignation” from 1st April. The information was initially shared with the community by the FAMC, through a [notice](#) that Elaine had replaced Anbu as the ATDC representative for the Housing Board. The Auroville Council also [announced](#) that Verena has resigned as a member of the RAS, effective from May onwards.

Communication with Dr Karan Singh:

Community member Deepti recently wrote to Dr Karan Singh to send him a copy of the Bharat Nivas Journal. She took the opportunity to make a plea on behalf of the community regarding the current visa situation. You can read her mail and the reply from Dr Singh [here](#).

Important change regarding the funding for Sri Aurobindo’s 150 Anniversary National Celebrations:

There have been changes to the government grants for the 150 Year Birthday Celebration. Contrary to the established agreements between the Sri Aurobindo Centres in India, Auroville and both Ashrams (Pondy and Delhi), the Ministry of Culture appointed the Secretary of the AVFO as the new coordinator of the events. The previous coordinator (a senior ashramite) withdrew from the role due to her discomfort with the new procedure in funds distribution. A radical departure from the usual procedures for Ministry of Culture funds distribution has caused fear and concern. The Ashram was told that the funds would not be in the form of a simple grant as per usual but instead involve complex financial arrangements involving Bond schemes that

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this should be the case and why the Secretary would feel the need to consolidate financial power in this way. Nor is the legal authority clear for how she can act as an agent for government funding to other entirely and legally independent bodies such as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Declaration letter:

[The declaration letter](#) that has been mandatory to sign for the last few months by non-Indian nationals in order to request or renew an Auroville visa, is now also a requirement for Indian nationals who seek any formal paperwork such as proof of residence. The Working Committee previously [stated](#) that the letter was merely a 'pilot/draft' and was not mandatory. Please email the Working Committee (workingcom@auroville.org.in) to ask why this letter is still being used.

Other updates from Working Groups:

The Auroville Council [has invited](#) the community to a General Meeting “for an open and meaningful exchange” on Monday 18th April, at 4.30pm at the Unity Pavilion.

The FAMC has posted on Aurnet its [report for March 2022](#), in which it reaffirmed that it sees itself as “the FAMC of the Residents’ Assembly”. Some important elements of the FAMC report are:

- To the Secretary’s suggestion “that the FAMC be endorsed by the Governing Board”, the FAMC replied that it considers it “as not required”
- The Foundation Office (AVFO) wrote to the Housing Service that “there are plans to add a significant number of houses in the near future”
- On the Secretary’s office’s request, “the FAMC has provided general maintenance information to the AVFO. Furthermore, as requested, the FAMC has made details available for the Aurovilians who receive(d) a maintenance provided from GOI grants” but according to the report it has not provided such details for other maintenances
- Following “a delay at the office of the Auroville Foundation in the signing of authorisation letters for registration of new land purchases”, “a new process has since been worked out for approval by the AVFO where the Working Committee will give the Land Board the authorization, instead of the AVFO”. The approval of this new process is still awaited.

The RAS has posted on Aurnet its response to a recent email by Anu, Arun,

Action needed:

- **Participate in the RA Meeting on the Working Committee** which will be held at the Unity Pavilion on Wednesday the 20th of April, 4 - 6pm.
- **Give feedback on the proposal to dismiss Working Committee members** until Saturday the 16th of April by clicking [here](#).
- **Vote in the RAD on a new Selection Methodology for working groups** until Sunday the 17th of April. Please see above for more information.
- **Help needed to empower and revive the Residents Assembly:** The Auroville Council has called for community members to participate in a task force to increase the Residents' Assembly participation. Their plea can be viewed [here](#).

Changing the narrative:

There is an often repeated claim that 50 to 60 meetings were held prior to the actions in December suggesting that the community had been adequately informed and consulted regarding the intentions of the ATDC and the Foundation Office.

- These were not proper community meetings / processes but were held behind closed doors with selected individuals.
- There were no meeting minutes produced. No agendas were given and many meetings were held at short notice, sometimes even called an hour beforehand.
- Many people were refused meetings and not invited to meetings that concerned them. It was also common for questions to be ignored or people to be told that ATDC would 'get back to them', however this often did not happen.
- There was no conclusion to any of the meetings. The YC/Bliss stewards were frequently told that their proposal would be considered and ATDC would revert back to them. The situation was the same for the Darkali stewards, who also presented an alternative proposal which they were informed would be considered. However, months after handing in their

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proposal was rejected and that clearing would start the following week. The next day JCBs arrived unannounced.

- The ATDC and the Foundation Office have yet to give feedback on what elements of the alternative proposals have been considered and if any have been integrated into their planning processes.
- These actions can be called "token participation" - a common practice in large infrastructure development imposed on local people by an authority. It involves going through the motions of professing to listen to some of the views of the locals involved in order to avoid being seen as autocratic, whilst simultaneously having no intentions of incorporating any of the feedback and proposals received.

Update from the Bulletin team

Since the 12th issue of the Bulletin, many of the inconsistencies in the mailing list have been corrected. Those who were not receiving the Bulletin due to technical issues should now be receiving it. If you still experience any technical issue, please write to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. If you know of any others who share the aims and values expressed in the Bulletin who may like to receive it, they can also write to evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com mentioning their name and community.

For those who have had previous technical problems receiving the Bulletin, the list of all previous Bulletin issues is accessible here: <https://linktr.ee/evolvinggalaxy>

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:

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methods such as the Dreamweaving initiative

- Transparency and fairness in the organisation of Auroville
- Creating unity with our diverse voices

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 evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

Please also share your thoughts and suggestions by replying to this email.

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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