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Auroville Bulletin 24

FAMC and ATDC update, investigations of communication take over, grievance cell

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

21st June 2022

*Note: There are **important actions** to take at the end of each Bulletin, if you are reading on your phone you may need to click 'see more' to view the entire bulletin.*

Hot topics

Wrongful constitution of FAMC & ATDC further challenged

On 14th June, the AV Council and WCom released [a clarification](#) regarding the recent takeover and 'appointments' of FAMC and ATDC by the Office of the Secretary. This clarification states:

“The principles and spirit of Auroville’s purpose are endangered at present” by “a small segment of Aurovilians supported by the office of the new Secretary” who “are orchestrating a takeover of the RA to establish a reign of control and authority over working groups against the collaborative spirit and functioning of Auroville, altering the role the [Residents’ Assembly] has played since the Auroville Foundation Act came into effect”.

The AV Council and WCom further assert “that Auroville should be organized by its Aurovilians, those who have determined to spend their lives here”. More importantly, they provide “a detailed explanation of why the process followed by the office of the Secretary [in the recent appointments of FAMC and ATDC] lacks credibility”. The full post can be read [here](#).

In [another post](#), the AV Council and WCom also informed the community that “there are still 5 active members of the FAMC” who shall hold office until the current selection process is completed (three of whom will be ongoing members in the new team). They also clarify that the FAMC has a new email address - famc@auroville.services - since the old email has been taken over.

The Compat Forum taken over

The Compat Forum is a long-established email forum consisting mostly of early pioneers of Auroville and other well-wishers of Auroville currently living abroad. It was a forum created in 1996 and nurtured over many years and was crucial in keeping the spirit of Auroville alive for the wider Auroville family in a broader sense. Mauna was the Admin/Owner of the forum until it was recently taken over by Chandresh and Lieve on behalf of the AVFO. Not only was Mauna replaced as Admin but as of today, 21st June 2022, she has even been blocked from sending and receiving messages

Update on investigation into AV communication channels

In the last month, the Secretariat of the Auroville Foundation (AVFO) took administrative control of most of the Auroville communication channels (Auronet, Massbulletin, the Compat forum and Auroville email services), citing a “police complaint” based on claims of “anti-national & anti-government activities” in Auroville. To date, no information about this complaint has been released despite requests [from the Working Committee](#) (WCom) and [from the Funds and Assets Management Committee](#) (FAMC).

On 16th June, an [update](#) regarding the investigation was posted on Auronet by Sinduja Jagadeesh on behalf of the AVFO. The update showed a marked change in tone to [previous posts](#) on the subject, seeking to reassure users that their private emails and other online spaces were not unsafe and claiming that “an atmosphere of panic was being drummed up quite purposefully”. For instance, to the concern that “the Foundation Office (FO) and its staff were prying into people’s inboxes” the post claims that “nothing could be further from the truth”. However, the AVFO has not specified how they plan to investigate “anti-national & anti-government activities” without looking into people’s inboxes.

The AVFO’s reasoning for the takeover shifted from the original investigation of “anti-national activities”, to the takeover as an investigation into Sysop (the previous administrators of the auroville.org.in domain). Sysop is under question because they delayed handing over the admin rights when requested by the Undersecretary. Sysop awaited instructions from the WCom & FAMC who did not give the authorisation to hand over the rights due to the absence of an appropriate legal notice and copy of the police complaint. The AVFO subsequently took control by force.

Amongst other claims, the AVFO stated that the results of their preliminary audit had found that “the previous Sysop admins had been reading into mail headers of different user accounts for incoming or outgoing emails over the last months” - claiming that this was a breach of users’ privacy. An email header consists mostly of technical information, accompanied by basic content such as the email title/subject, who sent it and to whom). AVFO also acknowledged that email headers are often looked into by admins for troubleshooting purposes. Astonishingly, the AVFO’s original post had an annex which contained a list of email headers from emails sent to the Working Committee during the month of May 2022. The list showed the full email IDs of the email senders as well as the email subject lines. This list in itself, having been released in a semi-public domain, is a clear breach of the users’ privacy. Accusing Sysop of breaching users’ privacy for looking into email headers while troubleshooting, and then publishing on Auronet a list of email headers is misguided, if not absurd. Later, the annex was removed from the post “at the request of a user”.

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auroville.org.in servers to “obscure servers without prior authorization”. This “transfer operation” is part of a regular data backup service carried out by the Sysop team on a regular basis. It is done at the request of the various working groups and is covered by a budget released by the Budget Coordination Committee (BCC). The question of AVFO permission does not arise since AVFO accounts are not covered by this service. The Sysop team has further confirmed that no AVFO owned data has been transferred or deleted by them.

The AVFO update failed to mention the unprecedented move to censor Aurovilians on Auronet. Several users still have their access blocked or limited for unexplained reasons. It is also entirely unclear who the new Auronet administration and moderation team is since the previous team [resigned](#).

Important actions regarding AV communications:

- To continue receiving massbulletins, including communication from the Working Groups of the Residents’ Assembly, please update your alternative (non-AV) email address by completing [this form](#).
- If you wish to unsubscribe from the old massbulletin now under AVFO control, you can send an email (subject and text can be empty) to "massbulletinlist+unsubscribe@auroville.org.in". You will receive an immediate reply. Hit the reply button of that mail and click send. You should then receive a response to say that you have been unsubscribed.
- To continue receiving this Auroville Bulletin, please update the Evolving Galaxy bulletin team with your alternative (non-AV) email address by emailing evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. There is no need if you are already receiving the Bulletin on your non-Auroville email address.
- If your auroville.org.in email access or your Auronet access has been blocked, please email workingcom@auroville.services to inform the WCom.

Grievance Cell

On 16th June, the ex-WCom & self-appointed ‘interim members’ (ex-WCom) [announced](#) to the community that a ‘Grievance Cell’ was being created in order to respond to “several unofficial complaints from the silent majority of Auroville residents [that] indicate that they are unable to speak up in favour of the current movement to build the City as per the Master plan.” The creation of this Grievance Cell brings up a number of important questions and concerns. Ten pertinent questions regarding the

Other Updates and Information

AVFO allegedly offering Land Stewardship through a Housing Group member

On Monday 13th June, a member of the Housing Service sent a WhatsApp message to several community-linked groups. The message claimed that the “Auroville Foundation [is] ready to give Land stewardship for those who are capable of building their own house”. The message further claimed that “The Foundation” may also be able to help with infrastructure requests. If this message is genuinely reflective of the intentions of the AVFO, it would be another instance of disregarding established community processes.

The Housing Board subsequently [clarified](#) that this was not an “initiative related to the Housing Group” as a whole but rather one member acting in sole capacity. The Housing Board stated that an increase in housing options for Aurovillians is welcomed, but that all allocations must be done through “open and transparent community processes”.

AVFO plans to launch an Auroville TV Channel

The spokespersons for the AVFO (Joel van Lierde and Sindhuja Jagadeesh) who took over Outreach Media in January - February 2022 have now renamed it “Auroville Media Interface”. They [announced](#) in News & Notes #927 that an “Auroville TV Channel” would be launched soon, in collaboration with Jio platform. It is important that the information published about Auroville is accurate and offers balanced views, especially since the [OutreachMedia mandate \(2008\)](#) emphasizes that “the Mother has clearly said that there should be no promotional publicity relating to this unique experiment.” For example, in the past couple of weeks, several promotional videos including many erroneous statements were published on Youtube in different languages ([English](#), [Gujarati](#), [Hindi](#), [Telugu](#), [Kannada](#)).

Selection Process - Feedback on nominees ends soon!

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of the AV Council and WCOM, which jointly stated that “the RA will continue its process of selecting the Working Groups as per our internal policies and structure”. In its [VIBE newsletter #146](#), the Residents’ Assembly Service (RAS) shared that “the training session for the Selectors” was completed, and that residents can still send feedback on nominees **until noon** on Friday 24th June. To see the list of nominees and share your feedback with the Selectors, please [click here](#). The selection of nominees will take place this upcoming weekend (25th & 26th June), and the new composition of the AV Council, ATDC, Entry Board, FAMC and Working Committee should be known by the beginning of next week.

Police investigation at the Auroville Archives

On Thursday 26th May, members of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from Villupuram SP Office and two State officers from the Crime Investigation Department (CID) visited the Auroville Archives office. To read an account of the events on that day, refer to [this email](#) sent by the Archives team to the Working Committee.

Changing the narrative

Misrepresentation of the role of the RA

The narrative that the Residents’ Assembly (RA) only has an advisory role to play in the development of Auroville, and has little power compared to the Governing Board, demonstrates an incorrect interpretation of the Auroville Foundation Act (1988). For an explanation of the true role and power of the RA [click here](#).

Action needed

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Send feedback on nominees: To see the list of nominees for the Working Groups' Selection Process and share your feedback with the Selectors, please [click here](#). Deadline is Friday 24th June before noon.

- **Letter for international supporters of Auroville:** A letter is available for international well wishers and supporters to sign. Please share with your contacts outside of Auroville who may wish to be supportive during these challenging times. The letter is available [here](#).
- **Update your email with AV Council:** To continue receiving massbulletins including communication from the Working Groups of the Residents' Assembly, please update your alternative (non-AV) email address by completing [this form](#).
- **Unsubscribe from old massbulletin:** If you wish to unsubscribe from the old massbulletin now under AVFO control, you can send an email (subject and text can be empty) to "massbulletinlist+unsubscribe@auroville.org.in". You will receive an immediate reply. Hit the reply button of that mail and click send. You should then receive a response to say that you have been unsubscribed.
- **Update your email with Evolving Galaxy:** To continue receiving this Auroville Bulletin, please update the Evolving Galaxy bulletin team with your alternative (non-AV) email address by emailing evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. There is no need if you are already receiving the bulletin on your non-Auroville email address.
- **If you have been blocked from your mailbox or Aurovet:** If your auroville.org.in email access or your Aurovet access has been blocked, please email workingcom@auroville.services to inform the WCom.
- **Support for Working Groups:** It has been challenging work for community members working on behalf of the community, any show of support is most welcomed.
- **Call for translation:** If you have translation skills in Italian, Russian, Spanish or Korean, you can read [this announcement](#) by the RAS and contact them if you would like to assist them with translation.
- **Call for financial support:** If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

Media & Other Links

- National Geographic India, 15th June 2022, "[Educating Young Kids on Waste](#)" – a video interview with Ribhu Vohra
- [Media Release from the Working Committee](#), 16th June 2022
- The Indian Express, 16th June 2022, "[Tamil youngsters' group holds meeting in Auroville to discuss Residents Assembly](#)"
- The Hindu, 17th June 2022, "[Auroville treading uncharted terrain amid deadlock over city goal](#)" by Dinesh Varma
- The Hindu, 20th June 2022, "[Foundation taking over Auroville's self governance bodies](#)" (this counterbalances [another article](#) published in the same issue, which is in line with the AVFO's narrative)
- See [here](#) for a collection of photos from last week's Community gathering.

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

Please note that the website <https://standforaurovilleunity.com/> contains a great deal of information and a detailed timeline.

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social media, film editing etc. are welcome to write to evolvingalaxy@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.

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

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