

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

[View this email in your browser](#)



Auroville Bulletin 30

BCC Takeover, Town Hall violence & Legal update

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

August 1st 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.

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

Hot topics

AVFO takeover of the Auroville Budget Coordination Committee (BCC)

On 25th July, the Budget Coordination Committee (BCC) was given an [Office Order](#) (495) demanding that they “immediately stop all BCC disbursement of funds to all projects except maintenance with immediate effect”. AVFO accounts officer, B.S. Sathyanarayan, claimed that this step was necessary as BCC had not shared details regarding recipients of City Services Maintenances with them. BCC did not comply with this unusual request because they “were not comfortable providing such data to a body whose right to request it was not established, and whose intentions were not disclosed”. After a few days of uncertainty, BCC decided to release the requested information as the withholding of funds would have possible dire consequences, in particular for the hundreds of non-Aurovilian staff who are paid via these funds. They issued a [statement](#) explaining the situation.

One day after the BCC statement, on 29th July, the AVFO’s ‘FAMC’ released a [massmail](#) instructing the community to disregard the statement that BCC had issued, announcing that the “The Funds & Assets Management Committee along with Unity Fund and City Services are now managing the disbursement of all funds, including monthly maintenances and other project funds”. They added that they “would like to also reassure you that no funds are being withheld and will be routinely processed as usual.”

On the evening of 30th July, the AVFO’s ‘FAMC’ sent a second [massmail](#) announcing that they had formed a new ‘service’ called the Budget Coordination Service and that it would take over from the longstanding BCC. They claimed that this new “BCS” had been constituted via an Office Order and named 8 Aurovilians as the new members. However, it seems that at least 2 of these members had not been informed of their ‘position’ prior to the announcement. AVFO’s ‘FAMC’ stated that the move was necessary because they “felt the team [BCC] had been persistently stalling matters, and with a lack of sharing of information as had been requested from the team”. To date, no Office Order has been shown.

AVC Secretary physically assaulted by ACUR Executive

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

[email](#) demanding that the AV Council vacate their meeting room and desks with less than 24 hours notice. Community members have been holding a vigil to ensure that the room stays at the service of the Working Groups of the Residents' Assembly. The Entry Board, Housing Board, Auroville Council, and BCC continue to have their weekly meetings in this room thanks to these efforts.

On Thursday 28th of July, Sathiya, secretary to the Auroville Council, was holding the vigil with one BCC staff member waiting to start a meeting in the room. Lieve Claes came and tried to put a padlock on the Council room, but Sathiya put herself between Lieve and the door. Lieve tried to push Sathiya out of the way and they struggled at the door for several minutes. The distressing interaction was caught on camera by a passer-by, and [the videos](#) have been widely shared in the community. The video shows Lieve strongly pushing Sathiya, trying to close and padlock the door, with Sathiya resisting. The incident left Sathiya very shaken.

Lieve Claes has, meanwhile, offered a different version of events and claims that it was Sathiya who assaulted her. She shared the CCTV footage on [YouTube](#) and Auronet. This footage starts a little earlier and captures Sathiya preventing Lieve from putting the padlock by squeezing herself in between Lieve and the door. The CCTV footage does not contain any audio so it is not possible to fully ascertain what was the interaction between Sathiya & Lieve which occurred prior to the passer-by arriving.

Aurovilians say 'no' to ACUR management violence

A group of approximately 250 Aurovilians [came together in Town Hall](#) on the morning of 29th July 2022 to express disapproval of the use of violence in Town Hall premises. Residents came together on the ground floor for a moment of silence, after which they held hands in a circle just outside Town Hall. Some of the Aurovilians present also gathered in front of the Auroville Foundation Office to silently support a group of 12 Aurovilians who attempted to meet the Secretary to discuss the situation.

The previous day, 28th July, residents had gone to see the Secretary to report the incident but she was not in her office. After waiting for some time, they were told that they could only meet her at 10.30 AM the following day on 29th July. At the appointed time, they returned to the Foundation Office and were informed by the Security Officer that the Secretary would only meet a maximum of 5 people. 5 people were chosen and entered the conference room, however the Secretary's PA ordered them out again and said that only 2 people plus Sathiya could meet her. After choosing 2 people (Induja & Aravinda) the PA then said Aravinda could not be present in the meeting but any other two people could. The group asked for the reason for not allowing Aravinda to accompany Sathiya and requested to let the people whom she feels comfortable with accompany her. It became apparent that there was no

meeting the Secretary.

Auroville Archives Takeover, Continued

Former members of the Archives team have shared a [report](#) detailing their dismissal on Auronet. Doris, Kirsten and Isabelle had continued to work for the Archives even after the [Office Order](#) dated 21st June had dismissed most of long standing Archive executives and replaced them with Muriel & Varun. The report details claims that the AVFO appointed Archives management team have made the Archives non-functional, stating that “It seems clear that the changes made have nothing to do with the actual work, and instead are part of a political game, a worldview superimposed onto us in which Aurovilians are sorted into 'loyal' or 'disloyal' to an authoritarian force acting through people here today”.

The report gives details of a shocking incident that occurred immediately before the dismissal of the team, in which Varun shouted at the team members for allowing Gilles (former Archives executive) to sit at a computer and also subjected Gilles to verbal abuse. It is not clear how Varun has been appointed as an executive, as he currently has no Auroville status due to his Friend of Auroville status having lapsed.

Legal update

NGT Update

An application was filed by Navroz and Sandeep before the NGT stating that the Foundation has continued to cut trees in the Bliss forest area and hence is violating the directions of the Tribunal. At the [hearing on 27th July 2022](#), the Foundation denied having done so, stating that “they are only taking steps to remove the unauthorized occupants, which has been permitted by this Tribunal in accordance with law.” This statement has been recorded by the Court.

The Joint Committee appointed by the Tribunal was directed to file a report on this and the Foundation was directed to file its Reply to the application by August 10th, after which the matter will be taken up again.

WCom, Outreach Media & ATDC Cases

All final submissions for the court cases regarding Office Order 491 constituting the ATDC, Outreach Media, and Working Committee were handed in on Wednesday, 20th July. The community now awaits the verdict on all three cases. There is no timeline for the verdict.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

On 17th May 2022, FIRs were registered against Hemant, Sauro, Renu, Michel (Wazo), Suryan and Chali. The complainant was Mr Srinivasmurty, the Under Secretary of the Auroville Foundation (AVF). He was acting with the approval of an unidentified 'Competent Authority' of the AVF, presumably Dr Jayanti Ravi. It was a wide ranging FIR citing six provisions of the Indian Penal Code and a further three from the Information Technology Act 2000, all relating in an unspecified way to actions said to hinder the operation of the Working Committee endorsed by the Secretariat.

A petition was filed in the Madras High Court to have the FIR and complaint by Mr Srinnivasmurty declared invalid (quashed being the legal term). If successful, it would mean that the FIR would be disposed of in favour of the petitioners and no trial would be necessary.

On 29th July, the application to quash the FIR was heard at Madras High Court. The petitioners were represented by Mr PV Balasubramaniam. Mr Vaibhav Venkatesh appeared for Mr Srinivasmurty (who was effectively making the complaint by filing the FIR). It was argued before the court that the complainant was effectively seeking to treat a civil dispute in a criminal manner and that no criminal offence was made out in the complaint, as cited in the FIR. The Court provisionally agreed and asked for further information in the form of the case file and sought from the Government Pleader an explanation of how all the elements of the cited offences were made out within it. Matters were not concluded. The hearing was relisted for 29th August. Until then, all the petitioners remain on anticipatory bail (a preventative measure that stops coercive steps being attempted to undermine their liberty before that date).

FAMC Court case

As [mentioned](#) in the WCom of the RA report dated 20.07.22, a case has been filed challenging the appointments made by the Secretary to the AVFO's 'FAMC', as there is a lack of clarity on whether the FAMC is a Committee of the Governing Board, or of the Residents Assembly under the Auroville Foundation Act (1988) and its Rules and Regulations (1997).

The first hearing is scheduled for the 12th August.

Other Updates and Information

On 30th July a community '[Meet & Greet](#)' for the Working Groups of the Residents' Assembly was held at Unity Pavilion. The WCom, TDC, FAMC & Entry Board (EB) were present and met residents in small groups. This format successfully facilitated deep, open discussions between the group members and the residents. Approximately 250 residents attended the meeting.

AVFO's 'Working Groups' meeting summary

The AVFO's 'Working Groups' held a meeting on 26th July, attended by a selected group of invitees who support them. The [video](#) released afterwards showed that it was [sparsely attended](#) with approximately 50 people present. During the meeting, a misinterpretation was repeated about the nature of the Foundation Act and the balance of powers between the RA and the GB. For example, in her speech, Anu modified the text of the Act to support her belief that the RA is legally powerless.

AVFO working groups shared information regarding the various projects which have been announced recently, such as the '1000 beds for 1000 volunteers' and a housing project for 1000 people. AVFO 'ATDC' members shared that they have not yet completed the DDPs. When asked about the Dreamweaving collaboration & the input from the Vastu Shilpa Consulting (VSC) they claimed that they did not need them because a lot of the work can be done in-house, however they claimed that VSC continues to be part of the "review panel". The claim is not supported by the Vastu Shilpa Consulting team.

See [here](#) for detailed information about the role of the Residents' Assembly, previously included in Bulletin 24.

Action needed

- **Come hold vigil at Town Hall:** After the events of this week it is even more important that the vigil continues! Please help make sure that the Auroville Council room remains available for the Working Groups of the Residents' Assembly. There needs to be at least 3 people present continuously. Email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com to sign up.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

@auroville.org.in administrators have blocked the bulletin from reaching Aurovilian inboxes.

- **Call for financial support:** If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

Media & Other Links

- [Auroville is Having a Crown Headache](#) : Article on Al Jazeera
- [La ville indienne utopique d'Auroville se heurte aux réalités politiques](#) Tout Un Monde- podcast (Swiss national radio, in French)

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.

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing,

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

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/evolvinggalaxy>

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

Grow your business with  mailchimp