View this email in your browser

Auroville Bulletin 33

Emergency RAD until 22nd August, Legal Implications of High Court Ruling and Land Issues

_____

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

August 18th 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 <u>here</u> .

Hot topics

Emergency RAD to reject all Orders from the Secretariat

Following a pulse by those in attendance at the emergency General Meeting held on 13th August, the Working Committee of the RA is calling for an emergency decision of the Residents' Assembly:

"We, members of the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation, agree to pass a resolution that states that we, as one of the authorities of the Auroville Foundation as affirmed by the honorable Madras High Court, confirm that orders (Office Orders, Standing Orders and any other form of orders) from the Office of the Secretary and her appointees are not the result of a collaborative work with the RA, and have been issued without consultation with or approval by the Residents' Assembly, and affirm our support for the groups and appointees by the RA.""

You can read the full text of the resolution (to be agreed upon) [here](#).

As this is an Emergency RAD, you will have **ONLY 5 days** to vote from the date of this [announcement](#) (18th August 2022). The voting will close **at midnight on Monday 22nd August**. A General Meeting will be organised on Monday 22nd in the afternoon. To ensure that all residents can attend this very important meeting, all workplaces are requested to close at 3 pm on that day.

You can vote online through the personalized voting link sent to you by the RAS (if you haven't received your voting link, please write to raservice@auroville.services). Printed ballot forms are also being distributed widely and can be submitted to the RAS at their office, Thursday 18th, Friday 19th or Saturday 20th, between 10 am and 12 noon. An in-person voting event will also take place on Monday 22nd August in the afternoon.

As this is an Emergency RAD, you will have **ONLY 5 days** to vote from the date of this [announcement](#) (18th August 2022). The voting will close **at midnight on Monday 22nd August**. A General Meeting will be organised on Monday 22nd in the afternoon. To ensure that all residents can attend this very important meeting, all workplaces are requested to close at 3 pm on that day.

you haven't received your voting link, please write to raservice@auroville.services).
Printed ballot forms are also being distributed widely and can be submitted to the
RAS at their office, Thursday 18th, Friday 19th or Saturday 20th, between 10 am and
12 noon. An in-person voting event will also take place on Monday 22nd August in
the afternoon.

Legal implications of the recent judgment

The recent judgment in the cases of the Wcom, ATDC, and Outreach Media at the
Madras High Court has far-reaching implications for how the community can move
forward. There is now in circulation a short overview of these implications, explaining
key parts of the judgment in non-legal terms. Highlights include:

- The RAD of 10th May is valid: Aurovilians who were confirmed by the
  Residents' Assembly to serve in the Working Committee on that date are the
  lawful Working Committee. These members are: Aravinda, Bharathy, Chali,
  Hemant, Maël, Sauro, Valli
- The attempt by the GB, through an Office Order signed by the Under Secretary,
  to unilaterally reconstitute the ATDC was rejected. Instead, the learned judge
  noted that "The reconstitution of members for the Auroville Town Development
  Council under the Office Order dated 15.07.2021 definitely requires the consent
  of the Residents' Assembly…"
- The RoR update is to be done, and no policy decision can be taken by any of
  the three authorities of the Auroville Foundation until this work is complete
  "after giving wide publicity".
- The GB's argument that it was "the Supreme authority under the Auroville
  Foundation Act, 1988" was rejected. [...] "The relationship between the three
  authorities is of mutuality" said the learned judge.
- Auroville Trusts are non-governmental organisations.

You can find the full overview here.

Town Hall locked

Directly following the results of the court case on 12th August, the doors to the
Working Committee offices were locked. On the morning of 16th August when people
were returning to work after the holiday, they discovered that all doors to the Town
Hall except for the front doors were locked and chained. Mr Mathi, the AVFO's
'Vigilance Officer' was sitting by the front doors observing who was entering and
leaving the building. After a few hours the doors were unchained and unlocked. When
the management were asked why these actions were felt necessary, no clarification

The Working Committee of the RA released a statement via massbulletin asking the community to "meet this [provocation] with perfect equanimity. Our answer should be a calm distance from the conflict zone. At the Working Committee we are taking necessary next steps and will keep you informed."

The illegitimate 'ATDC' indicated in their Auronet announcement on 16th August that the AVFO likely intends to ignore the decisions of the Madras High Court and will appeal. In order to support AVFO's narrative that Aurovilians are 'problematic' and 'blocking development', there may be attempts to portray interactions with community members in that light. In their statement the Wcom requests the community to ignore any provocations.
If interactions occur, please try to make sure that you are not alone and that everything is calmly documented by video.

Land issues

Issues of land encroachment continue in several places without communication or intervention from the Foundation Office to support the affected residents. For any land encroachment issues, make sure to alert the Auroville Foundation Office and the Land Board, as the Land Officer (the Secretary) has the final responsibility to protect the lands of Auroville.

Concurrently, there is no clarity about the Secretary's plans for land sale and/or exchange, creating uncertainty. Pebble Garden, the well known permaculture project of Deepika and Bernard next to Aurobrindhavan, received some unidentified visitors on the 14th of August 'to see the land'. They were accompanied by the Secretary's personal assistant. The reason for their visit remains unknown.

To help us get a clearer overview of the current situation, please write to tdc@auroville.services and evolvingalaxy@gmail.com with any information you might have regarding the following cases:

- Land grab/encroachment that is not being properly followed up on by the Land Estate Officer (Secretary).

- Unidentified individuals coming to the house or land that you steward.

Other Updates and Information

Second report on Crown Road work by Satprem of the Auroville Earth Institute

Last week Satprem Maïni of the Auroville Earth Institute wrote a technical evaluation of the quality of the work done on the Crown Road. He has now written a follow-up report which points out more issues with the sublayer, pavers, materials and techniques used to implement the road.

In his accompanying email to the Secretary, GB, and IAC, he reiterates his final conclusion: "[...] you should immediately stop this road, get a proper study and survey done, remove what has been badly done and resume the construction of the road once this study has been completed. We cannot go on wasting public funds from the Government of India." You can find the follow-up report here. Since Satprem's first report was published, some of the area which had been laid on the Bliss-Horizon road has been pulled up to be relaid. Additionally, a sign has been placed in the area of the roadworks stating that "photography [is] prohibited in this area".

Errata: Please note that last week, it was mentioned that for the full initial report you could reach out to the Auroville Earth Institute directly. Due to the current problems with auroville.org.in emails, please contact Satprem on his gmail account instead: satpremaini.auroville@gmail.com

Stewards not informed about 'calisthenics' area in Mahalakshmi park

On 15th August in Mahalakshmi park, a new project was inaugurated by the Secretary. It consists of a 'calisthenics' area with outdoor sports equipment. While such a project could be considered worthwhile for the Auroville community, it was implemented without informing the steward of the land at any stage.

The entire Mahalakshmi park area has been previously planned and mapped with TDC approval, including a phase-wise development plan of the park with different spaces and activities. With the implementation of the calisthenics area, the previously approved plan was completely ignored. Additionally, part of the equipment consists of a large advertisement for a Chennai-based company. When the steward arrived on site to inquire why he had not been consulted, he was accused by Jaya (member of the illegitimate 'ATDC') of 'ownership' and his queries remained ignored.

Kalabhumi meeting update

On 13th August the main Working Groups called an emergency [General Meeting](#) at Kalabhumi. Approximately 500 residents were in attendance. Speakers representing the WCom, TDC & FAMC plus the AV Council informed the community of the actions that have been carried out by the AVFO and their 'Working Groups' since the Secretary came into office in July 2021. They also shared recent actions that many in the community are unaware of, such as the attempted takeover of Afsanah Guest House (an Aurovilian entity which has never received any GOI funding) by the AVFO. The implications of the Court ruling were also outlined.

The Working Committee outlined their proposal for an emergency RAD to 'reject all of the Office Orders that have been issued by the Office of the Secretary' - this proposal was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the residents in attendance. The proposal has now been formulated into a resolution and can be viewed [here.](#) The said resolution is currently open for a vote of the Residents' Assembly.
Please see [here](#) for photos of the meeting.

Community Gathering for 15th August - Thank You!

On the 15th August, residents of Auroville held a ["Light Mandala & Sacred Fire Offering"](#) at the Inuksuk behind Tibetan Pavilion, as an expression of gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and Mother India with the collective aspiration to embody the Spirit of Auroville. Attended by approximately 1000 people (Aurovillians, Newcomers, Volunteers, Guests, Children and our local neighbours), the evening comprised of

around a [sacred fire](#) and an oil-lamp mandala of Sri Aurobindo's symbol.

The event came together spontaneously with community members working together and offering their time, amenities, expertise and finances. Residents of Auroville marked this auspicious day holding the diversity of our individual prayers in harmony and unity.

A special note of heartfelt gratitude to all who helped make this event possible and everyone who attended.

Action needed

- **Vote in the Emergency RAD:** Please participate in the ongoing decision of the Residents' Assembly. You can vote online through the personalized voting link sent to you by the RAS, or in person. Follow the instructions at the beginning of this newsletter.

- **Do not respond to provocations:** Calmly document any situation, preferably by video, and contact the Working Committee with the information (workingcom@auroville.services)

- **Land issues:** Please let us know if any brokers or other unidentified people come to Auroville land that you steward, and notify us of any encroachment/ land grab issues not dealt with correctly by the AVFO Land Officer.

- **Call for financial support**: Legal cases are and will continue. If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com.

Media & Other Links

- **The Hindu:** Auroville residents welcome High Court ruling

- **Mint Lounge:** Can Auroville become a model for cities of the future?

- **Tamil Samayam:** Cancellation of the order issued by Auroville Foundation

- **Totamil:** High Court upset by the infighting among the people involved in the Auroville Trust (Tamil only)

- **Galatta Voice:** Video interviews with Aravinda and with Kali (Tamil only)

- **Deutsche Welle:** A Auroville, la fin ou l'accomplissement d'une utopie ? (podcast in French only)

- **The Hindu:** HC disheartened over infighting among people involved in Auroville Foundation

- **Aandolan.medium:** Auroville is the future India needs

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,

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

---