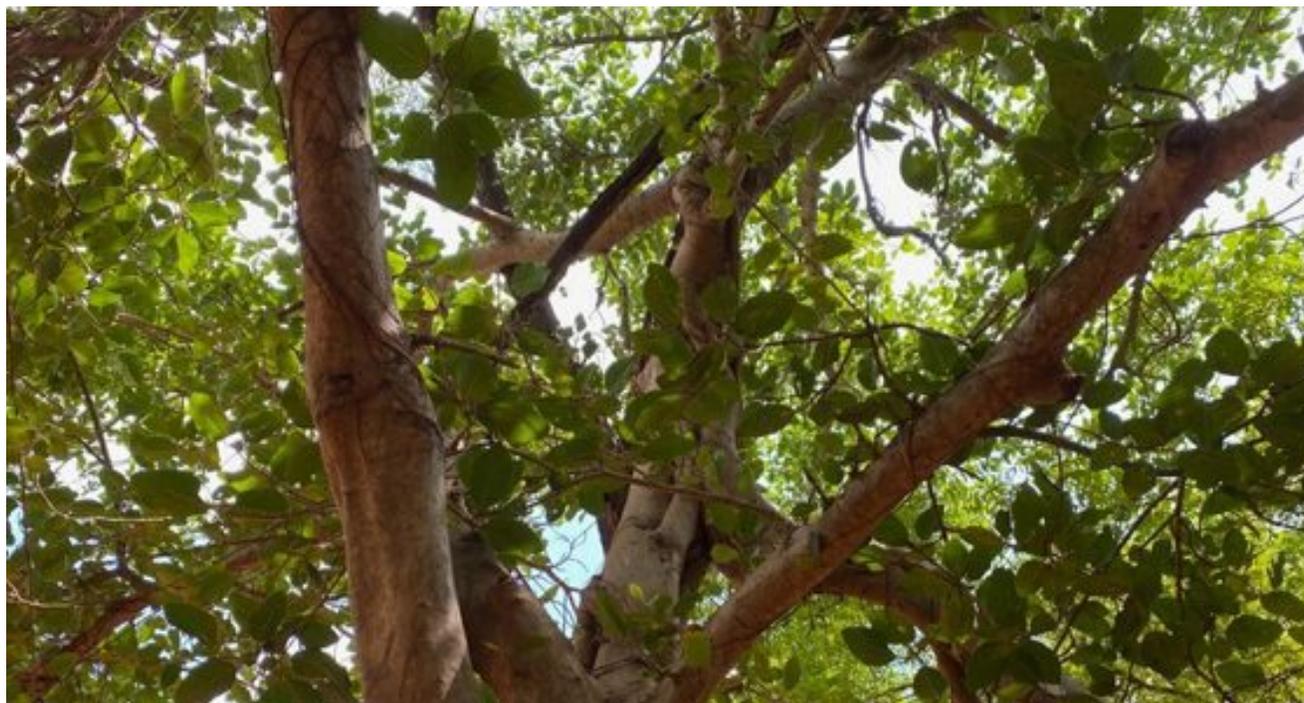


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Auroville Bulletin 37

Abri Land Encroachment, Legal Update & Housing Group Takeover

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

September 8th, 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.

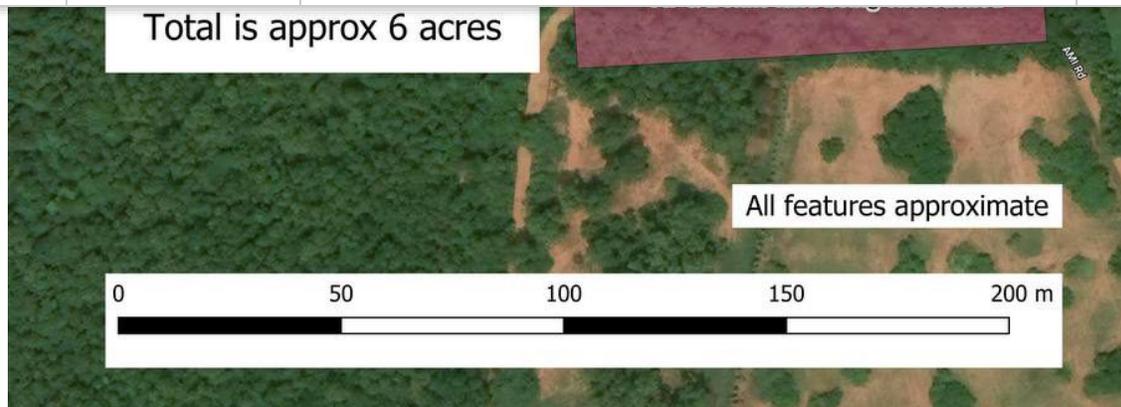
Please find a glossary of acronyms and terms used in this bulletin [here](#).

Hot topics

Land Encroachment Abri/Ami/Evergreen

The land encroachment issue at the Abri/Ami corner continues. Mr. PKS, who claims to be the 'owner' of the triangle that marks the split between the road to Ami and Abri, is putting up a brick wall to completely separate the area from the access road. It has also become clear that Mr. PKS intends to claim much more land than what was previously understood by residents. The following map shows the contested land area and the effect that this potential land grab would have on the main entrance to Auroville. The land being encroached is inside the Master Plan.



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On Monday, 6th September, Mr. PKS sent workers to fence off the area inside Evergreen Forest. A few Aurovilians came and stopped the work. However, as Mr. PKS had several people with him, and the interaction became heated [[pictures here](#)]. More Aurovilians arrived & the police intervened to diffuse the situation. It was agreed that for now, the community will not contest the building of the wall on Ami corner, but will seek to stop the encroaching into Evergreen and Michael Bonke land.

Since this latest interaction between Aurovilians and the encroachers, an [entry](#) into the Community Service Register (CSR) of Auroville Police station has been made by "Sridhar" against a small group of the Aurovilians who were present. Entries such as these are made for non-cognisable (i.e. less serious) offences. Non-cognisable offences include misbehavior, public nuisance, hurt and mischief, while cognisable offences are more serious crimes. For a CSR, an investigation cannot be initiated without prior permission of a magistrate, but the CSR receipt is used as a proof of filing a complaint in the police station and also for claiming insurance settlements.

The Land Board has requested the Deputy Superintendent of Police to direct Mr. PKS to stop any development for one week, until 16th September 2022. In the meantime, the Land Board is attempting to get a stay order on development and a proper survey done for the contested area. The AVFO & their 'Working Committee' does not appear to be intervening on Auroville's behalf at the moment, [despite their recent statement on the issue](#).

The WCom of the RA has been consistently present on site and issued [a mass bulletin](#) asking the community to be on the alert and ready to gather peacefully when encroachment occurs, stating that "Regardless of your background, age, or stand in the current conflict, this is a call for an action of unity and solidarity to protect the very base of the Dream - Auroville land."

To stay updated about where silent presence is needed, please join the SOS Telegram group: <https://t.me/+uRLmmaJBpxM4Nj1>

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Upcoming legal dates

08.09.2022 — Madras High Court hearing on the FAMC case

09.09.2022 — Hearing of AVFO appeal of the Madras High Court judgment of 12th August

15.09.2022 — National Green Tribunal hearing with regard to the Joint Committee report

16.09.2022 — Hearing on the FIRs on six Aurovilians

19.09.2022 — Madras High Court hearing on the ATDC, in front of a new judge

20.10.2022 — Supreme Court appeal regarding National Green Tribunal Ruling

Update on Appeal - National Green Tribunal Ruling of 28 April 2022 to the Supreme Court

The AVFO has appealed [the NGT Ruling of 28th April](#). The matter is now with the Supreme Court. During the hearing on Monday, the 5th of September, the AVFO claimed that the respondents (Navroz and Sandeep) cut trees to build their own houses and are large landowners owning land on the project area (i.e crown, ring and radials). Because of this, they said, the intent of the case was 'mischievous' from the outset.

The AVFO also claimed that the NGT had no jurisdiction over Auroville and that the Master Plan should be exempted from environmental laws, as the same plan has been followed since 1968 and at that time, environmental laws did not exist. The lawyers for the respondents clarified that the Master Plan was gazetted and came into effect only in 2010 and therefore, all environmental laws apply.

As you may remember, the NGT Ruling contained 3 Directives. For a short overview of the NGT ruling and its directives, [please see here](#). For the moment, respondents Navroz & Sandeep were told to make reply and arguments within 2 weeks, only on Direction 1. The order from the Court can be [found here](#).

Direction Number 1 of NGT Judgement states "(i) The 1st Respondent is directed to prepare a proper township plan either in respect of 778 Ha which is in their possession now or in respect of 1963 Ha which was visualized by the MOTHER by identifying the locations where each zone will have to be located, where the roads will have to be laid showing the location of the ring roads with their width and further

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one phase, how many phases in which they are going to complete the project and then apply for Environmental Clearance (EC) as it will fall under Item 8 (b) of the EIA Notification, 2006 as amended from time to time. Till then they are directed not to proceed with further construction in the project area."

This direction is the one that will be discussed at the next hearing. Every other aspect of the appeal on the judgment is not going to be looked at, for now.

The Court stated that it is not convinced on any other aspect of the claims made by the AVFO. Therefore, it did not grant any interim reliefs (stay order), as it would frustrate the entire exercise created by the NGT. It would also impact the current stay on cutting down any trees or clearing forests. The Court noted that the NGT, in its wisdom, has made an appropriate judgement and there is no need to issue a stay order at this moment.

Therefore, for the present, NGT judgement holds as law. The next hearing is posted for 20th October 2022.

Housing Group takeover update

On 31st August the AVFO's 'FAMC' sent [an email](#) to both Housing Board & Housing Service stating that they had 'reconstituted' the Housing Group and that there would be a new team working immediately. The Housing Board replied the same day, asking to see the mentioned Office Order, and explaining that they did not understand the grounds for such an action, seeking clarification. The interaction was [posted](#) on Auronet by one of the Housing Board members.

The following day, 1st September, a group of Aurovilians came to Town Hall to be present in the Housing Service & BCC office. They remained in place all day to ensure that the RA BCC & Housing teams could continue to do their work unhindered.

On 2nd September, staff members arriving at work found the doors to the Housing & BCC office locked. The Town Hall management team, Lieve and Venkatesh, were asked to open the doors but they refused. Once again, a group of Aurovilians joined the Housing Service & BCC members outside of the office space. An [Office Order](#) was then placed on the doors of the office by Madhi, the AVFO's Vigilance Officer, and the office doors were secured by a chain and lock. A peculiarity of this Office Order is that it only mentions the 'reconstitution' of the Housing Service and does not mention the Housing Board, which is a separate body. A [post](#) on Auronet on 6th September named the 'new Housing Service Team' as Banu, Iyyanar, Meena, Pietro (Piero), Saroja, Sugarr, Venkatesh, Vignesh & Uma.

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orders issued by the AVFO, as they were not made in consultation with the RA.

The following week, the office was reopened and a few of the members of RA-appointed groups were able to work in the office. The BCC is currently committed to holding the space, and community members can find them there for any queries.

Other Updates and Information

Conversations with Raghu Ananthanarayan

On the 26th August, Mr. Raghu Ananthanarayan received [a formal letter](#) from the Secretary of the AVFO, stating that the GB is requesting a process for deeper dialogue in Auroville, and requesting him to facilitate this process, “enabling the stakeholders of Auroville to arrive at a consensus and commit to a way forward [...]” Dena Merriam, IAC member, has since [posted on Auronet](#) announcing this intention to the community.

Mr. Ananthanarayan reached out to Deven, an Aurovilian, who then invited others to participate in one-hour long exploratory sessions (see [his post on Auronet](#)). Several Aurovilians have been in conversation with Mr. Ananthanarayanan. Those who have reportedly participated recently include Anshul, Aravinda, B, Bridget, Devi, Elvira, Helen, Induja, Jaya, Joan, Lakshay, Lalit, Min, Rosa, Sanjeev, Satprem, and Shankardevy.

The announcement raised questions about whether a process of dialogue or reconciliation should start whilst the takeover of Auroville’s internal organisation systems by the AVFO is still in process, and the pressure regarding visas continues. Concerns were also raised about the GB initiating this dialogue, without having met or consulted with the RA. As of today, no formal process has been defined. Mr. Ananthanarayan has been clear that at this stage, he is not willing to offer a mediation. The Working Groups of the RA have sent emails to [Dena & Raghu](#) highlighting their concerns. In the mail to Raghu they state;

“Over the past almost one year there have been many attempts by RA selected working groups and numerous members of the RA at mediation, collaboration, and real dialogue, in order to synthesise diverse points of views and proposals. These have been consistently undermined and/or hijacked to serve the seemingly fixed

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genuine goodwill and sensitivity, will be used, misused or discarded in the same manner”

For information about Mr. Ananthanarayan and his work, please see [his website](#).

Walk for Unity every Tuesday

Community members are showing solidarity in challenging times by coming together on a weekly basis. Every Tuesday evening, a '[Walk For Unity](#)' takes place, starting at Solar Kitchen at 5.20pm. The event has been taking place for several weeks and there is reportedly a good attendance and an atmosphere of community spirit. Please come along and join.

AVC Meeting Room Presence still held after 10 weeks

Since 2nd July, community members have kept a continuous presence in the Auroville Council room in the Town Hall building, following an [email](#), sent on 1st July by Lieve from AVFO's appointed ACUR (Town Hall) management, demanding that the AV Council vacate their meeting room and desks with less than 24 hours notice. The AV Council refused this request and since then a group of Aurovilians have kept a 24/7 vigil in the room.

The presence in the AV Council meeting room has so far been held by a small number of committed Aurovilians. More people are needed. If you can spare even one or two hours please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com or pass by the Council room to sign up. The AVC meeting room is a vital resource for the continued functioning of the Working Groups of the RA, so please help protect it when you can.

WCom of the RA reminder on illegitimate appointees

On 2nd September the Working Committee sent an [update](#) to the community reminding them 'not to engage with or recognize' any of the illegitimate members of the 'Working Groups' appointed by the AVFO. The relevant community members were named in the communication. A [correction](#) was sent afterwards with information regarding Rima Das, who was previously named as being a member of the AVFO's 'Loan Group' but who decided not to take up this position.

Call for proposals on Auroville's internal organisation

The AV Council has put out an [open call](#) to the community to make proposals on the internal organisation of Auroville, for example on the following topics;

- The way policies are made
- The way collective decisions are taken
- The roles and constitution of committees, "working groups", boards, etc
- The organisation of Auroville's economic structures

If you have any feedback or support to offer please email the AV Council avcouncil@auroville.services

Action needed

- **Join the SOS Telegram Group** : Land Encroachment is an urgent issue. If you would like to be updated on where silent presence is necessary please join the SOS telegram group via [this link](#)
- **AVC meeting room vigil**: For 10 weeks community members have kept a continuous presence in the AVC meeting room. If you would like to assist, please email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com
- **Call for financial support**: Financial assistance is urgently needed for the continuing court cases. If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email evolvingalaxy@gmail.com.

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- **The Yoga of Integral Violence** : Auroville's Media Liaison Team has released the first three videos in series to help explain the recent events in Auroville. See here for [Video 1](#) , [Video 2](#) & [Video 3](#). Please watch & share.

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, social media, film editing etc. 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.

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>

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