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## Auroville Bulletin 38

### **Abri/Ami/Evergreen encroachment update, Call for help with legal fees, UNESCO meeting**

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A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

September 17th, 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

## Abri/Ami corner land grab update

The conflict surrounding the land on the Ami/Abri corner has expanded to include land on both sides of the government road. The land grab extends about 100 meters into Evergreen community and into land owned by Michael Bonke, up until the Certitude tennis field. The claimant of the land, Mr. PKS has filed complaints against a list of Aurovilians who opposed the ongoing land grab. On Tuesday, 6th September in the evening, some of Mr. PKS' men dropped broken pillars along the contested area. The matter was reported to Auroville Security by Evergreen residents, who maintained presence on site for the next few days and nights.

On Sunday 11th September RA WCom members met with high level officers in Chennai regarding the issue. The RA WCom reported on this meeting via [mass bulletin](#). However, on Tuesday, 13th Sept at 4.30am, a JCB cut about 12x15 meters into the Evergreen forest. Members of Evergreen community managed to stop the work. Mr. PKS claimed that clearing of trees was his retaliation for the Aurovilians' destruction of the pillars.



The police have indicated that they can no longer interfere, as they have given extra time for the Auroville Foundation since late June to provide the necessary papers, without result as the

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signed the necessary papers, as per her role as the estate manager of Auroville land. The case will come up again in court on 22nd September. A statement by Mr PKS reportedly insinuating that he was acting on the Secretary's orders was included in Satprem's [report on Evergreen events](#), and sent to the GB and IAC members with [a covering note](#) asking them to intervene in the situation.

On Thursday 16th September, men hired by Mr PKS came again to the site and attempted to put up pillars for a wall on the Evergreen stretch. Over 80 Aurovilians arrived on site and eventually, the claimants of the land promised to Narendra, the Secretary's PA, to hold off any further construction until the next court date on the 22nd September. However, despite stopping work at the Evergreen plot, they have continued work on the Abri/Ami corner. There is concern on whether the agreement will be respected. **Residents are requested to stay alert.**

## Legal update

### Upcoming dates:

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

23.09.2022 — Hearing of AVFO appeal of the Madras High Court judgment of 12th August

20.10.2022 — Supreme Court appeal regarding National Green Tribunal Ruling

10.11.2022 — National Green Tribunal hearing with regard to the Joint Committee report

### Other updates:

**Madras High Court, FAMC** – A hearing for the case regarding appointment of the FAMC was listed for Thursday, 8th September. However, the case did not come up. The date for the next hearing will be communicated as soon as possible.

**Madras High Court Appeal** – The AVFO appeal of the judgment of the 12th August by the Madras High Court was listed for Friday, 9th September. However, due to various circumstances, the case was postponed by two weeks. The stay order on the judgment of 12th August will continue, until the next hearing. Further arguments are planned for 23rd September in the Madras High Court.

**National Green Tribunal** - The hearing with regards to the Joint Committee was listed for Thursday, 15th September. No discussions happened as the matter was adjourned to

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**FIRs on Aurovilians** - The case was supposed to come up on Friday, 16th of September, but was postponed. There is no new date listed yet.

## Appeal for financial support

**With the ongoing cases in both the High Court and the Supreme Court, plus the continuation of the NGT and the FAMC case, there is an *urgent* need for financial support for legal and delegation fees. If you are able to help, please email [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@gmail.com). Please share this call widely with community members or well-wishers of Auroville who may not be receiving this Bulletin.**

For a brief summary of how the community has arrived at the point of needing legal counsel, the ongoing court cases, and why an increasing budget is needed for legal support please see [here](#). As the author notes in their closing statement: “Those who love Auroville need to be united in their resilience and hope that the courts will bring reason to it. Please help if you can.”

## UNESCO Meeting

On the 30th September, an event is planned at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, organised in collaboration with the Auroville Foundation. Residents have not been made aware of this event via any official communication platforms. [A tentative programme of the event](#) was shared with Aurovilians and well-wishers currently in France. The programme includes a panel focusing on “Building the city according to the master plan, presented before the world already in 1968.” Speakers on this panel include Anu Majumdar, Anupama Kundoo, and Jaya Berggreen-Clausen. The Secretary, Dr. Jayanti Ravi, is also listed as a speaker who will provide the closing remarks of the event.

The RA WCom has shared its concerns about this event via [massbulletin](#), making a special note of the events of the last 10 months at the behest of the Secretary and stating that the programme for the day may “not reflect the reality nor the aspirations of the community, but may instead be used to promote a dubious interpretation of Auroville's aims.” They also note that they have shared these concerns with the relevant officials of the Government of India and UNESCO representatives. Satprem has written similar letters of concern to the [UNESCO Director General](#), and [other UNESCO officials](#).

# Other Updates and Information

## Land exchanges - update

After the recent exchange of Djaima land for land within the City Area, there are several reports from communities that have been visited either by unknown persons or Land Board members indicating that they are viewing the land for a potential exchange. The communities recently visited include:

- Eternity
- AuroOrchard
- Pebble Garden/Aurobrindavan.

Chances are high that these land exchanges are being realised without following due process. This is of great concern to the stewards of the land, who have not been consulted prior to these land exchanges.

## Housing & BCC takeover

The Housing Board and BCC Town Hall offices have been partially taken over by the [team](#) appointed to Housing by the AVFO. The BCC of the RA continues to do its daily work in the offices. They can be visited there for help every weekday from 10am-12pm. As their access to their @auroville.org.in inboxes has not been restored, despite a written request to the AVFO on the 4th September, they can be emailed at [bccauroville@gmail.com](mailto:bccauroville@gmail.com).

The 'reconstitution' of the Housing Service through Office Order 436 has been unequivocally rejected by the FAMC of the RA, as they have intimated [to the AVFO's 'FAMC' via email](#). The Housing Board has since shared a [communication](#) with the community in which they note that they are unable to do their work under the current circumstances, as they do not have access to inboxes and the Housing financial accounts. However, they remain available to community members to help in whatever capacity they are able to, and you can reach them at [housingboard@auroville.services](mailto:housingboard@auroville.services) or at [av.housinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:av.housinggroup@gmail.com).

Similar to those requesting visa letters from the Secretary of the AVFO, SAVI volunteers are now required to sign a [declaration](#) form before they are given volunteer status. Amongst other statements, the declaration asks that they will “Abide by the Master Plan based on the Galaxy Plan conceived by the Mother... and I hereby state that I will in no way obstruct or hinder its manifestation.”

## Incorrect claims of Auroville resident holding illegal cultural artifacts

In the past week, several newspapers have [reported](#) that a French Aurovilian’s house was ‘raided’. The reports claim that more than 20 ‘illegally held’ Indian cultural artifacts were found and due to be ‘smuggled’ out of India.

The WCom of the RA has since sent a correction, which has been [printed in The Hindu \(Chennai\)](#). They note that the report is inaccurate, as the French national (no longer residing in Auroville) had legally bought the pieces. When he wished to take them to France, he sought permission from the Department of Antiquities in Chennai as per protocol. When permission was not granted, the pieces were left behind. "There was no intention by the original owners to ship these items to France after they were rejected for shipment by the Department of Antiquities. Hence all talk of attempted smuggling of antiques is without any basis", said the release.

## Action needed

- **Join the SOS Telegram group:** Community support is needed at Abri/Ami/Evergreen. Join the SOS telegram group via [this link](#) so that you can receive alerts when silent presence is necessary.
- **AVC meeting room vigil:** For 11 weeks community members have kept a continuous presence in the AVC meeting room. If you would like to assist, please email [evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@gmail.com)

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[evolvingalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvingalaxy@gmail.com).

- **Write to UNESCO officials:** In Satprem's emails that are shared above there are the email IDs for several key UNESCO officials. Please write to them if you would like to share your concerns about the recent events in Auroville.

## Media & Other Links

- **The Yoga of Integral Violence :** Auroville's Media Liaison Team has released a series of videos to help explain the recent events in Auroville. See here for [Video 4](#) & [Video 5](#).
- **Galatta Voice with Lata :** The Galatta voice media team has released another video interview with an Auroville resident, which you can enjoy [here](#). The video is in Tamil.
- **The Pioneer:** 'Central Govt's scheme for students to be replicated' Article [here](#) about the AVFO's plan to offer internships to students.

## Changing the narrative

- **The Inflection Point by Rod Hemsell:** This article outlines an interesting analysis of recent events and includes a short summary of salient points from both the Madras High Court Judgment of 12th August 2022, and the appeal filed by the AVFO to said judgment. You can read [the full article](#) here.
- **How Much Worse?:** Auroville youth and RA WCom member Maël has written an inspiring blog on Auronet, where he raises questions about the current conflict and reaffirms and reminds us of the values of Auroville. You can read [the full blog here](#).

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## 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](mailto: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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