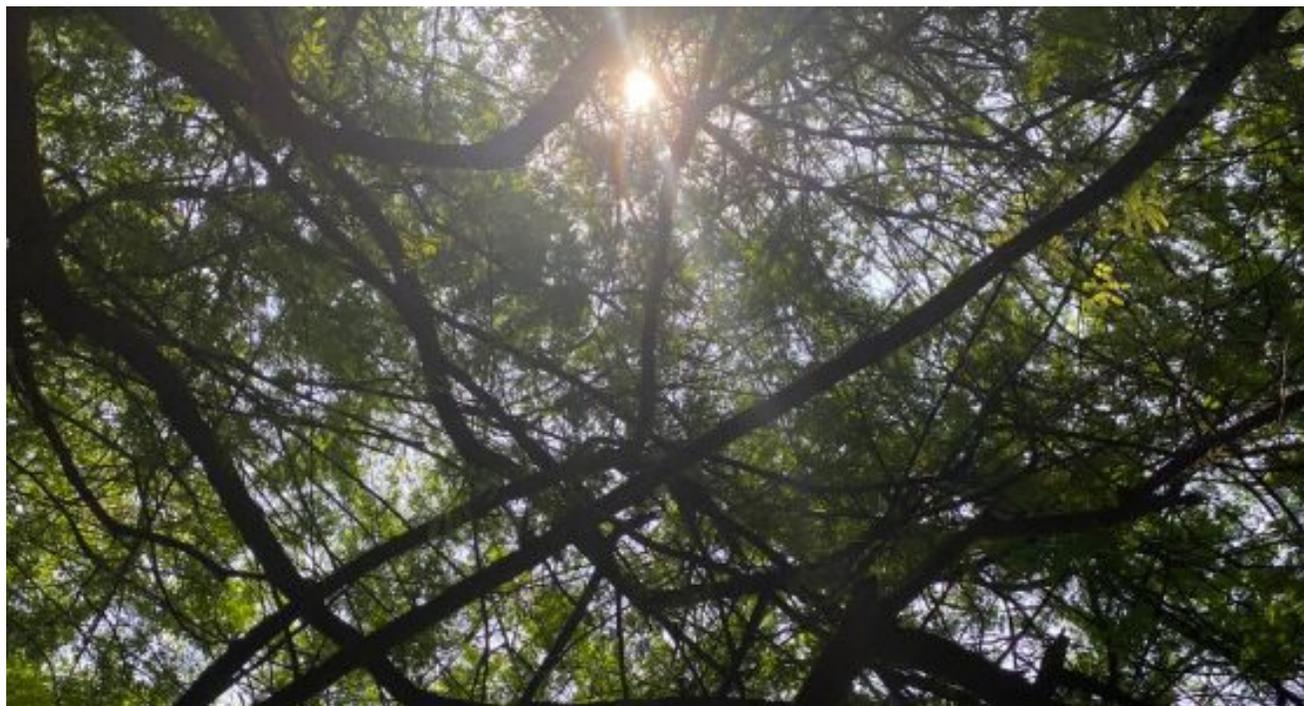


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# Auroville Bulletin 44

## **Visa pressure continues, Eviction notice for Aurovilians, City Services Update**

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A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

October 29th, 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](#).**

## Urgent Actions

- **BCC calls for support for Aurovilians on bridging maintenances:** At least 20 Aurovilians have been moved onto bridging maintenance with no warning, while they are still working for Auroville. Please see [here](#) for more information, and email BCC on [bccoffice@auroville.services](mailto:bccoffice@auroville.services) or [bccauroville@gmail.com](mailto:bccauroville@gmail.com).
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you would like to donate towards legal and delegation fees please email [evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com). Please see [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil:** For nearly 4 months a small group of Aurovilians have held 24/7 vigil in the AVC room in Town Hall. Your help with this is urgently needed, please assist with just one or two hours a week of presence. Contact [avcouncil@auroville.services](mailto:avcouncil@auroville.services) or WhatsApp 94430 03617 to sign up.

## Hot topics

### Gopal given 3 month letter of recommendation

After the news of Frederick's 1-year visa last week, another case of direct visa intimidation of a long-Gopal was given his name by the Mother in 1970 when he was 7 years old, and has lived in Auroville since then. He has devoted the entirety of his life to Auroville - he worked on the Matrimandir when he was young, was in charge of the Road Service, worked in the Water Service and turned 55 acres of barren land into Darkali, a densely forested city park with extensive water harvesting features. A time Aurovillian has surfaced. Darkali steward Gopal was given a 3-month visa extension letter instead of the recommended 5 years. As mentioned in last week's bulletin, letters such as these are not valid because the Auroville Visa Policy as published by the Ministry

Gopal was named by and admitted into Auroville by the Mother in 1970 when he was 7 years old. He has devoted the entirety of his life to Auroville - he worked on the Matrimandir when he was young, was in charge of the Road Service, worked in the Water Service and turned 55 acres of barren land into Darkali, a densely forested city park with extensive water harvesting features.

In a [recent email](#) by Satprem to the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council, he stated possible reasons for Gopal to be targeted as "the Secretary sees him [Gopal] as 'anti-development' and 'anti-city'" despite the role that Gopal has played in the physical manifestation of Auroville. He also notes that the Darkali park "is one of the parks of Auroville according to the Galaxy design by Roger".

## Eviction of Txuma, Elodie & Aris

As per a report of the RA-appointed working groups sent by [massbulletin](#), Elodie and Txuma have received notice to evacuate their house in Centre Field by the end of October. Despite previous assurances from the AVFO's 'ATDC' that the bathroom alone (the only part of the house that currently lies on the path of the envisioned Crown Right of Way) could be demolished and rebuilt on the other side of the house, it is reported that the Secretary now plans to demolish the entire asset as it is on the 'Crown Belt'. As well as causing huge stress and upset to the family, this would be a loss for Auroville of an asset worth approximately 30 lakhs, without a clear timeline for developing this area.

Elodie and Txuma have not been offered any compensation nor a suitable alternative for their family. If this goes ahead, this would be the second housing asset demolished by the Office of the Secretary in advance of implementing any planning processes, creating an additional strain in the midst of an ongoing housing crisis in Auroville.

In August, Elodie & Txuma shared [a statement on the situation](#), in which they clarified the history of this case and their position. In their own communication, the RA working groups note that the actions taken are not following the Indian law, as the Secretary is invoking the "Public Premises Act" which does not apply to Auroville as its housing assets are not government housing, and its residents are not government employees. They also warn of the precedent that this action sets: "This demand is being made without following any of our approved internal processes or any processes of natural justice, promises have been made and

one of us living in any housing asset in Auroville.”

## Dubious land exchanges - report of concerned residents

Recently, lands on the Tindivanam road and at Djaima community were exchanged for plots within the Masterplan area. Exchange of land was discontinued by the previous Governing Board because it was unfavourable to Auroville, incurring large financial losses. In addition, land exchange and sale is a very sensitive space for corruption, and extensive checks and balances have been put in place by the previous Governing Board and Land Board to make sure that land deals are secure and corruption-free. Now, land exchanges are being carried out by the current Land Board without any of these procedures in place, and without officially determining the value of the land, potentially leading to crores in financial losses.

Concerned community members have written an extensive report to inform the Residents' Assembly of the issues associated with these kinds of exchanges, noting that “Currently the Land Board has not been providing community reports, nor have they communicated with stewards of exchanged plots beforehand, operating in secrecy and presenting exchanges once the deal is done. The residents need to be aware of this situation [...] and consider how to address it.” You can [find the full report here](#).

## City Services Budget Update

This week, the RA BCC shared an [announcement](#) with the community about the City Services budget. They stated that this year they had “held a community budgeting process to share ... information and harvest inputs on our collective needs and priorities”, and the outcomes of this process had fed into the planning of the new 22/23 budget. However, they note that it is unclear whether the budget - which is now overdue by several months - will be implemented due to the takeover of the RA working groups by the AVFO and the subsequent set up of parallel working groups that only answer to the Office of the Secretary and the Governing Board.

The RA FAMC have now approved the budget which includes a 10% increase in the individual City Service Maintenance (the budget is available to view at [this link](#)) but the BCC note that “We do not know if disbursements made by the Budget Coordination Service under the purview of the GB [AVFO's]FAMC will

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who will attempt to fundraise in order to cover the shortfall”. There is an on-going concern in the community as to whether there will be further maintenance cuts to individuals, as suggested by the AVFO ‘FAMC’ in their [previous communication](#) regarding farms and forests.

The AVFO’s ‘FAMC’ [responded](#) to the RA BCC via Auronet. They reiterated their claim that they had “restructured” this group due to a lack of cooperation and that “new team members [have been] brought into play for a transition to the changed needs of Auroville”. They also state that the “financial management and stability of Auroville need not be a concern of the former BCC members as we believe that **She** is definitely guiding us”. In a [second announcement](#) they note that they are currently looking into implementing an increase of the City Services Maintenance, however “our monitoring of contributions to City Services has in the last month shown a sudden drop. We are concerned that some units are withholding their contribution due to the current circumstances”.

Nicole responded to this statement in [an Auronet comment](#), pointing out that the decline in contributions that the AVFO ‘FAMC’ refer to is “almost entirely [due to] a drop in contribution from Financial Services of 16.5 lakhs as compared with August. Whereas the contributions from units dropped only by a couple of lakhs between August and September, the smallest variation from one month to the other since the beginning of the Financial Year (April)”. She also points out that the funds received in August from both FS and Auroville units were well above average, meaning that any drop in contributions from that month to the next should not be blamed on unit holders, or used as an excuse for withholding a maintenance increase.

## Other Updates and Information

### Statement from TDC regarding legal case

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The statement mentions that, despite the fact that several interpretations of the outcome have been shared by people aligned with the AVFO, it has not yet been published by the court and they are therefore awaiting this information before sharing a complete update.

## UNESCO Letter reply

Mr Hezekiel Dlamini, Officer-in-charge of UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office, responded to [the letter](#) sent by members of the Residents' Assembly sharing their concerns about the UNESCO Paris event planned by the AVFO. 1408 residents and well-wishers of Auroville signed the letter, expressing their concern as the programme, which heavily focussed on Auroville, was designed by the Office of the Secretary and only included speakers aligned with the AVFO.

Mr. Dlamini clarifies that the UNESCO event was organized solely by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, and confirms that it is now postponed with no new date given. He ends his letter stating that "We hope that the disagreements to which you refer in your letter can be resolved, ensuring that Auroville's mission – which UNESCO has affirmed support for in the past – can continue to be realized." You can read [his full response here](#).

## Revelation Cycle Paths - Report

In response to the plans of the AVFO's 'ATDC' to put cycle paths throughout the centre and greenbelt areas, the stewards of the Revelation Forest sent [an extensive report](#) regarding the history and aims of Revelation. Revelation is in the north of the Centre area, under Nine Palms, and largely forms the northern section of the Mahakali park. As such, it was always envisioned and stewarded as a densely forested city park, with 2.5 metre wide pathways for visitors.

Since the 1980s, Revelation has also been treated as a sensitive aquifer recharging zone, as it rests on the bottleneck of a large watershed. Additionally, parts of it have been developed as a wildlife Sanctuary, educational space, and healing forest. The report of the stewards notes the many achievements of Revelation over the last 4 decades, and the large amounts of energy and personal funds invested in it by different Aurovilians over the years.

The plans for the cycle path, proposed by the AVFO 'ATDC' without any

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densest forests in Auroville, home to several rare old evergreen trees and one of the very few sanctuaries in Auroville where animals like deer, jungle cats, monitor lizards and porcupines live and breed. The Revelation stewards sent [their report](#) to the AVFO's 'ATDC', requesting their collaboration in further development of the Mahakali park, with reference to the extensive town planning efforts made for the area in the past.

## Lighting up Town Hall

An event was held at Town Hall this week to celebrate Diwali. The occasion took place in and around the AV Council room which has now been held for the community by a small group of around 35 individuals for nearly 4 months. If you are looking for a space to work or interact in any way with a group then please consider using the room. Contact [avcouncil@auroville.services](mailto:avcouncil@auroville.services) or WhatsApp 94430 03617.



## Errata re BCC email ID

In Bulletin 43 the email address for the BCC was incorrect. The correct email for reaching RA BCC is [bccoffice@auroville.services](mailto:bccoffice@auroville.services) or [bccauroville@gmail.com](mailto:bccauroville@gmail.com).

## 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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