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Auroville Bulletin 55

News & Notes open letter, CPWD damage to trees & Eviction emails sent to Aurovilians

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

February 8th, 2023

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 needed

- **Sign the open letter to the News & Notes editors:** A group of concerned residents have made an open letter to the editors of the News & Notes regarding the censorship of the RA Working Groups. Please add your name [here](#).
- **BCC calls for support for Aurovilians on bridging maintenances:** 25+ Aurovilians have been moved onto bridging maintenances without warning, while they are still working for Auroville. Please see [here](#) for more information, and email BCC on bccoffice@auroville.services or bccauroville@gmail.com.
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you can donate towards legal and delegation fees, please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. Please see [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil :** Please participate! For nearly 6 months the community has held a 24/7 vigil in the AVC room in Town Hall. **More people are needed** to ensure the round-the-clock presence. Please contact avcouncil@auroville.services, WhatsApp 94430 03617 to sign up. See [here](#) for more information.
- **Join the Wednesdays for Auroville meetings:** There is a weekly community meeting held at the Tibetan Pavilion, every Wednesday 5:00-6:30 pm.

Hot topics

News & Notes open letter

An [open letter](#) to the News & Notes editors regarding the recent censorship of the RA-selected working groups is now in circulation. Since the end of 2022, the editors have not published notices and reports by the RA Working groups. On a few

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AVFO-endorsed teams were published until then, when [pressure & legal threats](#) from the AVFO side caused the editors to change their stance, without openly sharing this decision with the community.

As the open letter notes “The News & Notes is one of the oldest institutions in Auroville, dating back to 1975, and has always served as an apolitical neutral space for all perspectives, so that residents have access to all information. Censorship is against the very spirit of mutuality and freedom that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother stood for.” The letter goes on “We request you to publish announcements and reports from the working groups selected and endorsed by the Residents’ Assembly. If either or both of you are unable to fulfil your function on behalf of the community, and to uphold the spirit and values of the News and Notes, we request you to resign so that other residents may fulfil this role.”

It is important that residents continue to express their collective voice, however difficult it may be, as this is also a big support for the RA Working Groups, the legal cases, and for upholding our common values.

Please add your name [here](#).

AVFO's 'ATDC' - extensive damage to Certitude trees



On Friday 3rd February in Certitude community, some workers were seen carving away tree bark and painting numbers on individual trees. In some cases, they

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Ring Road, amounting to many thousands in number, for surveying purposes. This work is being done by a team from Delhi, subcontracted by the CPWD.

The AVFO 'ATDC' subsequently sent around a [massbulletin](#) and [Auronet announcement](#) threatening those 'obstructing' the work with criminal action. They attempted to reassure residents that this is a standard procedure and will not damage the trees, and that "Any other method will be easily tampered with, especially in the current climate in Auroville where vandalism seems prevalent."

[Island Lescure](#), a trained arborist and Aurovilian, has sent in a report to the AVFO 'ATDC', noting that "Regarding whether this marking method does or not lasting harm to the trees: this is essentially partial [girdling](#) [...] It is a practice generally avoided unless you want to damage or kill a tree." He also noted that this work has already been done in Auroville using GIS, a computer system that can geolocate each tree with an accuracy of 2cm. Over 26,000 trees of Auroville have already been plotted using this method by the Geomatics team in CSR, in collaboration with the TDC, "without damaging a single tree. Yes, more needs to be done, but properly. We have the means and know-how here."

You can read Island's full report, which includes a map of all the areas already plotted, [here](#)

Aurovilians sent eviction emails by AVFO's 'FAMC'

The AVFO's 'FAMC' has sent one-line emails to [Mawite of AuroAnnam](#) and [Afsanah & Baskar](#), the former executives of Afsanah Guest House, ordering them to vacate their houses. The emails request that the AVFO's 'Housing Service' put them on the housing transfer list "on high priority".

In recent months Mawite has been placed under severe pressure by members of the AVFO's 'working groups', to leave the house that she has been living in for over 20 years so that the land can be exchanged. In December 2022, Mawite shared her story [here](#).

The houses at Afsanah's Guest House which are now threatened were built by her, and she has lived there for over 35 years. It is unclear what the AVFO 'FAMC' intends to do with the Guest House. Since the takeover of the Housing Group last year, housing allocations have not been following the agreed community processes, creating a lack of transparency as to how allocations are now made.

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The AVFO 'FAMC' called for a meeting with all unit holders [via email](#), noting that they expected them to attend 'without fail', at Bharat Nivas on Thursday 2nd February. At the meeting the AVFO 'FAMC' shared the many changes that they plan to implement in the coming months. More information will follow soon.

Other Updates and Information

Negligence during Crown works

RA TDC have [recorded](#) that a JCB excavating along the Crown road near Food Link nearly hit a high tension cable of 11,000 volts. Had the JCB touched the cable it would have been lethal for the driver. This negligence raises serious questions about the lack of markers for the cable and the standard of safety protocols during the works, which they note as "being executed in a haphazard way ... no plans for the Crown have been shared until now. We even wonder if these plans really exist."

They make a series of urgent stipulations regarding the infrastructure planning during the Crown works. This intervention comes around one month after the RA TDC sent an [open letter](#) to the Infrastructure Group, raising concerns about "the excessive number of cables and pipes [that] have been broken during the digging works along the proposed Crown".

Legal update

Abri/Ami/Evergreen - The case came up for hearing on 31st of January 2023, but was again postponed until mid-February, 2023.

AVFO's Aurovilian Accounts Officer

It has come to light that B.S Sathyanarayan, a member of the AVFO's 'FAMC' who is employed as an [Accounts Officer by the AVFO](#), is a confirmed Aurovilian, as [announced](#) in the News & Notes in October 2021. It is highly irregular for an

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of all Aurovilians. It is unknown whether his appointment followed the standard Ministry of Education practices. Sathyanarayan has been closely involved with the AVFO-instigated audits of Auroville units holders which have seen a number of trustees and executives investigated for alleged financial misdeeds.

Town Hall watchman

The ex-Town Hall watchman, who was fired from his job at the end of December 2022, has not yet been able to secure a new position. He was fired from his role after an event at Town Hall held by residents to mark the one year anniversary of the actions in the Youth Centre. He was deemed by the AVFO's 'Town Hall management' team as having failed to prevent residents from switching the electricity supply back on.

Three offers of work have come from Aurovilians however they were unfortunately not suitable for him. If you have night watchman work, preferably in the central Auroville area, please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

G20 visit to Auroville

On 31st January a group of delegates from the science working group of the G20 visited Auroville under strict security conditions. Aurovilians were not allowed to move around the city area, and all schools were closed. Prior to the event, the RA WCom sent out a massbulletin welcoming the party to Auroville. Apart from an AuroNet post with [photos](#) shared by the AVFO's 'Auroville Interface Team', no information about the event has been shared with the community by the AVFO and their 'working groups'.

Media & Other Links

- **Letter to the IAC from an Aurovilian** : Long-time Aurovilian Christine Devin has written a [letter](#) to the International Advisory Council reminding them of their duties as defined in the Auroville Foundation Act.

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.

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