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Auroville Bulletin 58

Maël leaves India, CPWD Tenders & latest Crown Road report

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

March 3rd, 2023

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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

- **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 evolvingalaxy@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

Maël Leaves India

In order to comply with the Leave India Notice (LIN) received on 15th February, Maël left India on Wednesday 1st March. Despite the RA WCom sending several emails to

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Maël has still not been directly informed why he was issued an LIN.

On 3rd March, Maël shared [a testimonial](#) stating: “I trust that I will be able to return to Auroville very soon. And in the meantime, I remain connected with all of us. I will continue to serve the Community and the Charter as a resident, as a member of the RA Working Committee, as an aspiring Aurovilian.”

A note summarising what is known so far in regards to his LIN ([‘Getting the Facts Right’](#)) is also attached. Some key points are:

- Mael’s previous visa expired on 9th November 2022. He did not receive the Letter of Recommendation (LoR) on time and applied with an incomplete application - this is standard procedure and a person is not overstaying as long as the visa application is in process.
- In February 2023, he was told at the Foundation Office that his LoR was signed in December and sent directly to the FRRO. Despite repeated requests he has never seen a copy of this LoR, which leads him to believe that the Secretary may have put a note on it (similarly, Satprem and two others received a letter stating they were involved in ‘anti-government’ activities).
- Maël notes that he is “... not aware of any visa violations I could have been involved in. I have always respected the Constitution of India and will continue doing so.”

‘One Day’- community singing event

The community came together on Auroville’s birthday to sing a song of hope for the future of Auroville. Approximately 400 people met in front of Solar Kitchen to sing ‘One Day’ by Matisyahu in English and in Tamil. Community members were inspired to organize the event after Maël received the LIN to show solidarity during these difficult times.

You can find a photo album of the event [here](#).

A compilation of clips from people singing the song around the world can be found [here](#).

A video made by Manohar can be found [here](#).



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Dawn Fire - Attempts to control the narrative by AVFO

The Dawn Fire on Auroville's birthday is usually widely attended by Aurovilians who look forward to a time of peaceful and joyful togetherness. This year many Aurovilians did not attend the Dawn Fire for the 55th birthday. Seemingly to counter the lack of attendance, the AVFO kept the gate open during the usually peaceful mediation time to allow a steady influx of attendees - most of which were reported to be non-Aurovilians.

The AVFO's "Media Interface" team sent out a press release appearing as an [article in the Hindu](#) which ends with a quote stating that "Auroville has a lot of development planned for the coming years, and the Aurovilians look forward with great anticipation and enthusiasm to the year ahead, as it holds many possibilities and promises." This press release does not represent the reality, where the community is largely against the current means of implementing this 'development' without community input. It also claims that the attendance was 2.500 people, when the actual number seems to be much lower. You can watch a [video of the event here](#).

'Unity Farm' update

The 'Unity Farm' project, which was extensively discussed in [Bulletin 57](#), was inaugurated on Auroville's birthday, 28th February. According to [the invitation](#), the chief guest was the Secretary, Dr Jayanti Ravi. Neighbours noticed that construction on the project started on Sunday 26th February, before the building application was accepted through the community feedback process.

CPWD Tenders for cutting in Darkali and making cycle paths

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 15th March 2022 between the Auroville Foundation and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), the official construction agency of the Government of India. The scope of work is not clear since [the announcement](#), made by the CPWD on its social media pages (Facebook and Twitter), only states "for the execution of Projects related to Making of Auroville City, Tamil Nadu". The community was not consulted in this move, however it appears that the CPWD will continue as its contractor, despite the many issues with the work done on the Crown Road until now.

The CPWD subcontracts work through a public 'tender' process, meaning that the scope of work is posted online and contractors bid for the job. The one providing the lowest estimate usually receives the contract. Recently, two such tenders have surfaced online. One is for '[Cutting of Trees in Darkali Area at Auroville](#)' and the other is for '[Developing New Cycle Paths \[...\] as per the Master Plan](#)'. The tender for cutting Darkali trees ends on 3rd March, at which point the contractor may come to clear the way for the Crown.

Other Updates and Information

Crown Road update

Satprem from the Auroville Earth Institute has shared his latest report on the Crown Road works, highlighting that the new precast reinforced cement concrete (RCC) slabs that the AVFO's 'ATDC' are utilizing in their design do not comply with any Indian standards for roads. Amongst other observations, he notes:

- The road slabs, which have an 'interlocking' system, are not made properly and are designed in a way that will make them difficult to fit and will compromise the road's durability.
- The road slabs that have been laid so far have been laid on unlevelled ground on top of a plastic sheet, a method which "does not follow any standard

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difference in height of up to 1.2cm with gaps between the laid slabs of up to 1.3cm. It is not clear how this can be corrected given the weight of the slabs and the method of laying.

- The finish of pure cement milk that covers the slabs will most likely make the road “very slippery during heavy rainfall”. Satprem also predicts that “this road will be flooded, as well as the surrounding areas”.
- It appears that a lot of materials, paid for by the Government of India for the Crown Road, are being used for other works which are not in any contract with the CPWD - a possible misappropriation of funds.
- The new design with RCC precast slabs emits 6,630 Tons of CO₂, which represents 952% more carbon emissions than the road planned with paver blocks. [Sequestering](#) these 6,630 tons of CO₂ would need 20 years by an additional forest of 32 hectares, planted with 1,000 trees per hectare.

Satprem recommends the following:

- An environmental impact assessment to be done.
- Two audits for this work: a financial one and a technical one.
- For the time being, to avoid further mistakes and apparent misappropriation of funds, the road construction should be paused until these audits are done.

You can read his full report [here](#).



Fig. 41: Level difference between channels: 2.1 cm



Fig. 42: Level difference between channels: 2.1 cm

Stormwater channels laid near Humanscapes

The latest deadline for completion of a 100 mtr ‘test stretch’ of the Crown Road passed on Wednesday 1st March. At the AVFO’s ‘working groups’ open meeting in January, Sindhuja Jagadeesh (AVFO’s ‘ATDC’) stated that the stretch of finished road through the Youth Centre would be completed by the end of February, however the road appears to be far from ready.

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usable new road in place, and the competency that Auroville has developed over the years is not being utilized. The 'first phase' of 2.1 km of road was originally meant to be finished at the end of December 2022 and it is uncertain at this stage whether the later deadline of 1st April 2023 will be met.

News & Notes update

The AV Council shared an [update](#) in last weeks News & Notes (N&N) regarding the current situation at the weekly newsletter. Presently, the N&N are not publishing any notices from the RA working groups, as well as essential community services such as the RAS. According to the AV Council, the editors are following the directives of the Secretary, who has ordered that only the AVFO groups are acknowledged in the publication. A recent open letter asking the editors to again include notices from the RA-endorsed working groups was signed by a total of [516 community members](#) and AV well-wishers.

Media & Other Links

- A Few Words About Auroville : A [short video](#) of Cristof Alward-Pitoëff, who passed away this week. He was head of the French section of the Ashram Press, SAICE professor, translator and a theater director. Here he speaks a few words about Auroville.
- Auroville - One Day: A [compilation of clips](#) about the 'One Day' singing event, including singers from Auroville & around the world.
- Dutch Consul Visits Auroville: A [newspaper article](#) detailed the visit of Mr. Ewout de Wit, who met with residents and the Secretary, Jayanti Ravi, on his last visit.

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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 evolvingalaxy@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/evolvingalaxy>

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