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Auroville Bulletin 88

Evergreen Land Grab Update, Yet More Tree Cutting, Takeover of Auroville's 'Health and Wellness' Sector

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Wednesday, 12th February 2025

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

How can you help?

Urgent actions

- **Support for Maintenances:** Individuals cut off from their maintenances by the AVFO working groups need regular support. For more information, please contact the BCC: bccoffice@auroville.services. If you wish to support the Farm or Forest Group as a whole, please contact these groups via evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.
- **Support the RA News and Notes:** The RA News and Notes needs financial support to continue functioning. Please consider donating to Financial Service account number #252150. To read all issues and subscribe, [click here](#).

Ongoing actions

- **Assist with documenting tree-cutting and clearing:** You can help the legal team by documenting tree-cutting and land clearing. In light of the Stay Order placed on the NGT verdict it is particularly important to continue with documentation now. Please get in touch with evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com to lend a hand.
- **Financial support for legal fees:** Over the past years, the legal team has played an important role in protecting against the AVFO takeover. Please help this team through donating towards legal and delegation fees. This work can only continue with the support of residents and friends of Auroville. Please email evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com to donate. See [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil:** For over 2.5 years 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.
- **Share information confidentially with the RA WCom via email workingcom@auroville.services.** The RA WCom is collecting information regarding the various interactions with the AVFO and their appointees. This information is necessary in order to protect the RA and will remain strictly confidential.

Upcoming Community Event

She said:

**“The world is preparing for a big change,
will you help ?”**

The Mother / 1970
New-year message

How can we help beyond these apparent contradictions ?

Narrative for a Renaissance ?

Community Gathering

28 February 2025

from 3:30-4:00 to 5:30

Light snacks and beverage will be
served at the end
Venue will be communicated later



From Pablo and Rakhal,
Members of the Call for Organization Group

Please check next weeks [RA News&Notes](#) (Issue 1063) for the Location announcement.

What is happening now

Evergreen Land Grab Update

An appeal against the judgement in favour of PKS in the Evergreen case has now apparently been filed on the final date possible, 7th February 2025. Over the past three months, since the judgement was given in October, the land has been entirely cleared of forest with the last of the cut trees taken away on 13th January. See below drone image:



A wall has been built around the land with a sign for 'Auro Glob Farms' and a makeshift road has been laid, indicating that PKS has taken full control of the land. The AVFO has made no attempts to prevent this from happening, nor have they given any explanations regarding their lack of involvement, or why they took so long to file the appeal. This land has been in the exclusive and continuous possession of Auroville for over 30 years, during which time it has paid the Land Tax. Community members made multiple pleas to the AVFO to protect the land, and on 25th January a few residents sent [this letter](#) to the Secretary, which remained unreplied. In desperation, concerned community members called residents to gather at the AVF Office in Town Hall on Monday 3rd February 2024. Around 100 people gathered peacefully on the day and a [petition](#) was handed over. This petition had been circulated online and received [over 700 signatures](#) in 48 hours.

As none of the relevant officials were present in the AVF Offices that day, a smaller group of people went to the AVFO 'Land Board', 'WCom' & 'FAMC' offices to ask the members of those groups why no action had been taken. [Images and films](#) have since been circulated by people on the AVFO side attempting to paint the attendees as "assaulting" and "harassing" the AVFO 'Working Group' members. It is clear however that there was no physical violence. Emotions did run high for one or two people who responded to the comment by Anu of the AVFO 'WCom' that "there is no such thing as the RA". An Aurovilian who was present during the gathering has since circulated this [response](#).

In the week following the Town Hall gathering, a volunteer who had been present received an [email](#) from Savi terminating their status on the instructions of the "Auroville Foundation Working Committee". The cancellation was with immediate effect and the volunteer was not offered any opportunity to respond.

Tree Cutting on the Outer Ring Road and Radials

A new round of destruction began on 29th January 2025, when workers, overseen by the AVFO 'ATDC', came to cut down the 70-year old Mango tree that had previously been protected and incorporated into the newly built section of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) near Aurovelo. Community members who arrived on the scene to stop the tree cutting were informed that the tree was being cut to allow lorries to pass. After receiving the assurance from Mr Selvaganapathy, Procurement Officer of the AVFO, that the tree would only be trimmed to follow CPWD guidelines, the residents left the spot. The next day, an AVFO 'ATDC' member came with a team and cut it down, as well as the Kaya tree.



The following days, a protected and sacred Pipal tree was also cut.



On 29th January, AVFO 'ATDC' member Sindhuja verbally told community members that they now "had permission to increase the ORR to 30 meters wide". On 3rd February 2024, workers returned to the ORR and began [cutting more trees](#). More tree felling ensued over the coming week.

On the new Verite Radial, which is built [directly](#) next to the old Verite Radial, seven mature trees were also cut. Three of these trees had been planted circa 2008-09 with approval from ATDC in order to provide shade for the radial. Several other trees that do not lie in the path of the new road were also about to be cut but an Aurovilian managed to stop the workers.

The new section of radial road does not connect to any existing infrastructure and for it to be completed it will require the destruction of several buildings inside Afsaneh's Guest House.



Tree cutting was also reported at the [Mangalam Radial](#) (near Pony Farm) where protected species such as Red Sanders were cut.

The RA TDC sent [a letter](#) to numerous state and central government officials, cataloging the wanton destruction. As well as the offences mentioned above, they highlight how a number of trees were [cemented in](#), then partially [un-cemented](#), and then [cut entirely](#), all within a single week. This haphazard and unprofessional work demonstrates a lack of planning and communication within the AVFO 'working groups', not to mention a waste of funds and a complete disregard for ecology and for Auroville's conscious-based approach.

Threat to Silence Forest

Silence Forest is located near Kottakarai Village, between the Industrial Zone and the Greenbelt. In 2019, Dave Storey, steward of Silence Forest, followed the proper procedure by obtaining a NOC from L'avenir d'Auroville for a caretaker's house. One of the architects, Sindhuja (now a member of the AVFO 'ATDC'), personally visited the site and reviewed and approved the marked layout of the building's location before construction began. The location was carefully chosen to maintain the required 10m distance from the future Ring Road while preserving the existing forest environment. In February 2024, without prior notice or consultation, JCBs arrived at Silence Forest to mark the northern segment of the ORR. After a survey - notably the first survey ever conducted in the area - the AVFO 'ATDC' claimed that the house was built in the wrong location and declared it a "red asset", contradicting their original documentation. The steward has provided evidence that the road alignment has changed, not the house location. This evidence includes:

1. The presence of mature trees (over 20 years old) surrounding the house - making it physically impossible for the house to have been built in a different location without leaving a cleared area.
2. The original NOC maps show the house's position relative to existing trees and pathways.
3. Multiple witnesses who can attest that the house has remained in its original position since construction.
4. Documented site visits and approvals from the architectural team during construction.

Despite this evidence, on 11th October 2024, the AVFO 'ATDC' demanded the steward vacate the approved structure by 30th November 2024. The situation still stands to this date.

The situation is particularly concerning given Silence Forest's ecological value. Recent scientific studies have documented its significance: it hosts the [largest colony of Indian Flying Fox](#) in Villupuram District, with over 2,000 bats. A [detailed ecological assessment](#) of just a 20mx20m plot revealed remarkable biodiversity with 129 species of flora and fauna, along with significant carbon sequestration capacity and crucial groundwater recharge function.

If this piece of the ORR is built it will lie unused, because as with nearly all the new roads being built by the AVFO 'ATDC', it extends onto land which is not owned by Auroville and for which no permission exists to build roads. In addition, the AVFO 'ATDC' has not followed the necessary protocols to cut trees.

This case is one of many cases of previously approved assets by ATDC being marked as "red

assets” for destruction by the AVFO, representing a huge waste of funds, time and energy.

Health & Wellness sector takeover

A newly formed 'Wellness Focus Group' shared a proposal titled '[Auroville Integral Wellness](#)' via the AVFO unit 'AWARE' on 11th January 2025. The document outlines plans for restructuring Auroville's healthcare system through the creation of a centralized 'Wellbeing Coordination Group' (WCG).

The proposed WCG would consist of nine members appointed by the AVFO 'FAMC', with three representatives each from proactive, curative, and supportive well-being areas. Several aspects of the proposal have raised concerns from the community. While members for the WCG "could be recommended" by health units and services, appointment power would rest solely with the AVFO 'FAMC', with no stated selection criteria. The proposal to implement a centralized Electronic Health Records (EHR) system does not specify measures for data privacy or security compliance, nor clarify protocols for individual consent regarding health information digitization.

The document proposes combining the health fund with city services contributions, but provides no details about the management of the current health fund's reserve or its administration. The future relationship between the WCG and currently community supported services like Health Centre, Sante, Pitanga, Arka, Farewell, and Quiet remains undefined both administratively and financially.

The proposal indicates plans to secure funding through donor contributions, government grants, and partnerships with private insurance providers for "group health plans". It also mentions potential collaboration with [AYUSH](#) (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) for enhanced herbal medicine availability. No parameters or criteria are specified for selecting or implementing these initiatives, nor is the role of the community in these decisions defined.

The document was open for resident feedback for one week, a short timeframe given the length and complexity of the document. After this, it was stated it would be submitted to the GB for their "blessing". There is no transparency as to whether feedback was received, and how it was integrated.

Aurovilians working in the health and wellness sector have reported new difficulties while trying to navigate the system now being put in place by the AVFO 'FAMC'. It has always been difficult for individual practitioners to fully support themselves through their work, as traditionally Aurovilians pay on a donation basis for these services. For health practitioners, the short guest season is an important period to make a livable income. Despite this, the AVFO 'FAMC' are insisting that the activities must be income generating and must make a surplus for the Central Fund, or they are threatened with closure. Additionally, practitioners are now only permitted to work at registered premises, any income is divided further and GST is applicable. This will inevitably lead to fewer health practitioners able to provide this important service to both Aurovilians and guests.

Other Updates and Information

Road construction - Photo Reports

Three recently released photo reports show the extent of the mismanagement and failure of the AVFO 'ATDC' and their contractors in their road building program across Auroville.

The [first report](#) highlights the number of private, temple or Poramboke lands located in the way of the roads that are currently being built . On the 4km-long Crown alone there are seven plots of private land blocking the progression of the road, with numerous more lying in the way of the planned trajectories of the radials. Additionally, the majority of the land that would be needed for the ORR to be completed does not belong to Auroville, with some of it falling inside local villages. Despite this, large areas of carefully managed forest and numerous houses and buildings are being threatened with destruction to build pieces of road that may or may not connect to future roads, should the necessary tracts of land ever be purchased. Furthermore, due in part to the mismanagement of land deals by the AVFO, the price of land inside the Master Plan area has more than doubled since the Land Board was taken over by the AVFO.

The report also exposes clear failures in planning and execution, with two stretches of the ORR appearing not to align with each other.



In Aurodam, the radial was partially built on Poromboke land and now ends abruptly. It was also built two meters too wide in one place, and at the wrong elevation meaning that it will not connect to the Crown as it is supposed to.

The [second report](#) highlights that “roads have been built adjacent to existing roads, while roads in good condition have been destroyed.” Photos of the ORR and the new alignment of the radials at Verite and Vikas show the unnecessary waste of money and materials as well as the destruction of forested areas and threats to valuable buildings, to build roads that add no discernable value.



The [third report](#) uses images that have been collected over the past two years to show the general poor quality of the roads that have been constructed, the inadequate provisions for rainwater runoff and some of the dangers that have been caused by inadequate signage and overall poor planning.



Update on ‘Gujarat Initiative’

As reported in [Bulletin 87](#), on December 25th 2024, Villupuram District Collector D. Mohan [announced](#) a "significant plan" to connect Auroville's development models with Gujarat (see [here](#) for a translation into English). The initiative focuses on environmental protection, sustainable growth, and cultural exchange, particularly in areas of agricultural practices, water conservation, and renewable energy.

Please see [here](#) for an article featured in ‘Country and Politics’ regarding the Gujarat initiative. This is part of an ongoing effort by the AVFO to market Auroville as a ‘sustainable city’. At the same time, over the past three years there has been constant harassment of the foresters in Auroville, and constant threats to the reforestation project that is the very reason for Auroville’s so called ‘sustainability’.

Mitra Youth Hostel Takeover

In January 2025, all of the volunteers and guests who were staying in Mitra Youth Hostel were asked to leave in order to house a group of 27 financial auditors. The auditors have also taken over the first floor of the SAIER building while they carry out their work. The youth were removed under the pretext that they were “[not mindful of the Peace Area](#)” and were accused of alcohol and substance abuse although no evidence was given for this.

Since the beginning of the takeover, the AVFO has repeatedly taken over much-needed residential assets for their staff, causing even greater pressure on Auroville’s housing crisis. Residents attending Housing Service are being told that there are no options whatsoever for housing.

While initially only Government of India funded assets such as some units at Maitreye and Harmony (SAIER’s newly-built staff quarters) were appropriated by the AVFO, now some houses that were privately funded have been taken over by AVFO staff members. Additionally, the children of AVFO staff members are receiving free schooling at Auroville’s schools at a time when unprecedented cuts are taking place due to lack of funding, while they receive a salary that is far above the amount of the Auroville maintenance.

AVFO ‘HRS’ take over more Resident Service functions

As was mentioned in [Bulletin 87](#), the Residents Service has been [renamed](#), and will now apparently be called “Passport and Visa Registration Desk”. As had been already indicated, the AVFO ‘Human Resources Service’ (HRS) will now take over recording information about when Aurovilians arrive and leave in Auroville. The [Auronet post](#) shared by the AVFO ‘FAMC’ also disclosed that the ‘HRS’ team “may be contacted instead of the former Residents' Service for the processing of your file, which will then enable the Working Committee to issue a no-objection letter to the Office of the Secretary, Auroville Foundation for a Visa Recommendation Letter”. As the ‘HRS’ team is composed of Aurovilians with strong links to the AVFO takeover of Auroville, this could create even more difficulties for Aurovilians who are relying on a visa.

Media & Other Links

- **56 Good Years:** The song "[56 Good Years](#)" which was published last year is now back online
- 13th January 2025, **Radiofrance.fr:** [Inde : Auroville, la fin de la ville utopique](#) (In French). A short (4 minutes) report on the situation in Auroville.
- **Chronicles of Dawn:** A new substack dedicated to Auroville-related fiction has been released. You can subscribe [here](#).

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

If you wish to know more, the websites <https://auroville.media/> and <https://standforauroville.org/> contain a great deal of information on the current situation.

Please note that our previous bulletins can be found at this link: <https://linktr.ee/evolvinggalaxy>

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. Also feel free to share with us information, questions or suggestions.

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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