

Auroville Bulletin 9: A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

11th March, 2022

Recent events update:

- **Poll on the prioritization of RADs:** the poll from the Auroville Council is still running until the end of today, Friday 11th March 2022. If you would like to participate in the poll, please follow the personalised link sent to you via email. In case you do not know which RADs to select as your top-priorities, please read [this announcement](#) by the petitioner representatives & coordination team for the RADs on WCom and TDC. This may help you make an informed decision.
- **Status of Vikram Ram:** The Entry Board has [clarified on AuroNet](#) that Vikram Ram “hasn't had any valid status in Auroville since 2017”, meaning that he is no longer registered as a Friend of Auroville. However he seems to be collaborating with the new Outreach Media team. For those unaware, Vikram Ram was registered as a Friend of Auroville in the past, but after having a falling out with Auroville over a land issue, became bitter and put his energy into maligning Auroville and Aurovilians in a website called Auroville Files. This site spread misinformation about Auroville and defamed certain people by name. It was taken down for some time by the police's Cyber Crimes unit due to defamation, however the site was remade recently. The community had a meeting a few years ago to take action against Vikram Ram, and the Auroville Files site, as it was seen as dangerous to Auroville as it showed a false and negative image of Auroville. It is concerning, to say the least, that he is now collaborating either informally or formally as an external paid position with the new Outreach Media team.
- **Drones in Auroville:** Several members of the community have reported seeing drones in Auroville recently. Auroville residents were not alerted that drones are being used to survey the area for the Crown Road. It was instead reported in this news article:
<https://m.timesofindia.com/city/puducherry/tamil-nadu-auroville-proposes-survey-using-drones-to-lay-road/articleshow/90096565.cms>
- **Statement from 4 members of the WCom:** This week, 4 of the members of the Working Committee - Anu, Arun, Partha & Srimoyi - released a [statement](#) regarding how they see their roles as members of the Working Committee. They claimed that they do not have a duty to uphold a decision of the RA that ‘jeopardizes Auroville’s growth’, and went on to say that they do not feel that their duty was first and foremost to the RA but ‘to uphold the ideals of Auroville and like every Aurovilian be at the service of the Divine Consciousness which for us is the Mother’. That is the duty of every Aurovilian, however, there are different manners to interpret Her teachings and to be at the service of the Divine Consciousness. If one person or a

small group of people in positions of power decide that they are the only ones able to receive and enact Mother's vision without considering the collective voice of the RA, Auroville's governance and the aim to move towards Unity in Diversity is not being respected. Moreover, according to their mandate, the Working Committee is specifically selected to 'Represent the Residents' Assembly in interactions with the Governing Board, International Advisory Council and the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation (in collaboration with relevant working groups)'. It is vital that the RA is represented by a Working Committee group that is willing and able to fulfill the task entrusted to them by the residents.

- **Speech of R.N. Ravi, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation:** At the occasion of the seminars organised during the so-called 'Auroville festival', the Chairman of the Auroville Foundation and Honourable Governor of Tamil Nadu, R. N. Ravi, has given [a speech](#). This speech has been transcribed and is available [here](#).

The address dives into a Hindu-oriented interpretation of the spiritual aspects of Sri Aurobindo's writings, and cites the role of the government as that of a mere catalyst in the experiment which is yet to see Auroville's vision half a century down the line. The Auroville Foundation Act is mentioned as a govt. intervention that was a consequence of the community being trapped in desires and egos - a "very subordinate level" which according to the Chairman's speech is also reflected in the current dissonance in the community.

The Chairman states that even though the evolution of consciousness itself cannot be done by the govt., they "have to and will do the physical aspect of it, because Mother had given the design of what the township should be like." This brings up the question of whether there is a confusion between Mother's sketch for Auroville, the Galaxy concept of Roger Anger, and the various iterations of the Master Plan. A detailed explanation on these three different documents and the formulation of the Master Plan [can be found here](#).

It is significant to note that although Auroville holds a diverse range of meanings to different members of the community, the Chairman's address singles out the goal of the experiment as synonymous with only the first point of the Charter, while "the rest of the 3 just follow from it". It is also significant to note that Sri Aurobindo and Rishi Arambind, the more Sanskritized version of his otherwise Bengali name, were used interchangeably (and often) in the address.

- **Visa issue continues:** In the last few days a number of Aurovilians, some of whom have lived here for several decades, have only been granted a 3 month extension. The shortest Entry visa previously given to Aurovilians was for one year. Reportedly the RRO in Pondicherry does not know how to process these short visa extensions as they have never come across them before. The Auroville International (AVI) Board made [a welcome intervention this week](#), echoing Dr Karan Singh's request that visas not be 'disturbed'. The Working Committee has also sent out a [mass bulletin](#) regarding the issue, and asked for anyone affected to email them and outline the

number of years they have been in Auroville and what work or service they have done in Auroville. It is worrying that some old time Aurovilians are being asked to prove their value in this way. In addition, [the declaration form](#) is still required for any visa request despite [previous assurances from the WC](#) that it was only a 'pulse' and not compulsory.

A summary of the visa situation for the last three months

- 58 visa have been requested
 - 25 are still pending
 - 9 people received 1 year visas instead of 5 years
 - 8 received less than 1 year visas (including 3 month visa extensions)
 - 18 received the visa that was recommended.
 - 1 person refused to sign the self declaration
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- **RRO visits:** There has been a continued RRO presence in Auroville. To date, at least 36 individuals have been visited by the RRO and questioned. In addition, there were checks made by the RRO regarding therapist certificates at Quiet but this is reportedly unrelated to the protests and the ongoing situation in Auroville.
 - **Report of the Auroville Council:** The Auroville Council has published [its report for November, December and January](#). Among other important points, the Council informed that it has requested the Selection Process Review Task Force "to include the selection of ATDC members in their proposal to the RA", and that it has created a "Mandate and Policy Review Taskforce ... to review, update and catalog all mandates policies and guidelines". The Council also mentioned that "a study of the gaps and shortcoming of past RAD processes" has been initiated, as a "first step towards developing a new collective decision-making process". These elements seem particularly encouraging in taking a step towards improving Auroville's self-governance.
 - **Results of the survey on what stalled development in Auroville:** The survey 'What blocked development in AV for the last 20 years?' has ended, and the survey results (based on 120 participations) have been published [here](#).
 - **Article in the New York Times:** [This article](#) by Emily Schmall in the New York Times appeared earlier this month. Although the report contained a few inaccuracies, including the statement that Sindhuja Jagadeesh is a 'spokeswoman for the local government', it is encouraging to see that recent events in Auroville have visibility in such a renowned journal.
 - **50 years of achievements:** Recently it has sadly become common for some people to claim that Auroville has 'failed'. [Here](#) you can find an outline of many of the amazing achievements of Auroville.

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. - you are welcome to write to evolvingalaxy@gmail.com.

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.