

View this email in your browser



Auroville Bulletin 90

Supreme Court rulings, New housing guidelines, FIRs filed

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Monday, 14th April 2025

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

How can you help?

There are many ways to help support the community at this time. Here are some possibilities. If you have any skills you would like to offer, or have questions on how you can get involved, feel free to contact evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com or the related email below. Thank you!

Financial assistance

- **Support for Maintenances:** Please support individuals cut off from their maintenances by the AVFO working groups. 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 for legal fees:** Please donate towards legal and delegation fees by emailing evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com. Please see [here](#) for more information about why financial assistance is necessary.
- **Support the RA News and Notes:** The RA News and Notes needs financial support to continue functioning please consider making a donation to Financial Service account number #252150. To read all issues and subscribe, [click here](#).

Hands on help

- **Documentation work:** In light of the Stay Order placed on the NGT verdict it is particularly important to continue with documentation of tree cutting and land clearing. If you are available and willing to help with documentation, please get in touch with evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.
- **Keeping vigil in the AV Council room:** 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.

What is happening now

AVFO 'FAMC' publish new 'housing guidelines'

The AVFO 'FAMC' has recently published new "[Procedures and Guidelines for the use and allocation of an Auroville residential asset](#)," aimed at transforming how housing is managed within Auroville. When observed alongside the new Auroville Foundation (Residence Criteria) [Standing Order 2024](#), these changes represent a significant shift in how Aurovilians' relationship to their homes is defined by the AVFO and their 'working groups'.

The new housing guidelines state that "All residents/occupants of Auroville assets are Permissive Occupants." This language marks a departure from the long-established concept of 'stewardship' central to Auroville's approach to housing. Historically, while acknowledging the Auroville Foundation's legal ownership of assets, Aurovilians were considered stewards of their homes, with certain recognized rights and responsibilities. While it was recognised that a steward could not bequeath their house to anyone after their death, the asset was theirs to live in for as long as they were alive and wished to live there, as long as they were still residing in Auroville. A 5 year grace period was given to those who had good reason to be outside of Auroville for an extended time. There was also a pool of relocation funding, available for those who had invested in a housing asset and wished to leave Auroville for good. These assurances encouraged many Aurovilians in the past to invest their time, labor and resources into creating assets for Auroville that did not legally belong to them.

The new guidelines eliminate the concept of stewardship entirely, replacing it with "permissive occupancy," which carries significantly fewer rights. The guidelines emphasize that Aurovilians may be required to relocate based on the AVFO's assessment of their needs, stating that "Inhabitants may be asked to move to a different asset when their needs change, or if the city development requires this change of accommodation."

A number of the guidelines are explicitly linked to the 'Residence Criteria' Standing Order. For example, in cases where a resident leaves "without approval of the [AVFO] HRS", it is stated that the Housing Service will reallocate their residence after a three-month notice period and for residents who are "asked to leave Auroville", the notice period is reduced to just one month. A further departure from previous policy is that a housing asset stewarded by an Aurovillian that passes away "will not be allocated to, and cannot be used by persons who may have lived with the deceased Auroville resident and whose names are not included in the RoR [Register of Residents]." This would leave spouses and children of Aurovilians that pass away vulnerable to being removed from their homes.

Supreme Court Judgments on Auroville

On 17th March 2025, the Supreme Court of India delivered two key judgments on appeals filed by the Auroville Foundation regarding the governance and development of Auroville. The two rulings concern the appeal against the National Green Tribunal (NGT) verdict of 2022 and the appeal against a Madras High Court order concerning the Auroville Town Development Council.

In the case of [The Auroville Foundation vs. Navroz Kersasp Mody & Ors](#), the Supreme Court set aside the NGT's directions that had theoretically halted the construction of the Crown Road and other infrastructure projects. The reality on the ground has been very different, as [numerous violations](#) of the NGT's directions were recorded whilst the verdict was in place, and since the stay on the verdict came into effect in December 2023 there has been large scale clearing and construction in Auroville.

The NGT had ruled in April 2022 that the AVFO should obtain proper environmental clearances before proceeding with development plans, particularly in relation to the Crown Road. The Supreme Court has now ruled that the NGT's directions were "without jurisdiction and legally untenable," stating that the Auroville Master Plan, which was approved in 2001 and notified in 2010, has statutory force and does not require fresh Environmental Clearance.

The Court stated that "no substantial question relating to environment had arisen" and that the Tribunal had committed a "gross error in assuming jurisdiction and giving directions untenable in law."

In the second case, [The Auroville Foundation vs. Natasha Storey](#), the Supreme Court set aside the judgment of the Madras High Court that had invalidated Standing Order No. 01/2022 issued by the AVFO for reconstituting the Auroville Town Development Council (ATDC).

The Supreme Court ruling has affirmed that the Governing Board (GB) of the Auroville Foundation has full authority under the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988 to constitute and reconstitute committees, including the ATDC. The Court stated that "the Governing Board is vested with all the powers and is empowered to discharge all the functions as may be exercised or discharged by the Foundation."

The Court also stated that the RA's role is "confined only to advise the Governing Board in respect of the activities relating to the residents of Auroville and to make recommendations as specified in Section 19 of the Act, and not any further."

The Court imposed a cost of ₹50,000 on the petitioner, Natasha Storey, to be deposited with the Supreme Court Legal Service Committee. Both cases have been widely reported in the media (please see in the below section 'Media & Other Links').

RA WCom issued a [statement](#) on 20th March acknowledging the Supreme Court decisions. They clarified that "the statutory rights and responsibilities of the Residents' Assembly as outlined in the Auroville Foundation Act and its rules remain intact." They also emphasized that what was at stake was "the principle of cooperation and mutuality between the Governing Board and the Residents' Assembly that was established by the Madras High Court order of 15th March 2024."

The RA WCom statement affirmed that while this principle has "unfortunately been set aside for now, it cannot be permanently disregarded, as Auroville was always envisioned as a

collaborative effort."

ERAD on RA committees & results

Following the Supreme Court ruling, the RA WCom [launched](#) an Emergency Residents' Assembly Decision-making (ERAD) process to formally acknowledge specific existing RA working groups as Section 19 committees under the Auroville Foundation Act. The Supreme Court had confirmed that the Residents' Assembly has the right to have committees formed under Section 19 of the Act that will "advise the Governing Board in respect of all activities relating to the residents of Auroville."

The RA WCom also held a General Meeting on Friday, 28th March to present this ERAD and explain the reasons for it. They said that the aim of this response was to affirm the statutory role of RA-selected working groups. The ERAD concluded on April 6th 2025, you can find the results published [here](#). A total of 598 valid votes were submitted online and in-person, and the results concluded that the RA formally acknowledged 11 entities as Section 19 Committees of the Residents' Assembly. Additionally the Residents' Assembly resolved that the 11 groups should be supported by the community's collective funds.

FIR filed for moving soil from Matrimandir

On 14th March 2025, Auroville residents intercepted a tractor carrying soil from the Matrimandir excavation site to the hill site at Fertile Field. When discovered, there was reportedly an attempt to dump the soil and flee the scene. Residents alerted the Villupuram Tahsildar, who arrived on site along with press representatives.

According to reports, several individuals arrived at the scene to confront the residents, including Selvam (Matrimandir Team), Sundar (Matrimandir executive), Sindhuja (AVFO 'ATDC' amongst other job roles), Antim (AVFO 'ATSC'), Joel (AVFO 'ATSC') and also Mr. Balasubramaniam (Chief Security Coordinator, AVFO). Despite reported pressure from these parties, the residents maintained their position that proper permissions were required for soil transport.

As a result of the residents' actions, the vehicle was seized and taken to the police station, and an FIR (First Information Report) was filed by the Tahsildar. The incident was covered by [local media outlets](#).

Under Indian law, unlicensed movement of soil from one plot number to another is classified as theft, requiring proper permissions from authorities. The soil in question was being moved onto private land that is owned by Aditi Diamonds, a company that [Michael Bonke](#) is a director of.



This incident follows a [letter](#) that was sent to the Auroville Secretary in December 2024, by Arun (Revelation Management Team). The letter documented unauthorized transport of soil across state lines from Matrimandir excavation sites. Arun observed two lorries carrying soil from Auroville and followed one vehicle to confirm the soil was being transported from Tamil Nadu to Sanjeevi Nagar in Pondicherry. In addition to the unauthorized transport, Arun's report raised concerns about the disappearance of soil piles from Matrimandir excavations "at a rapid pace" with "JCB bucket marks" indicating organized removal. The Secretary did not respond to the letter.

As per standard procedure at Matrimandir, one of the executives must sign the gate pass for any material being taken out. Furthermore, an [email exchange](#) from January 2019 reveals that the Matrimandir executives are fully aware of legal requirements to obtain proper permissions for soil transport, especially across jurisdictional boundaries. In an email exchange from that period, a Matrimandir representative acknowledged that the "Tasseldar is not recognizing the Auroville Foundation permit letter to transport the red earth" and that one lorry from Matrimandir had been stopped. The email further stated that "Road Service has to get the permission letter cleared up with the Tassledar before we can supply."

After the FIR was filed, the RA TDC sent a [letter on March 19th](#) to the MM team, the AVFO, and the AVFO 'ATDC', stating their concerns about legal compliance issues around earth mining and moving.

They noted that "Despite previous communication on the same, the MM team, the GB-ATDC, and the AVFO have yet to address these concerns." They emphasized that "Sustainable development, environmental accountability, and responsible urban planning must balance growth with ecological preservation through lawful and transparent practices."

There has been no statement from the AVFO or their 'working groups' addressing these incidents or clarifying the procedures for soil transport from Matrimandir excavation sites. However, [minutes from a July 2024 meeting](#) between the MM team and the AVFO 'ATDC' clearly state that their plan for creating the hill at Fertile Field involved the movement of soil from Auroville land to private land.

Red Sandalwoods cut illegally by AVFO

Two protected Red Sandalwood trees that were located on the radial next to Transition School have been illegally cut by the AVFO 'Land Service'. [Under Tamil Nadu state law](#), there are mandatory guidelines which have to be followed in order to fell these trees, as the wood is particularly valuable and sought after.

On 3rd April 2025, a resident became aware that the trees were being cut and confronted the 'Land Service' workers. Although they were unable to prevent the trees from being felled, the resident put out an SOS call to the community and a few other people came to the scene and managed to prevent the workers from taking the wood away. The state Forest Department was alerted to the action and the residents guarded the wood until they arrived. After they arrived and assessed the situation, the Forest Department officials confiscated the wood and gave verbal assurances that an FIR would be filed against the AVFO.



IIT Madras announces new campus in Auroville

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has announced plans to establish a campus in Auroville. This significant initiative was first mentioned in the [65th GB meeting minutes](#) from December 2023, however most residents only became aware of the project after it was reported in [The Hindu](#) in December 2024 and more recently in the [Times of India](#) in March 2025. The minutes of the GB meeting were only shared after an RTI request was filed.

According to the Times of India article, IIT Madras plans to set up a campus on Auroville land. The campus will reportedly feature a Research Park, an Innovation Hub and a “test track for electric trucks”. IIT Madras director V. Kamakoti stated that the campus will foster collaboration with Auroville in areas such as alternative energy, sustainability, and eco-friendly technologies.

The Hindu's earlier report from December 2024 mentioned that the Research Park would "cater to start-ups interested in rural and sustainability solutions" and would have "access to infrastructure support and networks to grow their technical ideas into business opportunities." The article quoted the IIT Madras director as saying that the institute had "already created a corpus to establish the park."

The 65th Governing Board meeting minutes, dated December 12th 2023, reveal that the Board "noted the MoU signed between IIT, Madras and the Auroville Foundation and approved the allocation of 105 acres of land for the said proposal." Despite the significant impact such a development would have on Auroville and the substantial allocation of 105 acres of land, there has as usual been no consultation with the Residents' Assembly (RA) regarding this initiative.

Several questions remain unanswered:

- Where exactly within Auroville will the 105 acres be located?
- What will be the relationship between IIT Madras activities and the existing Auroville community?
- What governance structures will be in place?
- Have any environmental impact assessments been conducted?
- What timeline is envisaged for the development?

As has been recently confirmed by the Supreme Court, The Auroville Foundation Act stipulates that the Residents' Assembly has the role to "advise the Governing Board in respect of all activities relating to the residents of Auroville," but as with the majority of the activities carried out by this GB since it was formulated in 2021, the RA has been sidelined in making this major and far reaching decision.

Other Updates and Information

News Minute article

A recent article titled "RSS and BJP's quiet takeover of Auroville" (paywalled article [here](#), article text [here](#)). published by The News Minute on 31st March 2025, examined the ongoing changes in Auroville since the appointment of Dr. Jayanti Ravi as Secretary of the Auroville Foundation in 2021. In particular the long-form piece focuses on how cultural spaces in Auroville - particularly Bharat Nivas - have undergone significant transformations that often have religious connotations. New programming is focused on classical art forms, Sanskrit workshops, and exhibitions related to Hindu mythology and the Ram Mandir. The authors note that “ until recently, a variety of miniature statues of the Ram Mandir were on sale. There are plans to reintroduce them.”

The article also discusses the cancellation of the play ‘Jane Bonda’ (please see [Bulletin 62](#) for more information). The satirical play was prevented from being performed at Bharat Nivas after being labeled ‘political’. According to theatre artists who were interviewed, when they attempted to stage the production at another venue, the caretakers of the venue were allegedly warned about possible job losses, funding cuts and visa complications if they allowed the play to go ahead.

PTPS no longer a community service

Pour Tous Purchasing Service (PTPS) is no longer a community-only service, as it now accepts UPI payments (GPay, PayTM and so on) regardless of Auroville status. Previously, only Aurovilians, Volunteers or official AV guests could use the service. Under the former management, which was removed by the AVFO ‘FAMC’ in 2024 without following the correct processes (please see [Bulletin 84](#) for more information), changes were in process that would have introduced a tiered system of payment, so that those who contribute to Auroville would have paid a discounted price on goods, subsidized by visitors and other non-Aurovilians. This proposal was abandoned and now the UPI system of payments means that anyone can use the outlet the same as any other shop.

Miscellaneous news

- **Response to Idealistic Perspectives:** An Aurovilian shared a [response](#) to two idealistic perspectives that have been recently circulated, about the ongoing takeover of Auroville by the AVFO. You can find the original articles [here](#), one is in English only and one in English and French. The article concludes “Real understanding of Auroville's situation requires engagement with documented facts, listening to diverse voices from the community itself, and grappling with complex realities rather than simplistic spiritual narratives”.
- **Auroville Online Store takeover:** Auroville Online Store was forcibly taken over via an [Office Order](#) issued by the AVFO in December 2024. As with all of the unit takeovers implemented by the AVFO and their ‘working groups’, none of the processes outlined in the agreed Code of Conduct were carried out when changing the executive.
- **WCom response to GB FAMC:** The RA WCom sent a [response](#) to the AVFO ‘FAMC’ [notice](#) on executive and management changes. They point out that the AVFO ‘FAMC’ notice is vague, lacks context, makes false claims and repeatedly mentions ‘managers’ despite there not being any such role mentioned in the Code of Conduct.
- The AVFO recently shared a new video on YouTube titled “[Auroville calls YOU! Let's build a better future together](#)”. The video invites people to volunteer, take internships and other collaborations and pushes the AVFO narrative that Auroville is a ‘sustainable city’.
- **VoA Issue 8:** The Latest issue of the Voice of Auroville has been released. You can find issue 8 [here](#), and all the previous issues [here](#).

Media & Other Links

- March 30th 2025, **by Gmail:** [RA Forest Caretakers Newsletter No.7](#)
- March 22nd 2025, **via Substack:** [Chronicles of Dawn chapter 9 \(final chapter\)](#)
- March 15th 2025, **Youtube, Thanthi TV:** [Shocking incident in Auroville Area \(in Tamil\)](#)
- April 7th 2025, **via Substack:** [Exploring the causes of Auroville's crisis](#) by Rod Hemsell
- April 4th 2025, **Youtube, Mère Divine:** [Auroville en Danger \(in French\)](#)
- April 11th 2025, **Youtube, Mère Divine:** [Lecture et Commentaire sur les Critères de Résidence d'Auroville voulu par la Fondation \(in French\)](#)
- February 18th 2025, **community circular:** [To the trees that are no more](#)
- March 17th 2025, **Indiatoday.in:** [Supreme Court fines resident Rs 1 lakh for case against road in Auroville](#)
- March 17th 2025, **Livelaw.in:** [Auroville Residents Have No Right To Be Part Of Council/ Committee Formed By Foundation's Governing Body](#)
- March 17th 2025, **ndtv.com:** ["Right To Development Equally Important": Supreme Court Order On Auroville](#)
- March 17th 2025, **Lawtrend.in:** [Supreme Court Sets Aside NGT Order on Auroville Township Project](#)

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.

You receive this email because you have joined the newsletter **Evolving Galaxy** With the address evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com.

[Unsubscribe](#) to no longer receive emails from us.