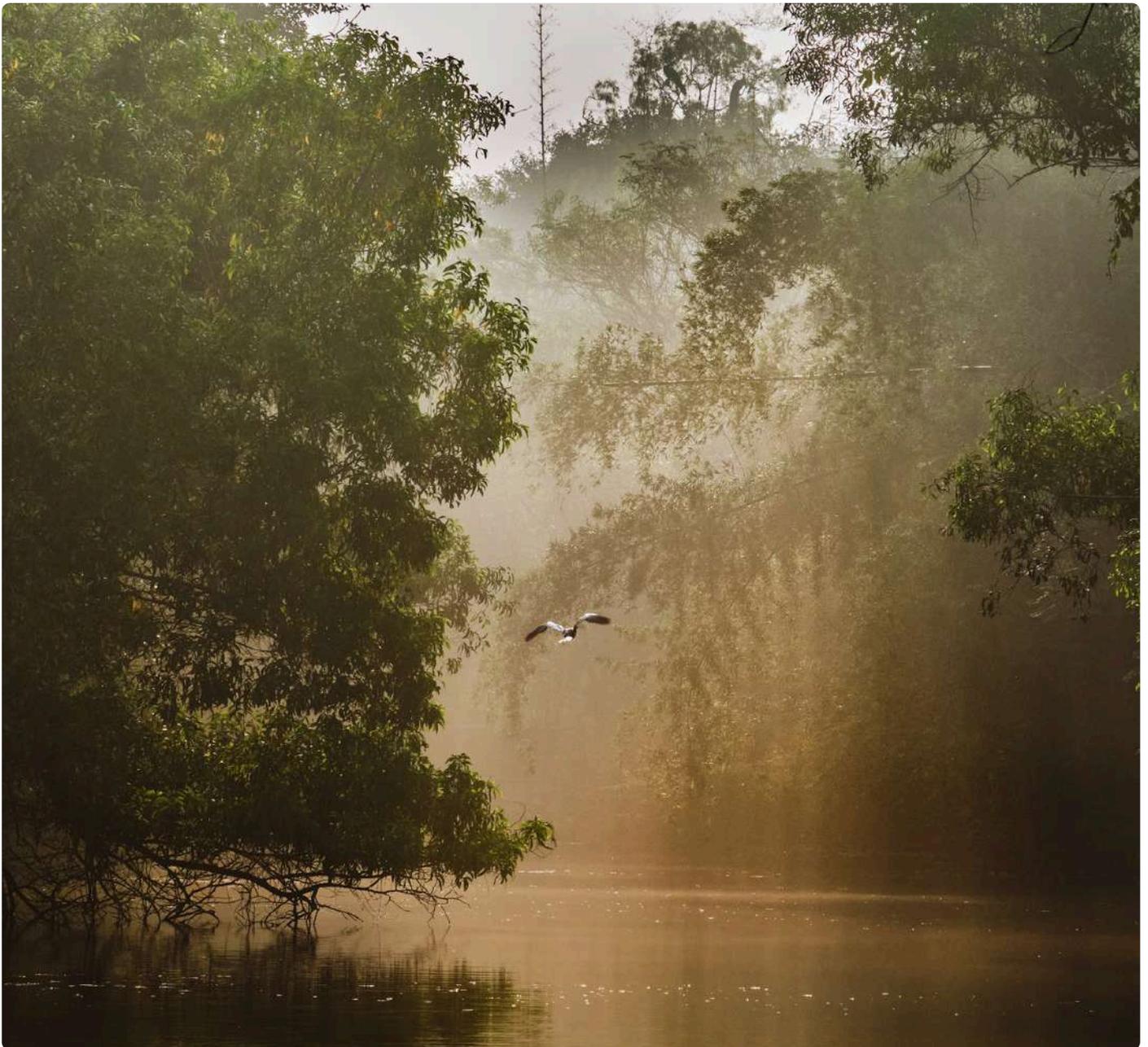




ISSUE 10
FEBRUARY 2026

Voices of Auroville

News & Highlights from the Auroville Community



This is an independent publication, written by a team of Aurovilians and well-wishers committed to transparency, honest reporting, and giving voice to the residents of Auroville.

In partnership with
AURVILLE
Media Liaison



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Cover image: A water catchment in Annapurna farm, 2026

Closing image: Auroville's 50th anniversary, 28th February 2018

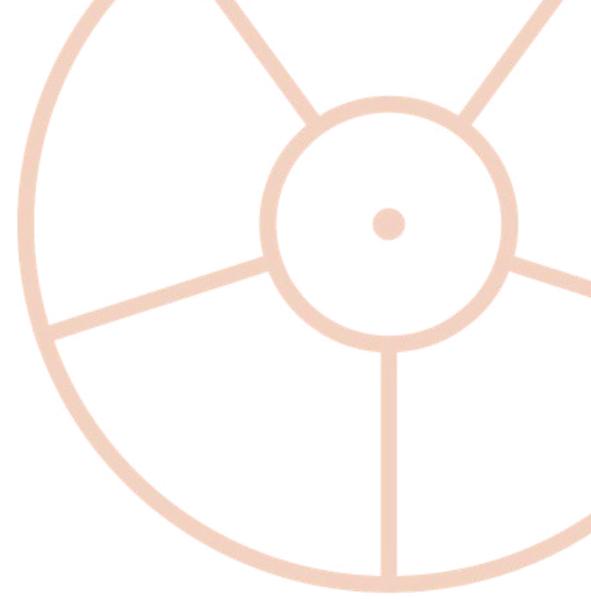
Voices of Auroville

About us

Voices of Auroville is a quarterly magazine to inform well-wishers and friends of Auroville across India and the globe with factual updates about the current events unfolding in Auroville. We are committed to transparency, honest reporting, and giving voice to the plurality of lived experiences that compose and strengthen the Residents' Assembly.

What is Auroville?

Founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa, known as the Mother, Auroville is an international project based on the vision of the great sage and philosopher Sri Aurobindo. This unique experiment in human unity attracts seekers and visitors from all over India and the world. You can find a quick introduction to Auroville in the first issue of *Voice of Auroville*, by visiting auroville.media/voa or by scanning this QR code.



“The individual is not merely a social unit... He is not merely a member of a human pack, hive or ant-hill; he is something in himself, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law as well as his natural or his assigned part in the truth and law of the collective existence. He demands freedom, space, initiative for his soul, for his nature, for that puissant and tremendous thing which society so much distrusts and has laboured in the past either to suppress altogether or to relegate to the purely spiritual field, an individual thought, will and conscience.”

**Sri Aurobindo,
*The Human Cycle***



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In this tenth issue, we focus on a **summary of recent events**, along with **interviews and testimonials** from residents and well-wishers of Auroville.

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— *Editorial Note*

New voices, new beginnings

This tenth issue marks a significant evolution for our publication. In response to the forced closure of *Auroville Today*, we are introducing a new section called "Voices from Auroville," featuring interviews, testimonials, and first-person stories from community members. To reflect this expanded scope, we have renamed the publication *Voices of Auroville*.

From this issue onwards, *Voices of Auroville* operates as an independent publication. We are no longer affiliated with any Auroville working group, which guarantees our editorial freedom. We offer our work in service to Auroville, its community and its enduring spirit.

We remain grateful to all who continue documenting this period with integrity, and particularly the *Evolving Galaxy Bulletin* team for its detailed and regular work in chronicling unfolding events.

In a spirit of service, *Voices of Auroville* will continue providing factual reporting while now also amplifying the diverse voices of those who uphold Auroville's founding vision.

***Voices of Auroville editors,
February 2026***



Pongal Celebrations in Auroville, 2026



Current Crisis

The new Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly, February 2026

Summary of events – Oct 2025 to Jan 2026

The aggressive takeover of Auroville — initiated more than four years ago with the appointment of a new Governing Board and its Secretary, Dr Jayanti Ravi — shows no signs of slowing. Previous issues of Voice of Auroville have covered events through September 2025, a summary of which can be accessed at www.auroville.media/crisis.

The period from October 2025 to January 2026 presents a stark contrast: while the Residents' Assembly's concerns received significant recognition in a Parliamentary Standing Committee [report](#), authoritarian measures intensified, including the first expulsion of an Indian resident as *persona non grata*,

forced closures of independent media bodies, and the seizure of more community spaces.

Although the Governing Board's four-year tenure concluded in October 2025, the Office of the Secretary (also known as the **Foundation Office**) continues to tighten control over residents' lives, disregarding both Parliamentary recommendations and legitimate community governance structures and decisions. As the community awaits the appointment of a new Governing Board in line with the Auroville Foundation Act, residents have responded to the tightening control with renewed resilience and the selection of new working group representatives.

Parliamentary Recognition of Residents' Concerns

A Significant Acknowledgment

On 8th December 2025, a potentially significant development emerged with the release of a [Parliamentary report](#) reviewing the Auroville Foundation, among other autonomous bodies under the Ministry of Education. Issued as the 371st Report of the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports — chaired by Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh and comprising 31 members from across both Houses and all political parties — the report advances several recommendations long articulated by the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly. While the report is advisory rather than legally binding, it represents the most significant external validation of residents' concerns since the crisis began. The report's recommendations, if followed, would signal a decisive shift away from the authoritarian governance approach taken by the Foundation Office since late 2021.



Visit by MP Shri Digvijaya Singh, September 2025

Key Recommendations

On governance and decision-making, the Committee emphasised “the distinctive nature of Auroville as a community” and noted that “the Auroville Act (1988) is unique in that it governs a community, not just an institution”. As such, the Committee insisted that the Residents' Assembly, the Governing Board, and the International Advisory Council “must work together in close coordination and harmony” and that key decisions should be made through “consultation and collaboration”. Crucially, the Committee underscored that “an empowered Residents' Assembly is critical” as it is “the only statutory body capable of representing the residents of Auroville”.

Regarding the highly disputed IIT Madras campus proposal on Annapurna Farm, the Committee explicitly recommended that the farm “should not be disturbed and alternative sites should be found”. This recommendation affirms the concerns long raised by resident bodies and farm stewards, who have argued that destroying Auroville's most productive farmland for an external institutional campus would undermine the township's commitment to food sovereignty and sustainable living. For further details, see the section below: “Annapurna Farm: Parliamentary Support Amid Ongoing Threats”.

On Master Plan implementation, the Committee called for close consultation with the Residents' Assembly and stakeholders, noting that changes should be made as required, and that all land transfers “should be implemented in full transparency and consultation with all stakeholders, including the Residents' Assembly and the International Advisory Council”.

— Summary of events

Most significantly, it recommended that any amendments to the Auroville Foundation Act (1988) and the Auroville Foundation Rules (1997) should be developed through “a consensual process, with the unanimous support of all the three statutory bodies”, directly responding to the Governing Board's stated intention to pursue amendments without meaningful consultation.

The Committee also emphasised that Auroville's international character is "not just a matter of pride, but is the very intent of Auroville," and recommended speedy visa processing, with five-year visas “as the norm for all residents”. It further advanced minimising the role of the Central Public Works Department and other external bodies, in recognition of Auroville's long-standing tradition of self-direction.

A Way Forward?

Members of the Auroville community and the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly gratefully acknowledged the engagement of the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee during his visit to Auroville and Annapurna Farm, welcoming the report as "a reasonable, positive and appropriate way forward", and indicating their readiness to support and collaborate on its implementation.

Whether these recommendations will be heeded remains uncertain. The Secretary Dr. Jayanti Ravi has received another one-year extension, and to date, the Foundation Office has shown little intention to modify its approach despite repeated calls for consultation from residents, the International Advisory Council, and now one of Parliament's own Standing Committees.



End of Governing Board Tenure

The 70th Meeting

The Governing Board held its 70th and final meeting on 1st October 2025 at the Auroville Foundation office building, marking the conclusion of their four-year tenure. In keeping with the secrecy that has characterised their term, outdated information of the meeting emerged only through media reports.

In his opening remarks, Chairman R.N. Ravi characterised the Board's tenure as a period of "course correction" and expressed satisfaction with progress made on infrastructure development and the formalisation of rules and regulations. The report stated that without the Governing Board's “undaunted support against all challenges and accusations, it would not have been possible to resurrect Auroville to its pristine glory and international status”.

The Board collectively thanked Dr Jayanti Ravi for her service as Secretary. Although her one-year extension was due to conclude in December 2025, her term has since been extended again on an interim basis, either for another year or until another full-term Secretary is appointed.

Questionable Legacy

While the Governing Board expressed satisfaction with infrastructure progress, many residents conversant with reality on the ground contest this assessment. Over the Board's four-year tenure, it seems the only completed infrastructure project has been installing an elevator costing around 55 lakh rupees (approx. 60,000 USD) at the Town Hall. Although multiple new projects have been announced, and land was cleared of trees at several sites including areas near the Town Hall and existing communities, nothing was actually built. Numerous roads were begun but remain incomplete, leaving a landscape of unfinished projects.

The partially constructed roads themselves are a significant downgrade from earlier Auroville standards. They carry a substantially higher carbon footprint due to the use of concrete and imported materials, encourage much higher speeds due to lack of speed regulation mechanisms, and create safety hazards with rougher, more slippery surfaces that increase accident risk. The wider roadways have also destroyed established cycle paths, offer less shade for pedestrians and cyclists due to the removal of mature trees, and limit water percolation, contributing to increased flooding during monsoon seasons.

Significant community funds have been directed towards projects of questionable value: Mother's Flower Garden (with a budget of 12 crore rupees or 1.3 million USD); a proposed "Toy Train" for the Kindergarten zone; and a tender for a Virtual Reality Museum. Along the Crown Road between Kalpana and Santé, precious shade trees were removed and replaced with grass lawns and ornamental plantings — glaring changes that prioritise aesthetics over ecology and everyday practicality.

Centralised Authority Approved

The most concerning outcome of the 70th meeting was the Board's move toward further centralisation of authority, granting the Secretary final decision-making power over the reconstitution of all residents' working groups, committees, units, trusts, and entities. While existing group members may nominate new members and resource persons, the Secretary is authorised to make final decisions "in the interest of the Auroville Foundation", marking yet another step in the erosion of participatory governance structures built by residents over decades.



Unfinished road segment, February 2026 (Auroville Foundation does not own the land to complete roads in many places)

— Summary of events

The Board also approved new "Procedures for engagement and functioning of the Residents' Assembly", though no details have been shared with the community. This raises serious concerns, as the Auroville Foundation Act establishes the Residents' Assembly as an authority equal to the Governing Board, not subordinate to it. Any attempt to redefine its functioning appears to conflict with the Act's framework of collaborative governance.

Residents have raised concerns about the steady stream of new administrative directives issued without clear implementation plans, as well as the continued lack of meaningful communication from the Foundation Office and its appointed committees.

Escalating Threats to Residents

Threatening Notices and Contested Appeals

During this period, the Foundation Office's Admissions and Terminations Scrutinising Committee continued targeting long-time Aurovilians and Residents' Assembly working group members with threats of removal from the Register of Residents and eviction from Auroville. Among those affected are all the resident-elected members of the Town Development Council and Working Committee, and many senior pioneers of Auroville.

To date, 39 residents, including individuals awaiting visa renewal, received notices giving them 14 days to respond to allegations or face removal from the Register of Residents. The Working Committee of the Residents'

Assembly described these letters as "filled with baseless accusations, written in a tone that is hostile, intimidating, and devoid of humanity".

The majority of those targeted are international Aurovilians who rely on entry or business visas to remain in the country, and who have been openly critical of the Foundation Office's actions and methods. In response, residents circulated an open letter that received broad community support, objecting to the intimidating tone of the notices, and calling for respectful engagement in line with Auroville's founding ideals of human unity.

In September 2025, shortly before the end of its tenure, the Governing Board constituted an 'Appellate Committee' to hear appeals against residents' terminations of Auroville status and removals from the Register of Residents. The committee was composed entirely of Governing Board members, the same body responsible for the widely contested decisions under appeal, creating an inherent conflict of interest in the appeals process.

The First Indian Resident Formally Expelled

On 28th October 2025, the Foundation Office took the unprecedented step of formally declaring an Indian resident of Auroville *persona non grata* for the first time, citing the Residence Criteria Standing Order of 2024 (see [Voice of Auroville Issue 08 and Issue 09](#)). Major Arun Ambathy (retired from the Indian Army), confirmed as an Aurovillian by the Residents' Assembly's Entry Board in April 2025, was barred from entering or residing in Auroville. Residents and services were instructed not to engage with

him “in any capacity”, and the Auroville Security Service was instructed to enforce “strict compliance with this directive”.

This marked a sharp escalation in the Foundation Office’s use of coercive authority. Since arriving in 2018, Arun has worked in reforestation at Revelation Forest. He is a vocal supporter of the Residents’ Assembly, and is highly engaged with the local Tamil community. He has repeatedly raised concerns about unauthorised activities, including soil mining, inter-state soil transport, and unpermitted tree felling of protected species — actions that led to three official state government complaints against the Foundation Office, and intervention by the Collector’s office and the Forest Department. He also supported forest workers seeking unpaid gratuities after their dismissal.

Residents have since launched a [petition](#) opposing the Foundation Office’s decision to declare him “*persona non grata*”.

Impact on Auroville's International Character

Ongoing pressure from the Foundation Office on visa-dependent Aurovilians since 2021 has significantly dampened international interest in joining Auroville. Between June and August 2025, non-Indian entrants comprised only 23% of those entering through the Residents’ Assembly Entry Board process, and only 30% via the Foundation Office's own admissions committee. Despite the lack of exact figures, it is widely acknowledged in the community that many international Aurovilians have left over the past four years given mounting challenges



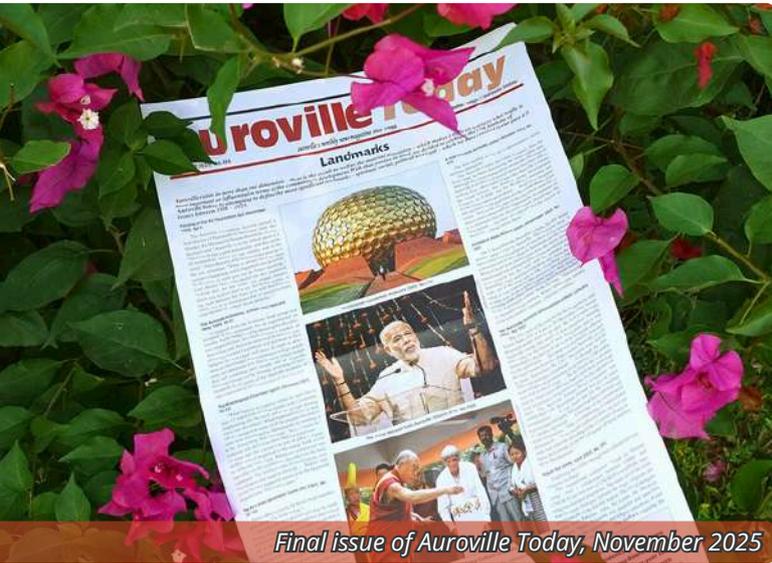
Major Arun Ambathy (Retired) in 2021



Pongal Celebrations in Auroville, 2026

to secure visas and sustain livelihoods. This steady erosion of Auroville's international character stands in direct contradiction to the Parliamentary Standing Committee's observation that internationalism is a defining principle of Auroville that lies at the core of its purpose and founding vision.

— Summary of events



Media Censorship Reaches New Levels

The Forced Closure of Auroville Today

In November 2025, Auroville's independent monthly news magazine *Auroville Today*, operating since 1988, announced it was ceasing operations. The closure came in response to a new Media Policy approved at the Governing Board meeting in December 2024, which was belatedly released to Aurovilians in November 2025.

The editorial team was informed in a meeting that all Auroville media would henceforth function under one "Media Hub" designed to "unify how Auroville represents itself to the world and to foster a positive image". The long-standing editors of *Auroville Today*, widely respected for their nuanced reporting on events in Auroville over the decades, decided they could not function under a policy that contradicts their core values of honest reporting on "the messiness of Mother's experiment".

The editors also noted that a substantial donation earmarked for *Auroville Today* had not been released for some time, hampering their operations and responsibilities towards donors. To mark its closure after 37 years, the magazine made [its final issue](#) freely available to readers.

The Contradiction of "Alignment"

The Foundation Office's response to the closure was revealing in its contradictions. A member of its Funds and Assets Management Committee dismissed "claims of censorship or persecution", while simultaneously stating that Auroville's media landscape must "align" under "a unified umbrella of communication", arguing that "fragmented messaging harms Auroville's credibility and purpose".

Assertions that "censorship and persecution are unfounded" clash with the reality of events since 2021, which include the takeover of AuroNet (Auroville's internal communication platform) and mass-mailing system, the [auroville.org](#) website, and the News and Notes community bulletin, as well as the forced transfer of admin rights of resident-run Facebook groups to a Foundation Office representative claiming authority as "AVF Media Vetter".

False Narratives in the Media

The Foundation Office has also actively spread misleading information through mainstream media to project a positive image. In a stark example, a prominent newspaper reported in August 2025 that former Governing Board Chairman Dr Karan Singh had "commended the progress" of the Crown Road project and the Matrimandir lake redevelopment during a

visit to Auroville. Dr Singh later stated in [an interview](#) with *Auroville Today* that it was "not true", and that his brief visit was for unrelated personal reasons.

Dr Singh expressed concern about the Foundation Office's current direction, stating that "Trying to build Auroville without the cooperation of the Aurovilians is *prima facie* a contradiction which goes against the *raison d'être* of Auroville". The Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly subsequently wrote to the newspaper requesting a correction; however no correction had been issued at the time of publishing this tenth edition of *Voices of Auroville*.

Independent Media Under Threat

Residents' Assembly-managed communication platforms continue to operate without official funding, with many struggling to sustain their work.

The situation affects non-English media as well: the quarterly French-language journal [La Revue d'Auroville](#) recently cautioned their readers not to send contributions through formal Foundation-related channels, due to uncertainty about whether donations would reach them, raising concerns about the ongoing viability of the journal.

In response to these pressures, residents launched a new YouTube channel, [Auroville Uncensored](#), to provide independent video reporting on local developments in Auroville.



Threats to Community Spaces and Assets

The Youth Centre Under Attack, Again

The Auroville Youth Centre — a vibrant community space for over 30 years and a symbol of community resilience since December 2021 — faced renewed closure attempts in late 2025. On 3rd November, its electricity and financial accounts were cut without notice following a youth event. While the financial accounts were later restored, electricity has yet to be reconnected.

On 9th December, Youth Centre residents were called to a meeting purportedly about restoring power, only to be informed of a unilateral decision to close the Youth Centre altogether. The Foundation Office characterised the Youth Centre as "a focal point for activities not aligned with the ideals of Auroville". The residents issued a detailed rebuttal, arguing that the "selective and misleading" claims reflect the deeper "erosion of trust, due process, and community spirit over the last four years". A [petition](#) in support of the Youth Centre has since gathered over 7,000 signatures from wellwishers worldwide.



— Summary of events

Council Room Seized, Then Reclaimed

For nearly three and a half years, the Auroville Council meeting room in the Town Hall had been kept safe for use by the Residents' Assembly and its working groups through a continuous community-led 24-hour vigil. On 14th November 2025, the lone Aurovilian on duty was asked by a member of the Foundation Office's Working Committee to step outside under a false pretext. When she did, she was ambushed by a group of approximately ten people who entered and took over the room.

The Foundation Office's Working Committee later claimed on Auronet that the repossession was "peaceful" and asserted that the Auroville Council is not "formally recognised under the current governance framework of the Auroville Foundation". This was strongly refuted by both the Auroville Council and the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly, which pointed out that the Council is a statutory body of the Residents' Assembly, constituted under Section 19 of the Auroville Foundation Act.

However, on 26th December 2025, the newly constituted Light for Unity group claimed the Council room and informed Foundation Office appointees that they would be using it, together with the Auroville Council, "to support their ongoing work for peace, well-being, and the larger interests of the Auroville community".



Assets destroyed in Afsanah Guest House after the takeover

Afsanah Guest House Takeover

On 16th October 2025, Afsanah Guest House, one of Auroville's most prominent hospitality venues, was forcefully taken over by the Foundation Office, with its appointed Security Service present. When the executive Auradha Markus, who had run the guest house since mid-2022, tried to retrieve her personal belongings, she was physically struck by an 'Aurovilian' security guard. Her belongings were withheld, and the office computers and files were taken.

The guest house, which had the honour to host His Holiness the Dalai Lama during one of his visits to Auroville, was privately financed by its founder and never received Government of India funding. Under Auradha's and fellow executive Rosy's management, Afsanah Guest House had prospered and doubled its income over four years. Many residents suspect its takeover was motivated by its suitability for hosting visiting politicians and VIPs.



After the takeover, longstanding guest bookings were cancelled without notice, and extensive tree clearing and infrastructure demolition took place to make way for a new section of a radial road, being built just a few metres from and parallel to an existing one in good condition. In typical unplanned *modus operandi*, the land at either end of this stretch is not owned by Auroville, so it is another piece of road from nowhere to nowhere.

Eternity Land Exchange Intensifies

Residents of Eternity community have been told that the Foundation Office now intends to exchange all 18.5 acres of the community's land, not the 7.5 acres previously disclosed. The Foundation Office's Working Committee claimed, without providing any documentation, that the expanded plan had been approved by the outgoing Governing Board.

The earlier proposal involved trading 7.5 acres of Eternity land, valued at over 130 crore rupees (over 14 million USD), for a similar amount of land in scattered parcels with a combined value of around 15 crore rupees (1.63 million USD) — leading to a loss to Auroville of 115 crore rupees (over 12.5 million USD). The beneficiary of that proposal is the son of T. Kannan, who also benefited from the earlier AuroOrchard land exchange (see [Voice of Auroville Issues 06 and 07](#)).

The real estate speculator T. Kannan has now acquired land near the Matrimandir's Visitors' Entrance, where he has begun construction and reportedly plans to build a hotel. Such developments raise questions about the effectiveness of the Foundation Office's land exchange strategy, and cast serious doubt upon



Eternity community, a lush canopy along the beach

the Foundation's claim that these land exchanges advance Auroville's collective interests, rather than private gain.

The Eternity land has been cared for by the same family since 1986, and developed into a thriving, ecologically biodiverse forest through private funds and collective effort. The environmental work done there is a model of coastal regeneration and sustainability, and its living fences are widely acknowledged to have provided much needed coastal protection in the area during past environmental emergencies.

To date, the Foundation Office has provided no clarity on what lands it would exchange for Eternity, nor how the loss of such high-value and ecologically significant land would benefit Auroville.

— Summary of events

Annapurna Farm: Lease Deed Signed Despite Parliamentary Opposition

Despite the Parliamentary Standing Committee's explicit recommendation that Annapurna Farm "should not be disturbed", the Foundation Office signed a long-term rent-free lease that transfers control of the bulk of the farm to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras. Signed on 23rd December 2025, the lease grants full use of 100 of the farm's 135 acres for 33 years, including all areas of active farming, rainwater reservoirs, dairy and grazing grounds, granary and food processing facilities, workshops, residences, and other infrastructure.

The Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly reports that the lease was executed without consultation and "in secrecy". It has raised concerns about procedural and potentially illegal flaws in the process, and legal options are being explored.

Annapurna is Auroville's largest organic farm, supplying around 30% of locally produced food and processing 90% of the community's grains. A [petition](#) opposing the farm's destruction has garnered over 16,000 signatures.

Systematic Closure of Community Activities

The Foundation Office's Funds and Assets Management Committee has been systematically shutting down units and activities that are not run by its appointees and which allegedly do not generate enough income, signalling a shift towards profit-driven criteria at odds with Auroville's founding ideals. In one such example, Anitya community was ordered to close its commercial activities without explanation. Founded in 2018 on abandoned land, the community has built a thriving residential area and had offered a range of healing therapies. In April 2024, one-third of its land, including the Thamarai Learning Centre, was arbitrarily taken over to construct an unplanned, and unfinished radial road.

Many other units offering services, therapies and products that provided modest but sustainable livelihoods for artists, writers, musicians and therapists have faced similar closures deemed financially unviable by the Foundation Office. This marks a troubling shift from Auroville's founding vision of a community where money serves human aspiration rather than governs it, towards a model where commercial profitability determines which activities may exist.



Wildlife in Annapurna farm, January 2026

Other Concerning Developments

Exclusionary Maintenance Increases

The Foundation Office's Funds and Assets Management Committee announced a long pending increase in the maintenance allowance (in lieu of salary) for Aurovilians who work full-time for the community. However, this measure excludes large groups of residents, including newcomers, those working half-time, children and students, those on care or maternity support, elderly Aurovilians eligible for retirement funds (that have been mislabelled "unauthorised"), and farmers and foresters. Eligibility for the maintenance increase was made conditional upon submitting a mandatory work recognition form that forced residents to justify their working schedules, all within a 24-hour deadline.

Legal Updates

The legal validity of the Auroville Foundation's Admissions and Terminations Regulations (2023) remains unresolved. Although court arguments concluded in August 2025, a written ruling was never submitted; hence the case is being reconsidered following the transfer of the presiding judge. Several court cases concerning the functioning of the Residents' Assembly and the selection of its Working Committee are still pending in the Madras High Court.

On 28th October 2025, the Madras High Court dismissed an Appeal that had been submitted by a resident, challenging the Foundation Office's land exchange transactions on procedural grounds. This appeal came after the court had ruled that the Foundation Office had followed due process after consultation with its own appointed committees.

Illegal Roadside Tree Cutting

Six trees, including two mature valuable Kaya trees, were cut by Foundation Office associates near Edayanchavadi village for the outer ring road expansion, without the required Highway Department clearance. Despite initial intervention by some of the local population and the presence of police, the cutting was later completed, resulting in the Highway Department filing a police complaint.



New year celebrations at Matrimandir gardens, January 2026

Community Resistance and Resilience

Light for Unity Emerges

In late December 2025, the new community initiative Light for Unity emerged, formed by a group of Tamil Aurovilians seeking to "restore peace, harmony, dignity, and a conscious collective approach to community participation and governance".

— Summary of events



Residents' Assembly meeting, January 2026

Following a contested ousting of the graphic design and printing unit from Town Hall by Foundation Office committee members, the group established itself in the Town Hall Graphic Section, opening the space as a “community hub” to address ongoing issues in the community. On 26th December 2025, the group claimed the use of the Auroville Council Room that had been seized just weeks earlier by Foundation appointees. Light for Unity framed both actions as efforts to reclaim community spaces for collective use.

Following a community meeting held at Kalabhumi on 27th December, attended by 175 people, the Light for Unity group reported success in securing the replacement of a member of the Housing Board and the removal of an Executive of the Land Service, both of whom were appointees of the Auroville Foundation office. (The Executive of the Land Service has been reappointed since then.) Two weeks later, on 8th January 2026, a larger general meeting attended by over 500 residents met at Kalabhumi, where Light for Unity presented its envisaged role and initiated an emergency referendum of the Residents' Assembly. This marked a notable resurgence in participation after two years of decreasing community meeting attendance due to threats against “unauthorised” public gatherings.

New Working Groups for the Residents' Assembly

In January 2026, Light for Unity gathered signatures from over 300 residents to trigger an emergency referendum of the Residents' Assembly. The referendum aimed to expedite the selection of new working group members for positions that have remained unfilled or whose membership terms have expired. This emergency measure became necessary because the Foundation Office and Governing Board have been blocking the Residents' Assembly's normal governance processes.

830 residents participated in the referendum, selecting a nine-member committee entrusted with appointing new working group representatives within two weeks.

In early February, the selection committee announced the new composition of four working groups: the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly, the Funds and Assets Management Committee, the Land Board and the Auroville Council.

However, the Foundation Office continues to maintain its parallel structure of Governing Board-appointed working groups, including its own Working Committee, Funds and Assets Management Committee, and Land Service. The legal dispute over which set of working groups holds legitimate authority remains ongoing in the courts.

Continued Documentation

Despite the closure of [Auroville Today](#), documentation efforts continue through multiple channels. [Voices of Auroville](#) maintains its quarterly coverage of events for a worldwide readership, while

the [Evolving Galaxy Bulletin](#) provides regular community updates. The biweekly newsletter [Auroville Witness](#) publishes first-person narratives from current and former residents and those with long-term relationships with Auroville. Other ongoing coverage is provided by [The Tragi-Comik Newsletter](#), the [Auroville Uncensored](#) YouTube channel, and international support networks such as the [Auroville International Centers](#) or the [Auroville Global Fellowship](#).

Gratitude Letters

In January 2026, Heartweavers, a group of Aurovilians formed during the current crisis to foster connection beyond polarities, organised two sessions inviting residents to write letters of gratitude. The response was remarkable: the first session at PTDC and Solar Kitchen gathered 180 letters in just four hours, with a second equally successful session following. Addressed to fellow Aurovilians, working groups, or simply "the Divine", these handwritten messages of appreciation are being distributed throughout the community. In a time of division and pressure, this community initiative reflects the efforts made to foster a spirit of care and solidarity.



The Parliamentary Standing Committee's report marks a significant moment: recognition from within India's democratic institutions that residents' concerns are legitimate, and that a different course is both possible and necessary. Whether this recognition translates into meaningful change, however, depends largely on forces beyond the community's control.

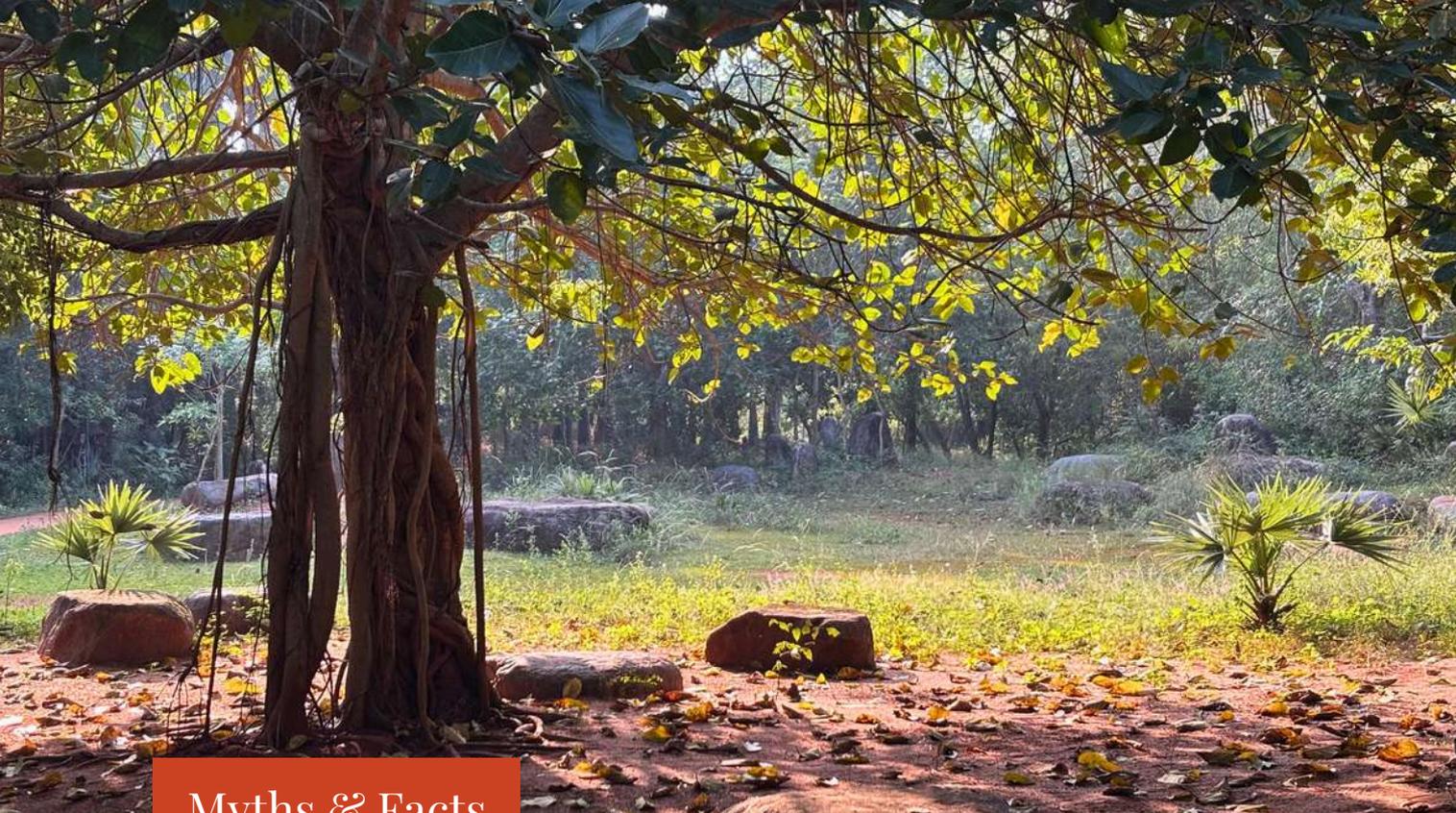
What does remain within the community's control is its response. The emergence of Light for Unity, the selection of new working group representatives, ongoing documentation efforts, petitions for decision-making, and everyday acts of solidarity all demonstrate that Auroville's core spirit — human unity, conscious collective endeavour, and the commitment to build something meaningful — endures.

The crisis in Auroville mirrors broader global patterns of democratic erosion, where centralised authority diminishes citizens' rights and suppresses dissent. Yet the community's sustained resistance also reflects a wider truth: communities grounded in shared ideals can preserve integrity and solidarity even under immense pressure.

As always, the support of friends and wellwishers worldwide remains vital. Your awareness, advocacy, and practical support make a real difference in safeguarding this unique experiment for future generations. For ways to help protect Auroville's vision and its people, please see "[How to Help?](#)" at the end of this issue.

Looking Ahead

As 2026 begins, Auroville faces deep uncertainty. Fundamental questions remain unresolved: When and with whom will a new Governing Board be constituted, and what will be its approach? Will the Parliamentary Standing Committee's recommendations be taken seriously by those in positions of authority? What lies ahead for Annapurna Farm, and for residents facing termination notices?



Myths & Facts

Mythbust:

Countering misleading narratives

Over the last four years, an increasing number of misleading narratives have been spreading within Auroville and in the media, and have created confusion. This section aims to clarify and debunk one of these narratives with facts.

You can find other mythbusts in previous issues of [Voices of Auroville](#).

Myth: The original Galaxy concept already addressed issues of environmental consciousness and climate considerations. Therefore there is no need for additional assessments or updates, in order for development to progress in the present-day.

Fact: While the Mother and Roger Anger showed remarkable foresight about environmental issues — particularly in regards to automobiles and renewable energy — the Galaxy concept emerged in the 1960s and

cannot encompass all of today's environmental challenges and scientific understanding.

The Master Plan explicitly acknowledges these shortfalls. The Auroville Master Plan (Perspective: 2025) defines itself as a “policy framework” intended to “guide” successive five-year and annual Development Plans; it was never intended as a fixed blueprint but instead expected to evolve over time.

Crucially, the Master Plan places environmental considerations at the centre of all development.

It states clearly that proposals will be considered only if they are “effectively eco-friendly and environmentally appropriate” for each case. In other words, environmental intent at the original conceptual level does not exempt individual projects from environmental assessment — it is not sufficient to assume that because the overall concept was environmentally conscious, individual projects automatically meet environmental standards.

The Master Plan further makes clear that there is no unrestricted freedom to build without regard for environmental impact. It calls for “a participatory Environmental Management process which will be integrated within all development, planning and urban design elements”.

The document recognises that “the entire Auroville township is sensitive from environmental and ecological points of view” and therefore requires “orderly and planned development of human habitation embedded in a regenerated natural environment”. This involves ongoing assessment and planning, not blind reliance on concepts formulated sixty years ago.

Scientific understanding of climate change, biodiversity loss, water systems and sustainable development has advanced dramatically since the 1960s. The Master Plan reflects this by calling for development that “harmonises both the needs of the environment and of development”, supported by clear “guidelines for such developments”.

The Master Plan's emphasis on the Green Belt — vital for water harvesting, aquifer recharge, bio-diversity conservation — draws on ecological knowledge that simply did not exist when the Galaxy concept was conceived.



Wildlife in Annapurna farm, January 2026

Environmental impact assessments and detailed development planning are therefore not departures from the Mother's vision, but are its responsible application in light of current science and documented best practices.

Vision alone is not a substitute for thorough assessment. The Mother laid the ethical and conscious foundation; fulfilling it today requires the careful, evidence-based planning processes that residents have consistently called for.



"Although the Master Plan perspective 2025 provides a time horizon of 25 years, it will neither be traditional nor static and rigid. [...] The present momentum in Development and Environmental activities will be strengthened through a participatory Environmental Management process which will be integrated within all development, planning and urban design elements."

Master Plan (Perspective 2025), a blueprint document formulated by the Residents' Assembly in 1999, and gazetted by the Government of India in 2010.



Lived Realities

Voices from Auroville

Starting with this tenth issue, *Voices of Auroville* will feature interviews, first-person narratives and testimonies from Aurovilians on the ground and well-wishers closely connected to Auroville. With the closure of *Auroville Today*, we want to give a voice to realities lived by those who have built and continue building Auroville. To begin this new direction, we republish three carefully chosen pieces.

◆ Problems?

An interview with Gloria, 2008

◆ The field of Auroville is of inestimable value

By Kathy Walkling, April 2023

◆ Beauty: cultivating an attitude of humility

An interview with Jyoti Naoki Eri, October 2024

Problems?

An interview with Gloria, 2008

This text is extracted from an interview released by Auroville Press in 2008 with Aurovilian pioneer and architect Gloria. Along with her partner Piero, they followed Mother's guidelines to design and implement the construction of the Matrimandir's Inner Chamber, as well as several school buildings, residences, and Auroville's Unity Pavilion. Nearly two decades on, this interview remains acutely relevant.

Even now, if you compare Auroville with the outside world, even considering all the mistakes, the difficulties, at least here there is an aspiration, a search, something so different, so much deeper. It is interesting to travel outside Auroville; one can see beautiful things, but where does one find a family like Auroville which has all these ideals in common?

For the first years after Mother left, there was an amazing hope, and there was a very strong connection between us, a very intense collective life, but in spite of this the division was deep. Today we don't have this great hope as we had before; we are very much aware that it will take much more time, because it is infinitely more complex — but I find that many of us have progressed a lot. Not outwardly, but inwardly: we learnt to have detachment, patience towards others, which we didn't have before. Earlier we had a lot of love for those who were part of our own circle, but we felt a lot of anger towards those who were of a different opinion. It's not like this anymore. One has realised that everyone has their own background, their own ideas; everything is complex and we cannot expect everybody to think in the same way. One feels much more compassion, even towards oneself. One knows how difficult it is to change, even with the best goodwill; how it is difficult to become wise, to experience mental silence, to preserve experiences; extremely difficult.



Gloria at work in the 1970s

Are we together enough, in view of all the problems?

[...] I can see the problems, yes, but it is not so important. We give a huge importance to our own truth, our own opinion. I don't believe anymore that there is only one Truth comprehensible by all. I don't believe it anymore. Where is the truth? The truth is made of a million truths together. Our mind cannot see the full picture.

— Problems?

For the problems of Auroville this is the same. We look for solutions and we don't find them. But if we do some inner work and go beyond, we can accept that difficulties are part of a complex evolutionary work. [...]

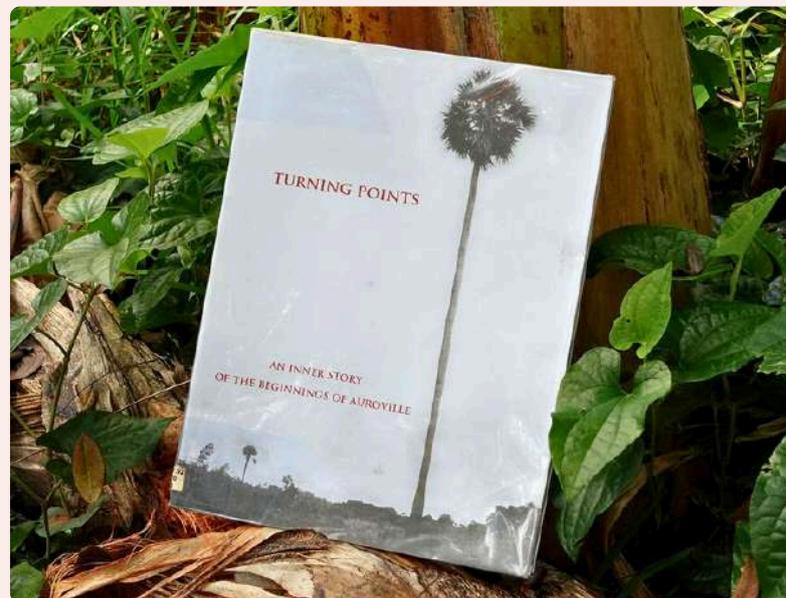
If you think of all the communities that were born in the world during the sixties, where are they today? But Auroville is still here. Auroville is here. Of course at times everything seems impossible, because there are so many problems: speculation, Pondicherry development [...] How to solve all this? On a practical and human level, it is impossible. But for me, even if Auroville at some point would become like Shantiniketan, as is probable, then it is not for us to decide. We do our best, and then it becomes what it becomes. Our aspiration will still have had its importance. In history it will have had its importance. And maybe that's what the Divine wanted. If you look at world history, it's the same thing. Civilisations are born, develop, and then die. It does not mean that they were unimportant. Think of the ancient Egyptian civilisation or ancient Greece: they have disappeared. But what they have given the world is still alive, it is still very important. So it was worthwhile...

Otherwise one would despair...

Mother gave Auroville its basis, which is *karma yoga*. One does the work as best one can, but one is not attached to the result. The result is not in our hands... This thought gives me a certain peace, and also the desire to work for Auroville till the end. Too bad if it does not develop, but what we do, I hope, still has some value.

Extract from a conversation with Gloria in 2008

The full interview can be read in Turning Points, published by Auroville Press.



The field of Auroville is of inestimable value

By Kathy Walkling, April 2023

This is adapted from a text written by Aurovilian Kathy Walkling in April 2023. Among many other contributions to Auroville, Kathy launched and managed the woman-led social enterprise 'Eco Femme' from 2010 to 2023. While Kathy has left Auroville for the time being, her testimony remains relevant today.

I moved to Auroville from Australia – half my life ago – back in 1997. Over the last 26 years, I have contributed in many different ways to building Auroville. I started with community building, tasting something of the pioneering experience as I joined a group of passionate newcomers to help build Adventure community on newly-acquired Auroville land in the greenbelt, right next to Edayanchavady village. There I learned and engaged with the foundational work of germinating seeds and planting trees, along with the more difficult challenge of learning to get along with people who came from such different cultural backgrounds. During the 10 years I lived there, I also engaged in various community projects including: joining the housing service and helping to kickstart the new residential community Creativity; preparing the SAIER development proposal to enable major Government funding to flow into Auroville for high impact projects such as Savitri Bhavan and Botanical Gardens; and developing the Visitors Centre as a gateway to introduce visitors to the multiple layers of Auroville life.

I became the Auroville representative for the Auroville International Centres to provide an interface between Auroville and the world. I also helped facilitate a number of study abroad programs that enabled foreign students, e.g. from the California Institute of Integral Studies, to visit



Kathy Walkling in 2023

and engage with Auroville and Integral Yoga. Everything I did for these first 10 years emerged from an external invitation to serve, and I did so as my skills and capacities enabled me to. It was my joy and privilege to serve Auroville without an agenda. The whole time, I continued to pursue inner growth and deepen my knowledge of Integral Yoga and understanding of what it means to be a True Aurovilian. I understood this as dissolving the strong grip of ego and becoming more transparent to serve the Divine's consciousness.

— *The field of Auroville...*

In about 2005 my focus shifted and various experiences and challenges led me to start to look more locally at the relationship between Auroville and our neighboring villages. I felt a deep impulse to work with village women and children, and this led to the birth of Thamarai community centre in Edayanchavady. This deeply transformational experience gave me a direct experience of a work which I feel is at the heart of one of Auroville's major challenges – to work with and integrate different worldviews into a harmonious unity. This work has been part of a continuous journey which asks me to widen inside and accommodate different perspectives, needs and motivations. This led me to engage more closely with the work of Auroville Village Action Group which in turn culminated in the birth of the project which now occupies most of my time – Eco Femme.

Eco Femme is a global women's empowerment initiative which has had impact across India and around the world. We introduced cloth washable menstrual pads into the India marketplace as a sustainable alternative to plastic sanitary pads and have been instrumental in reframing menstruation as an experience that can be healthy, dignified and rooted in our indivisibility from nature – nothing short of a worldview shift that bridges global perspectives with local realities. The field of Auroville – the flexibility that allows individuals to experiment, to explore, try things out, stretch and contribute – is of inestimable value in a world where opportunities like this become increasingly confined due to the crushing pressures of capitalism, not to mention the constraints in vision and imagination that emerge in societies which limit most people to small domains of influence.

It is my deepest hope and prayer that in all the churning that is happening here in Auroville, this open space can be preserved so that each, like me, can find a place to BE and to actualise their deepest potential on behalf of life itself. For this is what I understand Auroville is truly meant to be – a living laboratory for a new way of living, to foster the birth of a new human that is rooted in the knowledge of our intrinsic unity with all life. I believe this is our destiny, and that the opportunity to participate from a place of free will is a prerequisite for this new human to unfold its full potential and help build the city the Earth urgently needs.

***Adapted from a text published
by Kathy Walking on 9 April 2023.***
You can read the original text in full [by clicking here](#), which will lead you to the Auroville Witness newsletter.



The Eco Femme team, 2022

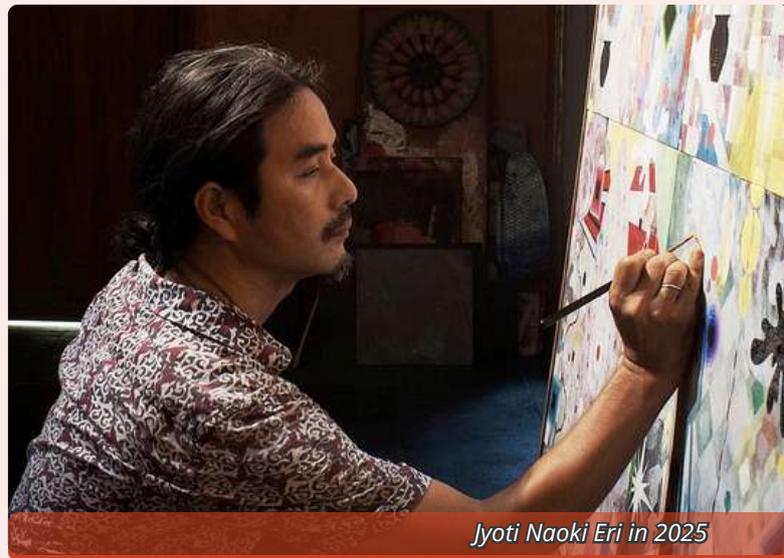
Beauty: cultivating an attitude of humility

An interview with Jyoti Naoki Eri, October 2024

Jyoti Naoki Eri was born in Kyoto, Japan, and has lived in Auroville for over 20 years. Working across multiple disciplines including sculpture, painting and landscape design, he served as a Matrimandir executive from 2017 to 2021. In this interview by Christine from La Revue d'Auroville, translated from French by Auroville Today and further abridged here, he discusses his relationship with beauty in Auroville's current context.

For me, the beauty specific to Auroville is the beauty of spontaneity, in any field. It's something profoundly meaningful. India already has this spontaneity, but in Auroville, because of our intention, we experiment with a structured and conscious approach in order to create a vessel to capture that spontaneity. Of course, we have beautiful natural surroundings and an international community, which makes Auroville something truly beautiful and unique. But this spontaneity is something that exists independently of us and which we cherish, even though what manifests is often not what we expected.

We create a social structure, rules and regulations, but this spontaneous beauty always goes beyond all that, and in the end, we change, we adjust, and we smile at each other – that is the beauty of Auroville. It's subtly playful and unexpected. What we plan doesn't manifest as we projected it, because we are meant to work together. Therefore, it transcends individualistic approaches. Something else emerges, and this "something else" can ultimately be appreciated as both process and result. That's the beauty of Auroville: it consists of an intangible aspect (which is the most important), which also leads to a tangible one.



Jyoti Naoki Eri in 2025

There's a gradual disappearance of the beauty that once surrounded us. People involved in works claim that for now they're building the road, the lake, and that beauty will be added "later." What do you think of this reasoning?

I have to speak from the Japanese context. We Japanese are influenced by animism, by Shinto — we live close to nature and collaborate with it. That's the essence of the Japanese psyche and culture. Harmony is essential. To live in harmony, we cannot begin by imposing our ideas. First, before doing anything, we must study nature, the environment, everything around us, the context of the project, the people, and the whole society.

— Beauty...

We cannot impose our ideas on nature and the environment. For that, we must cultivate an attitude of humility. Not to try to impose our ideas. That is essential.

Beauty is the result of our aspiration toward harmony. The more we aspire to harmony, the more we arrive at beauty. That is our challenge. Of course, our context is international, and Auroville is located in India, and there are the ideals of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We must of course consider all three. But no one should claim they understand the ideals of Auroville, of Sri Aurobindo, or of the Mother. We need space for constant progress, space for collaboration. We must not fill this space with ideology and ego. No one owns the greater truth.

What I believe is that the Matrimandir was a great achievement. And we must aspire for all Auroville projects to come from an aspiration as high as the one that led to the Matrimandir. They must all be of that same quality or aspire even higher. Every project should be a child of the Matrimandir.

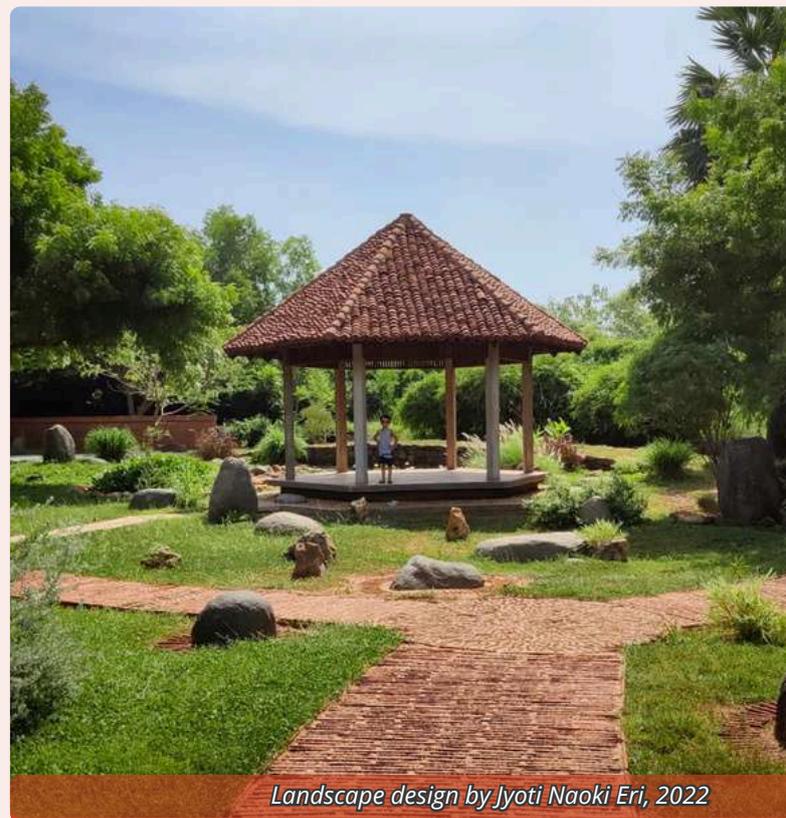
But, for example, the Crown Road is in total contradiction with the Matrimandir's realisation, with Auroville's aspiration. One cannot feel the Matrimandir's presence in the Crown Road. The Matrimandir is for now the highest material manifestation of Auroville, and after that, we must not aim lower.

I also have doubts about how the Matrimandir lake project is progressing. Some people in charge say: "Beauty will come later." For some people, unfortunately, beauty is just a superficial addition, or just on the surface. That's a problem. Whether for the Crown Road or the lake, these

two projects are being carried out hastily. Moreover, they're being carried out in a way I would call capitalistic – in the sense of: "We have this much money, so we can do this." But that's not true. This precisely separates us from the deeper connection with the matter. Money is not the first element to consider, whatever the decision to take. In my opinion, that's a backward attitude.

You could say that money is just the fuel for the vehicle, not the reason for choosing a destination.

In my 20 years living in Auroville, I can confidently say it really takes time to understand Auroville and the living expression of this place. Above all, patience and humility are essential qualities for deeper understanding – and they don't necessarily go along with linear, result-oriented planning or a capitalist mindset.



Landscape design by Jyoti Naoki Eri, 2022

Beauty must be present from the beginning. Beauty must be integral. And that includes the process! Because in the end, beauty will be a conscious manifestation of the process. It's the same as yoga: we can't skip the process. But that's what's happening now. We're even skipping the decision-making process! We're taking shortcuts in our collective yoga.

There's a certain naivety in our approach. We invoke the Mother, we wait for her intervention – and so we act less. Actually, we should act as if there were no Divine. [...] Of course, I believe the Divine is always there. But we should not rely excessively on the hope of divine intervention, resting on it. It may seem contradictory, but if we are to go beyond the human, we must use all human potential. Otherwise, we cannot truly learn from our experiences and move forward.

Extract from an interview first published in *La Revue d'Auroville* No. 63 (October 2024), and further republished in *Auroville Today*, No. 431-432 (June 2025).
You can [read the full article here](#).

Want to read more interviews?

Following the closing of *Auroville Today*, we have decided to include stories and interviews in our publication. In our next issue, we will feature exclusive interviews and continue republishing existing testimonials. In the meantime, you can also check out:

- *Auroville Witness*

A biweekly newsletter that publishes first-person narratives from current Auroville residents, past residents, and those with a long-term relationship with Auroville.

aurovilleglobalfellowship.org/witness

- *Auroville Today website*

A thorough repository of past articles from Auroville Today, including interviews with residents and well-wishers of Auroville.

auroville.today



'Incarnations of Time', an artwork by Jyoti Naoki Eri, 2024

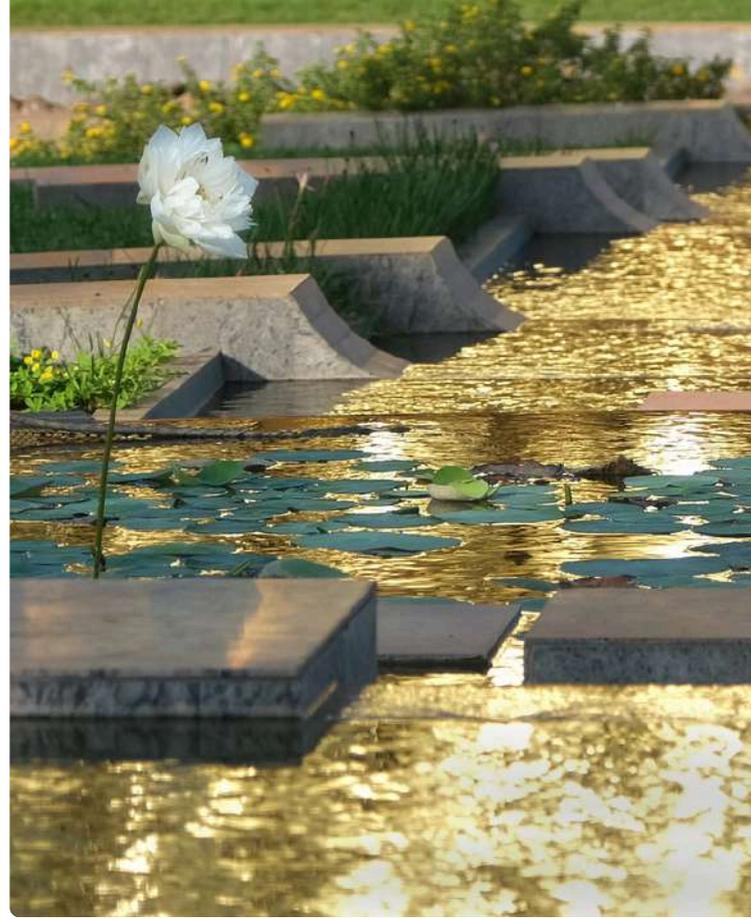
— *How to help?*

Thank you for reading our tenth issue of *Voices of Auroville*. We hope that you found it an informative read, despite the alarming news it covers.

The aim of our journal is to give voice to the Residents' Assembly of Auroville and uphold its decades of work to realise 'the City the Earth Needs' for the common good.

Wondering what you can do to help the Auroville community?

Here are a few immediate suggestions:



1 Stay updated and well informed

The new administrative regime has invested much of its efforts in **controlling the narrative** by censoring information, publishing oversimplified propaganda through diverse channels and punishing dissenting views. Today more than ever, we are all invited to be discerning and check where each piece of information originates from.

Some other reliable and fact-based news sources include the www.auroville.media website, and a community-led newsletter called the Evolving Galaxy Bulletin. For more information, contact media@auroville.services

To subscribe to *Voices of Auroville*, contact voa@auroville.services

2 Spread the word, raise awareness

Share this journal - and other testimonies - with your contacts and friends to make sure the voices of Aurovilians are not silenced. Everyone should know that Auroville needs help. If you can, reach out to potential change-makers: people with a wide network, journalists, philanthropists, diplomats, artists...

3 Offer your service or financial support

The current struggle for Auroville's survival requires everyone's help and participation. If you are able to offer some of your time and energy, or if you can offer some financial support to help those whose livelihoods have been impacted by the current crisis, reach out to us at voa@auroville.services.

Thank you - together we are stronger.



“If the growth of consciousness were considered as the principal goal of life, many difficulties would find their solution.”

– The Mother,
6thth February 1957



Auroville's 50th anniversary, 28th February 2018

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