

News in brief

Auroville Housing Survey 2011

175 people responded to a housing survey done by L'Avenir Communications Platform. 70% of them are Aurovillian, the remainder are Newcomers and friends of Auroville. The survey's main findings are:

74% of people need homes within a year. There is a fairly even divide in the types of units needed with 37% being family, 34% single and 29% couples.

41.6% of those surveyed are willing to steward outlying Auroville land.

78% want to live in the residential area, 75% say they need 2-3 rooms and the most popular housing preference is clustered detached or semi detached houses, followed by apartments and row houses.

51% of people have some financial capital, 46% of those have 5 lakhs or less, 26% have 5-10 lakhs, 20% have 10-20 lakhs and 4% have more.

41% would like to have a rental option, 57% of those could offer under 3,000Rs, 20% could offer 5,000Rs, 7% could offer 8,000Rs and 5% could offer more.

An analysis of these people's current housing situation shows that 79% are living in Auroville housing assets; 12.4% pay rent inside Auroville and 6.2% outside.

City Services budget

The Budget Coordination Committee has submitted a budget for the financial year 2011-2012 to the FAMC. This year, expenses are expected to exceed income by Rs. 40 lakhs. The deficit will be covered from the reserves. Aurovillians getting a full-time maintenance will have their overall maintenance increased by about 10%. Aurovillians getting less than a full-time maintenance will not get an increase in cash, kind or Pour Tous but will get the increase in the lunch and health funds covered.

Other major features of this budget are an increase in the contribution commercial units pay for every Aurovillian working there from Rs. 2,200 to Rs. 2,400 /month and an increase in school fees for guests from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 6,000. Commercial units are to give their minimum unit contribution (33% of net profit before contribution) fully unspecified, unless approved by the BCC. The units at the Visitor's Centre will contribute 2% of their turnover, of which 1% will go to the Matrimandir Reception Centre (to be built).

On the expenses side it was agreed that the maintenance budget, from which maintenances to Aurovillians are paid, will increase by 11%. Individual maintenances (cash, kind, and in-kind) will increase by 9.6%; the number of full-time equivalent maintenances will increase from 443 to 448; and there will be no new capital grants issued.

Termi-fauna survey

The Centre for Pollution Control and Environmental Engineering (CPEE) of Pondicherry University has been conducting a systematic survey of termite species in North-eastern Puducherry. As a part of this programme, a survey is now being conducted at Auroville in collaboration with an Auroville team.

CPEE's interest in the local termite species is to further its recently introduced concept of termigradation as the basis of a new solid waste manage-



PHOTO: COURTESY CPEE

Sampling the termites from Aurodam

ment technology. Termigradation involves the use of locally-available species of termites in ex-situ or

in-situ termi-reactors. They have translated the concept into viable processes that have the potential to handle ligneous and other types of 'hard' bio-wastes which resist microbial attack and hence cannot be treated by existing solid waste processing technologies like composting and vermin-composting.

Progress in the Matrimandir Gardens

The concrete pool of the Garden of Consciousness and the seven descending pools that slope down from it have been completed. The base of the fountain has been clad with slabs of granite.

In the Garden of Existence a golden thread has been created that will run through all gardens. The thread is made by glueing golden tiles onto thin aluminium strips. The tiles being used are the leftover tiles from the two million tiles fabricated for the Matrimandir discs.

Auroville Arts new website

The new Auroville Arts website (aurovillearts.com) functions like a window for all those interested in purchasing art from this international township. Potential buyers can view art directly, or will be directed to the specific website of the individual artist. The site is a service for Auroville artists who do not pay charges to participate.



PHOTO: COURTESY MATRIMANDIR

Creating a golden thread in the Garden of Existence

Matrimandir Gardens Support Group

Further to a vote of the Residents' Assembly on some issues in the Matrimandir Garden, which was not heeded by the management, and following the recommendations of the Matrimandir Gardens Forum, the Auroville Council has constituted a nine-member Support Group for the Matrimandir Gardens. The function of this group is to assist the Matrimandir gardens design team and be a communication channel and bridge between the Garden Design Group and the community as a whole. The aim is not to create an arena where opposite ideas confront each other but to initiate a learning process to discover in common the condition of a progressive unity. A first exploratory meeting took place last week with members of Matrimandir garden design team, Aurovillians working in the Matrimandir gardens, Matrimandir executives, the proposed Aurovillians and the Council.

New roads

In July the Vikas radial road and the stretch of



PHOTO: COURTESY MATRIMANDIR

Work on the pool in the Garden of Consciousness is almost completed

the Crown Road between Arka and Surrender were completed. Work has started on another stretch of the Crown Road, from Kailash up to the Pour Tous Distribution Centre. The work will be completed by mid October.

Land encroachment

Members of the Working Committee, Land Resource Management and Auroville Security have been dealing with a number of cases of encroachment of Auroville land.

Rain Drop healing

Quiet Healing Centre offers a new treatment called Rain Drop healing, an application of nine key essential therapeutic grade oils which are dispensed like drops of rain and massaged lightly into the feet and back. This healing method is described as a powerful non-invasive technique utilizing the antiviral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory action of the nine essential oils to assist the body in maintaining normal spinal curvature, to support the immune system, relieve body and joint discomfort, relax stressed muscles as well as balance energies and lift the spirit.

Lost hibiscus varieties

The Matrimandir Nursery workers are seeking to complete the collection of all the hibiscus flowers that the Mother named. Seven varieties remain to be found. Contact earthyoga@hotmail.com for help.

Sunlit Future

Sunlit Future has developed two Solar Home Systems: a 1 KW system @ Rs 2 lakhs and a 680 Watts system for Rs. 1.58 lakhs. Solar panels have a 10 year warranty, batteries a 4 year and the solar inverter a 2 year warranty.

Cité Universitaire

In response to the needs of an increasing number of volunteers and interns who want to participate in the building of Auroville, a project called 'Cité Universitaire' in the International zone has been initiated. The project has received site permission from L'Avenir d'Auroville. The 'Cité' wants to provide a 150-bed apartment for students, teachers, researchers and technical experts volunteering in Auroville. It hopes to reflect the higher ideals of Auroville in its architectural quality and concept. The 'Cité Universitaire' should be conducive to inner growth and personal development.

Passing: Erica Schumacher



On August 22nd, Erika Schumacher, who lived in the Surrender community from 1993 till 2007, passed away in her home in Arnis, north Germany, in the presence of her family and friends.

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