



In the great interest of India (and Tamil Nadu)

# COLLABORATION for AUROVILLE AREA PROTECTION Newsletter

(In brief, this newsletter is called "COLAAP Newsletter")

July 2010 - March 2011

Issue No. 48

**The Mother:** "And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work on one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the ... cure will be found. And then, that is why - THAT IS WHY I was made to start Auroville." (*Mother's Agenda Vol.9, Date 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1968*)

### **Mission Statement:**

We seek to safeguard the territorial integrity of Auroville from the vagaries of the market forces, from the unplanned and incongruous developments so that Auroville could develop into mankind's first unique Universal Township – the Earth-Queen, the Rose-flower of the Earth – which has the potentiality to emerge as a new kind of United Nations, become a major life-line of Tamil Nadu and render extremely significant service to the unity and integral progress of India and humanity.

### **Vision:**

To create win-win situations for all the stake-holders, to secure the whole-hearted cooperation of all – the landowners, the neighboring population, the potential donors, the concerned administrative departments at the local, State and Central level – for protecting the lands for the appropriate and unified development of Auroville together with the appropriate and ideal development of the surrounding population and localities: an Auroville bio-region integrated development which ensures beautiful and harmonious growth of all the constituents of the bio-region.

## **Vision Kindler**

"Auroville is larger than life, Auroville is much more than India. Auroville encompasses within itself the spirit of the world, the spirit of human beings. What you are doing in Auroville is what I think the world community should be doing..... In diversity, you discover the unity of the human race. That is the celebration of Auroville. Let's all celebrate it and take it forward."



Shri Kapil Sibal

Union Minister for Human Resource Development,  
(also Union Minister for Information Technology and Communication)  
Government of India,  
(During his visit to Auroville in July 2010)

## **Part 1**

### **Report for the Period (July 2010 – March 2011)**

During the nine months under review, Auroville Foundation purchased 4.81 acres in the planned township area.

The total donations received for the 12 month period (between April 2010 to March 2011) amounted to ` 87,78,961 (\$1,97,991/ ). This includes contributions from within Auroville as well as from friends and well-wishers of Auroville.

The highlight of the period, however, was the exchange of 6.31 acres near Certitude with the outlying lands. The exchange relieved the Auroville community as a whole from one of the major pressures of inconsistent developments happening right in the very centre of the township and kindled a hope that

many such critically important plots could possibly be secured for a unified and harmonious development.

The lands still to be secured in the city or the urban areas of Auroville stands at 206 acres (83 ha.) out of a total 1200 acres (486 hectares). Of these, 72 acres (30 hac.) are Tamil Nadu Government lands comprising canyons, fallow lands etc. Steps are underway that these lands be leased to Auroville Foundation on a long term basis for infrastructure development.

In the Green Belt and the Access Roads to Auroville's four zones the situation is much less advanced with more than 60 percent of the area still to be secured. Recently, a significant possibility has arisen in the Green Belt whereby 125 acres (50 ha.) have been offered to Auroville for part purchase and part exchange. We would need significant financial resources to negotiate successfully this offer. In this context, from our next issue No. 49 onward we will commence a new column on the relevance and potentialities of Auroville Green Belt.

Another highlight of the period was that that the Master Plan of Auroville Universal Township, published by the Town and Country Planning Organisation, Government of India, in 2001 has finally been gazetted in the Gazette of the Government of India. This would, hopefully, strengthen Auroville's case for Tamil Nadu state government's protection to the planned township area. This is in the great interest of the Tamil Nadu state itself.

A yet another good news, especially for our Indian friends and donors, is that tax exemption under 35(1)(iii) of the Income Tax Act, which allows for 100 percent tax exemption, has been renewed for Auroville in the category of donations for Social Science Researches and Scientific Research.

A major challenge that has emerged in recent times is that of encroachments on lands of Auroville. Not all the lands owned by Auroville Foundation are of immediate use but they will be needed for the gradual, appropriate and unified development of the township. Hence, to protect these lands has become matter of great and urgent importance. Steps are being initiated whereby Aurovilians willing to work as temporary care-takers of such pieces of lands are identified and entrusted with the responsibility.

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## Part 2

### Visit of the Chairman, GB and IAC



Towards the end of November 2010, Hon'able Chairman of the Auroville Foundation Dr. Karan Singh and most of the members of the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council of the Auroville Foundation visited Auroville for their biannual meeting. Working Committee of the Auroville Foundation and other representatives updated them with the progress report and brought to their notice ongoing issues of importance. At the end of their visit, they also met the residents

of Auroville in an open forum. Dr. Karan Singh was congratulated for 'Dayawati Modi Award for Art, Culture and Education' conferred on him by the Vice President of India Shri M. Hamid Ansari. On his part, Dr. Karan Singh spoke at length touching upon major aspects of Auroville – education,

village work, outreach work in Tamil Nadu and India, infrastructure development, securing the remaining lands, and the subjective life and growth of Aurovilians. Appreciating the level of fresh energy and confidence that he and his colleagues witnessed, he strongly advised for an enhanced communication of Auroville's outreach work. Referring to Adyar Poonga Ecological Restoration project in Chennai (which was to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh but was cancelled at the last moment due to other urgencies, and subsequently was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi), Dr. Karan Singh suggested to bring out publications that highlight the development related projects undertaken by Aurovilians outside Auroville. "The magic figure of 50,000" residents from across the world may be far away but at least 5,000 residents in near future should be feasible, he opined.

In the question-answer session that ensued, one Aurovilian said that the most logical step after the creation of the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988 by the Indian Parliament is that the Tamil Nadu government follows it up by enacting a complementary Act that protects the planned township area from incongruous developments. He requested Chairman to exercise his standing as one of the senior most and respected leaders in the country for this cause.

### **IAC report:**

IAC members too, like Dr. Karan Singh, stressed on the vital importance of the visibility of Auroville's extraordinary outreach work to be celebrated and better known. "Co-evolution has been the motto of their approach from the early days and we appreciate these promising results. We look forward to the presentation made to us becoming a pamphlet" they wrote in their report.

**Editor's note:** Between 1999 and 2006, Auroville Outreach team used to bring out a quarterly bulletin called *Auroville Outreach* containing articles on the projects and activities of Aurovilians. The publication was distributed among many dignitaries in the Central and the State governments, to various embassies and some of the consuls in India, to past and current members of the GB and IAC and to eminent friends and associates of Auroville. However, in 2006, the US based agency that was sponsoring the publication expressed its inability to continue its support. The publication has since been called off. The issues published during those 7 years can be viewed at <http://www.auroville.org/journals&media/outreach/outreach.htm>

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## **Part 3**

### **Inspiration:**

In July 1937, in answer to a question by K.D. Sethana on the connection between lives and work of Augustus Caesar and Leonardo da Vinci, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "Augustus Caesar organised the life of the Roman Empire and it was this that made the framework of the first transmission of the Graeco-Roman civilisation to Europe—he came for that work and the writings of Virgil and Horace and others helped greatly towards the success of his mission. After the interlude of the Middle Ages, their civilisation was reborn in a new mould in what is called the Renaissance, not in its life-aspects but in its intellectual aspects. It was therefore a supreme intellectual, Leonardo da Vinci, who took up again the work and summarised in himself the seeds of modern Europe."

**"...the writings of Vergil and Horace and others helped greatly towards the success of his mission."**

We wish to highlight these words because they bring out one of the most important facts of the human progress: writers and thinkers have always played crucial role in shaping the

civilization. At the very start of one of his major books *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo points this out in following words:

“There are even historians who deny or put aside as of a very subsidiary importance the working of the idea and the influence of the thinker in the development of human institutions. The French Revolution, it is thought, would have happened just as it did and when it did, by economic necessity, even if Rousseau and Voltaire had never written and the eighteenth-century philosophic movement in the world of thought had never worked out its bold and radical speculations.”

Harold Lasky, British political thinker, wrote: “Service to thought is the noblest of human vocation.”

During 1993 and 1994, an Aurovilian Aryadeep published two booklets on the importance and urgency of securing and safeguarding the planned Auroville township area. Here he had expressed his concerns and ideas that he had developed during his 3 years of stay in Auroville. One was titled “Reaching out the Survival Challenge of the Earth-Queen” and another “In Quest of the Dawn's Amplitude: That Breathing Land”. They had generated significant impact and fulfilled certain needs. However, one of the positive impacts came to light just recently after the lapse of 16 years!

Jopy Sol, a friend of Auroville, was given these two booklets by office bearers of AVI Netherlands. What follows in Jopy Sol's own words:

### **The Ten - Euro Campaign**



“In the far past there were times when I translated articles for the Dutch 'Auroville magazine' as per the request of its editors. In 1995 they gave me two booklets about the need for the remaining land purchase in Auroville with the request to draft a summary to be published in the magazine. I didn't like the topic very much as I associated land purchase with an undesirable form of materialism I rather shied away from. But while reading the booklets I couldn't but realise the necessity of it. After all, if Auroville were to ever come off the ground, the city would need

to have access to that ground. The author had managed to convince me totally of the necessity to purchase the land.

After brooding on this for a while I came to a conclusion and sent a proposal to the then management of Auroville International Netherlands: start a ten-guilders campaign. At the time we still had guilders and ten guilders didn't exactly amount to a too large burden on the shoulders of the contributors. Ten guilders a month would amount to 120 guilders a year and, if 100 Dutch individuals would participate, that would mean 12.000 guilders a year.

The Netherlands is only a small country. If in other countries, too, similar campaigns could be started up, yes, then... In a kind of vision I foresaw that in February 1998, on Auroville's 30th birthday, the goal could be reached.

The management accepted the proposal in the sense that they did support it, but I had to do all the leg work. All recipients of the Dutch Auroville magazine received an info sheet with an answering-strip enabling them to join the action via automatic bank transfers or otherwise. Quite a few subscribers responded, and that was great, but they weren't the hundreds I had hoped for. Certainly in the beginning several large one-time gifts came in. Some of these have been loyal from 1995 onwards. From May 1995 through September 2010 an amount of €56.249/- has been received

on the bank account of the ten-Euro action. Of this, the amount of Euro 56.147/- has been transferred to the “Lands for Auroville Unified-LFAU” account of the Auroville Unity Fund. The miscellaneous expenditure was taken care of by me.

On one hand it is a good amount, on the other the goal has still not been reached. Pity, pity, pity!!” -

Jopy Sol

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## Part 4

### News in Brief

Below we present a brief selection from a large number of events, projects and activities that took place since our last issue in June 2010.

### Ministerial visit



*Human Resource Minister Shri Kapil Sibal (middle) in informal conversation with an Auroville resident during tea after the book release. Shri V. Narayanasamy, Union Minister of State for Planning Parliamentary Affairs and Culture, looks on.*

On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010, Auroville was honoured by the visit of Shri Kapil Sibal, Human Resource Development minister and Shri V. Narayanasamy, Union Minister of State for Planning Parliamentary Affairs and Culture. The main purpose of their brief visit was to release an illustrated educational book “Passage” prepared by teachers and students of the Last School. The book was published by Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, SAIIER, Auroville. However, it was a pleasant experience for us when in his address to the community, Shri Kapil Sibal dwelt on his philosophy of life, his aspirations and thoughts. From that and from his informal meetings with the Aurovilians, we had the glimpses of a person whom we would

call “an Aurovilian at heart”. Shri Sibal himself said that much when he said in his speech that if he had the chance, he would stay in Auroville.

### “Welcome to a Universal Playground”



13 of the 25 national pavilion groups participated in preparing panels for an exhibition with the above title. It was inaugurated at the Unity Pavilion on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010 by Marc Luyckx Ghisi, member of the International Advisory Council, former advisor to the two European presidents and author of “The Knowledge Society”. The International Zone of Auroville

has been conceived as a site that consciously explores and encourages, to put it in the Mother's words, “all that is beautiful, noble, great and generous in the life of the country”. When we say in our vision statement that Auroville could emerge as a new kind of United Nations on India's soil, it is mainly to this vision of the International Zone that we are referring to.

The bright and brilliant exhibition spread over 36 panels presented succinctly the inspiration and vision behind the zone, its planning and the progress made so far.

Two days after the inauguration of the exhibition, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the site for the future Pavilion of Africa was consecrated in the presence of Dr. Karan Singh, members of the International Advisory Council and Mr. Shimelis Adugn, an eminent public figure from Ethiopia. African students from South India, the Africa House Group, Auroville and Swaram Music Group, Auroville conducted the ceremony while Jaya of the International Zone presented the plans of the pavilions.

### **“Aligning one's soul with the soul of your nation”**



(Photo Auroville Today)

This was the title of a 3-day workshop in March 2011 offered by Wolfgang Schmidt-Reinecke, a close associate of Auroville from Germany and Soleil Lithman, founder of the Hladina Method – an evolutionary healing approach. The workshop, organised by the International Zone group, aimed at developing awareness of the concept of nations' true being as expounded by Sri Aurobindo and integrating one's true being with it.

Bill Sullivan, one of the participants, said, “...it was clear this workshop offered a real process for the planning and development of the International Zone. To access a “nation soul” only a soul process will work and that was aptly demonstrated.”

### **Village women as professional mason**

60 ladies of Vanur village in the vicinity of Auroville received a 2-month professional mason training at the Auroville Institute of Applied Technology. This was regarded as the first of its kind training course which might set a trend for the rest of Tamil Nadu and India. Most of the women had schooling only up to 5th to 7th standard. They were working in stone breaking mines and after that were unemployed. The Institute is exploring the possibilities for their future career as mason. This includes building houses sponsored by TN Govt. under the Housing Scheme and forming “a network-based Cooperative Entrepreneurship”. “We believe that this is a great opportunity for women to move from poorly paid stone breaker to a much better-paid profession such as mason.” – writes Lavkamad, the director of the institute.

### **Sadhana Forest, Haiti**

A team of volunteers from Sadhana Forest, Auroville visited earth-quake torn Haiti in April 2010 with a view to volunteer in the rehabilitation work. Their work there was well received and it has culminated in Haitian administration entrusting them with a large area for creating an indigenous food forest. The project is located in Anse-a-Pitre and is called Sadhana Forest, Haiti - an extension of Sadhana Forest, Auroville. The new community not only aims to improve the self-sustainability of local people but also to light the flame of Auroville spirit in Haiti.

Sadhana Forest, Auroville was founded by Aviram and Yorit 7 years ago on 70 acre of severely eroded land on the outskirts of Auroville. For further information: <http://sadhanaforest.org/>

## A Danish Award for Sadhana Forest

Sadhana Forest, Auroville was awarded the 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Humanitarian Water and Food Award ceremony at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Shri Ashok Kumar Attri, the Ambassador of India to Denmark, attended the ceremony in honour of Sadhana Forest. For further info. <http://waterandfoodaward.wordpress.com/>

## Auroville Earth Institute – presentation at Washington DC

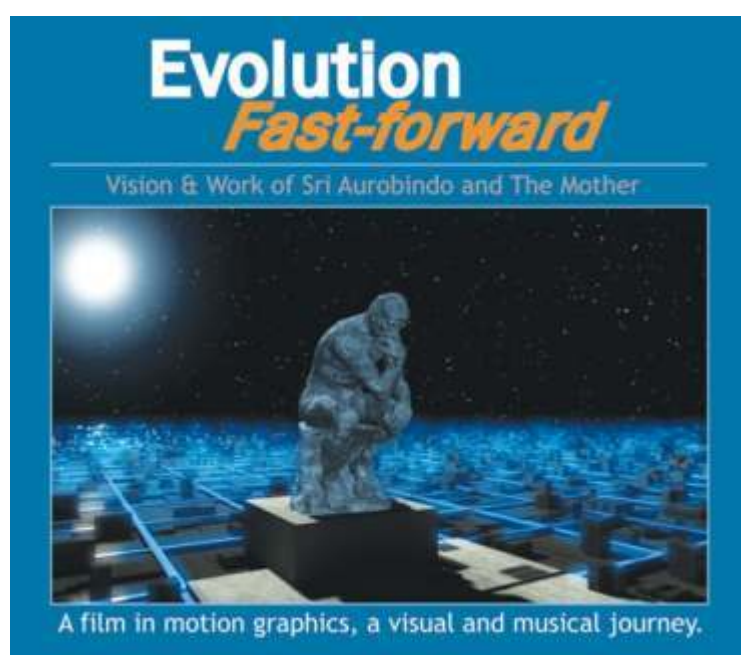
Satprem Maini, founder - director of the Auroville Earth Institute was invited in February 2011 at Washington DC, USA, for the annual meeting of the “American Association for the Advancement of Science”. This event gathered scientists and researchers from around the world to present their research in their field of work.

Satprem presented a paper on Stabilised Earth Architecture for a sustainable future during the symposium entitled “*If termites can do it, why can't Humans?*” He tried to show the link between the researches on earthen materials and technologies conducted by the Auroville Earth Institute. The presentation was very well received.

## Award for Auroville Earth Institute

***In July 2010, Auroville Earth Institute received “The Prince Sultan Bin Salman Award for Urban Heritage” by Al-Turath Foundation, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for building Al Medy Mosque in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2004. The 457 m<sup>2</sup> mosque was build in 7 weeks and was inaugurated by Prince Salman.*** For further information on the Institute: <http://www.earth-auroville.com>

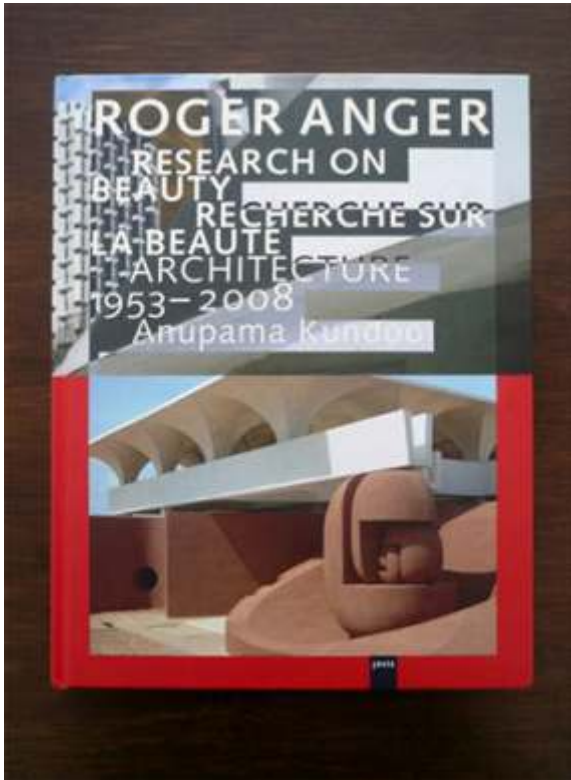
## Evolution Fast Forward – a new short film



This is the title of an introductory 22-minutes film on the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother brought out by Aurovilian Manoj Pavitran with assistance from friends and fellow-Aurovilians. Its release was organised in Auroville in February 2011.

For online viewing of the film: <http://www.sopanam.org>

## Book on Roger Anger



“Roger Anger: Research on Beauty / Recherche sur la beauté: Architecture 1953–2008” – this is the title of the book on the late chief architect of Auroville published by Jovis verlag, Berlin in French and English. The book is a result of extensive research by Anupama Kundoo, a former Auroville resident. Richly illustrated, the book presents Roger's remarkable architectural projects in Paris, in Auroville and elsewhere in the world.

In India, the book was released in August 2010 at the function organised at Pune, jointly by The National Institute of Advanced Studies in Architecture (NIASA), the academic body of the Indian Council of Architects, and Forum for Exchange and Excellence in Design (FEED). The event was graced by renowned architect and Governing Board member B.V.Doshi. Subsequently, Anupama also made a presentation on the book at Auroville, Paris, and Vienna. Distinguished Parisian architect Claude

Parent, a contemporary of Roger Anger who wrote the foreword of the book, presided over the function in Paris.

## “City of Dawn” a film on Auroville by unknown friends from USA



Francis Rothluebber, an educator and author from USA, heard about Auroville sometime in 2005. “I was so intrigued,” she wrote later, “that in 2006 I traveled from California with my friend Joan Kaeppliger to get a first-hand experience. As a result of that trip we were inspired to make a documentary film to tell the story of Auroville.”

Between 2006 and 2009, after two more visits to Auroville, the 80 minute film “City of Dawn” was released in September, 2009. It explores the evolution of the community over the 4 decades.

The film has been accepted into five international film festivals. In March of 2010, “City of the Dawn” won the Planet Prize Award at the European Spiritual Film Festival. The award is given to “the film that offers the most significant impact for the enrichment and improvement of our world.” The DVD of the film is available from Wild Seagull bookshop at the Auroville Visitors' Centre.

Francis Rothluebber and her friends' have now founded an institution “New Momentum for Human Unity” in USA. [http:// www.newmomentumforhumanunity.org/](http://www.newmomentumforhumanunity.org/)

Their latest release is [Being Still and Awakening](#), a Meditation CD inspired by Sri Aurobindo's “The Life Divine.”

## Unending Education Portal

Auroville Collaborative has created a web based knowledge portal dedicated to education in Auroville. [www.edu.aurovilleportal.org](http://www.edu.aurovilleportal.org)

According their message to the community, “The objective of this project is to provide a virtual teacher's centre where teaching material and teaching experiences can be shared. The Unending Education Portal is expected to become a valuable resource for all educators in Auroville and elsewhere in the world.” The project was sponsored by Sri Aurobindo Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) and Stichting de Zaaier, The Netherlands and is managed by Auroville Consulting ([http:// www.auroco.in/](http://www.auroco.in/))

## Life and art of Rabindranath Tagore

On the occasion of 150 birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, Kala Kendra and Pavilion of India organised in December 2010 an exhibition “Rabindranath Tagore – Towards The Universal Human” and an audio visual presentation by renowned art critic and Aurobindonian scholar Debashish Banerji on “The Life & Art of Guru Rabindranath Tagore.”

## Auroville presentation in Spain

Between 15 and 25 July, 2010 Auroville International, Spain organised a programme “Auroville: The Reality of a Dream” at Antic Escorxador Hall in Tortosa, Spain. It included an exhibition, a speech by Alfonso Galiana, President of AVI, Spain; training classes on “Awareness Through the Body (ATB)” by Aurovilian Aloka, presentation of the Catalan translation of Sri Aurobindo's SAVITRI by Professor Dr. Vicente Merlo of the University of Barcelona, and dance performance by Aurovilian dancer Devasmita Patnaik. The programme also included a DVD message from Dr. Federico Mayor, a Spanish scholar and former Director-General of UNESCO. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Miquel Àngel Essomba, the Director of UNESCO in Catalonia.

### “Collaboration for Auroville Area Protection”

COLAAP newsletter is published by “Lands for Auroville Unified”

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Information for donations: Cheques/ drafts should be drawn in the name of “**Auroville Unity Fund - LFAU**” and sent to the above postal address. Each donation is acknowledged along with a receipt and subsequently donors will receive a newsletter either by email or post depending on their choice.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, please e-mail us at: [LFAU@auroville.org.in](mailto:LFAU@auroville.org.in)

## Auroville Marathon 2011



On February 13, 2011, Auroville played host for its fourth edition of the increasingly popular Auroville Marathon. Writes the organisers “The uniqueness of the event is often perceived in its tangible features like the beautiful trails, lack of commercial interests, egalitarian participation, volunteers and so on. What often goes unnoticed is the intangible support from the Auroville Commune as a whole towards the event. Many Communities/ Units/ Aurovilians directly or indirectly, supported this event and it is the reflection of all their support, blessings and wishes that we see in the tangibles that makes this event a truly memorable one. The increase in the number of participation from a modest 200 in the first edition to the 1400 in the fourth edition is a clear sign of the joint effort by all the groups involved!” For details <http://www.marathon.auroville.com>

## Varanasi Weavers Exhibition

Between 11 and 19 February, Upasana Design Studio, Auroville organised Varanasi Weavers Exhibition at Maison Colombani, Puducherry. The Studio has been working for the uplift of Varanashi weavers’ community and their indigenous art which have suffered sever set back following cheap imitations that have flooded the market.

## Offering (Donation slip)

# LANDS for AUROVILLE UNIFIED

Erstwhile “Auroville Land Fund”

*“The lands for Auroville are to be bought and can be bought.. The money is needed. Will you help?” (The Mother)*

**Yes, I would like to contribute towards land purchase for the harmonious development of Auroville!**

Here is my contribution of \$ / / ` ..... by  cash  cheque  demand draft

My first regular monthly contribution of \$ / / ` ..... for the next ..... Months.

I would like to receive  100% tax-exempt receipt (35)(I)(iii)  50% tax-exempt receipt (80-G)  
 normal receipt (Please tick the appropriate box)

Tax-exemption in Rupee for Indian residents only.  
 For other countries contact relevant AVI Centre

Name : Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. ....

Email : .....

Address : .....

Birth date : .....

City : ..... Code : .....

PAN .....  
 (For 100% tax exemption within India.)

State : ..... Country : .....

Please write in  
 CAPITALS