

# Matrimandir

August 2024



## A DAY AT MATRIMANDIR

The nightwatch team emerges from below the globe of Matrimandir where they have sheltered for the night, protected from the light rains by the vast umbrella of Matrimandir.

The rising sun peeks out between drifting grey clouds on the eastern horizon as it begins to spread its life giving rays over the calm site of Matrimandir at the center of Auroville.

The nightwatch team, with different Aurovilians each night, have moved through the site and around the perimeter of the 22 acres of the gardens, making sure that all was well. It is a magical experience, to move in the deep silence underneath a dome of brilliant stars or under drizzling skies. Further out, beyond the gardens boundaries where our offices, workshops and outer park area lie, watchmen in blue uniforms have also patrolled and been present all night.

But now the sun begins to climb higher. The day promises to be one of those spectacular ones, bright and blue, where life unfolds in a happy tapestry of interrelated threads of action.

The Inner Chamber opens at 6 am, so the duty people begin to arrive, and then the small number of residents who wish to sit in the Chamber and bathe themselves in the Chamber's early light.

8 am approaches and with it the inward flow of the 220 or so people who take care, each day, of the multitude of tasks involved in building the Matrimandir and in maintaining its infrastructure and many gardens.

Each of the arriving teams; the plumbers, the electricians, the garden workers and the carpenters check in and prepare for the work day. Everyone has their task. Just now, many are planting fresh grass in the Garden of Light which, with its long straight

arrow-like stream has been brought to the final stage which is to plant these grassy areas and then fill the curved flower beds with plants prepared during the last few months in the nearby nursery. All the heavy stone work and masonry is over. The plumbers have installed the two pumps which will supply the recycling water for the ray-like streams.

Over in the Garden of Wealth, between the Banyan Tree and the Amphitheater, the garden's seven ponds and the long water body running between them are being constructed. These ponds are for Lillies which were given the significance of Wealth by the Mother.

At the perimeter of the gardens the vast project of the Lake awaits the arrival, in early September, of the engineer from Germany who will come to apply the waterproofing layer of HDPE foil to the two end walls of the lake which have recently been raised up to their full 10 meters height. One team of people is busy making a kind of boat, a raft, so that the engineer can work easily, floating on the lake (now 7.5 meters deep) to do the required welding work.

When filled with collected rainwater from the upcoming winter monsoon, the lake will then show, for the first time, its full 100 meters width. This will be a definitive first materialisation of the Mother's strong wish that the Matrimandir be surrounded by water. Excavation of the second lake phase, about 180 meters long, has

also been brought to near completion and this section will be waterproofed just after the winter monsoon.

Meanwhile, visitors begin to arrive. There is a dedicated team on hand to receive them and guide them to the Inner Chamber. From 8 am onwards they receive the 300 or so visitors who come almost every day to see the Chamber for the first time. Tuesdays are special, when the Chamber is reserved for visits by children.

Each group of 50 visitors is led to a set of granite benches on the edge of the gardens where they are given a brief introduction to the site. Up to 5 such groups of first-time visitors come each morning, along with another group or two of people who have visited the Chamber before.

After the introduction they are led to the Western pillar entrance of Matrimandir, named Mahasaraswati, and then into the building. Everyone puts on fresh white socks and then, in a very well-orchestrated flow, they walk up one ramp to the Chamber while another group, having already visited, descends by the opposite ramp. Attendants are at hand on all levels to guide the visitors and to make sure that all is well. Inside the silent Chamber another group of attendants is on hand to settle everyone onto the white cushions and chairs.

For two hours or so this very well-choreographed flow continues. After the Chamber visit some will then





visit the 12 petals which surround the building, sitting to absorb qualities such as Generosity or Peace.

While this flow of visitors is going on, all around, in the gardens and workshops, the many other jobs of the day are proceeding. In the metal workshop, for example, stainless steel clamps are being made to fit into the 2-ton concrete blocks which are being made on site for the eventual construction of the 3rd wall in the Lake. The metal workshop is also busy with an array of other tasks, whether they be related to the many details of maintaining the site, to the installation of the new the Chamber AC or to making fixtures for the Garden of Light.

10 am is tea time!! Everyone has a break at 10. Our catering team, working in their special kitchen hut, have been preparing tea and snacks for all the 220 + people on the site. Team leaders come with their cans to carry the tea or lemon juice or butter milk, along with biscuits or snacks back to their teams. For 15 minutes there is a relative silence on the site as all take their refreshment. A bell then sounds and everyone moves back to their task.

The gardeners, with their ride-on lawn mowers, are followed by teams who rake and gather the grass from the acres of the gardens. The plumbers attend to the issues of the day, which range from installing the new 27-kilowatt pump in the Lake, to fixing leaky or broken taps or sprinklers anywhere on the site.

Electricians follow, making new connections for the pumps, or getting on with the job of wiring up the newly installed air conditioning equipment for the Inner Chamber.

Then, in the heat of the day, there is a lunch break. Hired workers eat on site and rest for a while. Aurovilians go off to the Solar Kitchen or to the Sunship or Citadine community kitchens or elsewhere for their noon meal.

The period after lunch is when the Inner Chamber gets its big daily cleanup, with an experienced team on hand to vacuum the carpets, change cushion covers and clean and polish all the surfaces of white marble and glass. The group works in silence. One hears only the hum of the vacuum cleaners as they move across the wide Chamber carpet. The many other teams on site continue the tasks which had occupied them during the morning or they take up construction activities on Matrimandir itself such as building maintenance scaffolding or doing essential plumbing repairs now that the visitors of the morning are gone.

By 4.30 pm, just as the normal work day closes, a team of Aurovilians arrives to clean the outer golden discs of Matrimandir. They climb up to the roof, put on professional rope harness and, fixing their ropes to secure points on the roof, they rappel down the outer surface of Matrimandir, cleaning and polishing the golden discs as they descend. It often looks like an

aerial ballet, as they even turn upside down to reach all the edges of the discs. That particular job goes on 5 days a week, all through the year (except on rainy days!) as the lake excavation work sends large clouds of red dust up onto the discs and, in addition, the normal almost invisible air pollution of the area brings a constant gentle rain of black powder which settles on all surfaces.

The site closes, people move from the offices and many workshops, heading home. Some residents and volunteers remain until dark to carry on with garden maintenance jobs, for the cool hours of the closing day are inviting and invigorating.

Then the calm of the evening comes. People move quietly through the gardens or visit the Inner Chamber. Children curiously explore the long wandering stream in the Garden of the Unexpected. The sun begins to set, often bringing a spectacular touch of beauty to the evening sky. The evening watch arrives at

7.30, to patrol the site until, at 9, the nightwatch team arrives, ready to be present for the full night.

The daily cycle of life at Matrimandir flows on. Each day the projects on site grow a little more, whether they be the preparation for the second section of the Lake or for the growth of a new garden. The host of maintenance tasks continue daily.

Life at Matrimandir is like that of a living body, growing, developing, becoming always more finely detailed. As workers, we aspire for a growing perfection, completeness, wholeness in whatever is done.

Auroville's aspiration is made visible here, palpable, always growing slowly deeper and more intense.

And, as the day ends, a deep movement of gratitude rises up, gratitude simply for being here, for participating in the growth of this amazing symbol at the heart of Auroville.

*Let the Matrimandir  
be the living symbol of Auroville's  
aspiration for the  
Divine*



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### **Offerings to Matrimandir**

Please note that all offerings must be A/c Payee to Auroville Unity Fund. Cheques and Demand Drafts need to be accompanied by a letter / email from the donor specifying the offering is for Matrimandir along with PAN, full address, phone and email.

Offerings can also be made through direct Bank Transfer to Auroville Unity Fund. Please feel free to reach out to the Matrimandir Offerings Desk over email and phone for bank transfer details.

**matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in | 0413 - 2622051**

### **Booking for Concentration in the Inner Chamber**

Matrimandir Inner Chamber is open to visitors every morning except Tuesday and Sunday.

**Link for booking <https://mmaccess.auroville.org.in/visitors/new>  
Matrimandir Access Group [mmconcentration@auroville.org.in](mailto:mmconcentration@auroville.org.in)**

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be the living symbol of Auroville's  
aspiration for the  
Divine  
the Mother  
21 February 1971  
Foundation Stone Ceremony  
of Matrimandir*