

Matrimandir

August 2023



Unexpectedly generous summer rains brought the level in the Matrimandir Test Lake up to a level of 5.10 meters, just 20 or 30 centimeters short of the maximum level of its end walls.

Rainwater, harvested from the 22 acres of the Matrimandir Gardens' area, was channeled to the Lake via the open water channel which was built last summer specifically to catch this runoff and direct it to the Lake. It has worked very well indeed!

Now the race is on to build up the concrete block walls of the Lake in order to have enough free catchment area for the rains from the upcoming winter monsoon of 2023. The photo below shows a sample of the wall built up to a height of about

8.3 meters, which should be enough to hold this year's rains. Of course, Mother Nature can always surprise us... two years ago the monsoon rains totaled well over two meters... a rainfall like that would cause even the 8.3 meter wall to overflow... We will see...!!

Meanwhile, as preparations to build Section Two of the Lake move forward, with transplanting of trees and the relocation of boulders and the old public Viewing Point, work has been focusing on the construction of a new public Viewing Point, located just beyond the boundary of the future Lake Section Two.

To do this, we took advantage of the huge pile of



power which can be used on the site, when required.

This technique is well known around the world, and the idea here is to incorporate it into the final set up of the Matrimandir Lake and Hill. So, during the summer, on top of the 14-meter-high hill of red earth, a pond of about 1000 cubic meters has been dug out, and lined with HDPE liner, as a first step towards demonstrating the feasibility of using this principle at Matrimandir.

The photo below shows the hill pond filled with water pumped up from the Test Lake 1 as a

first trial. Matrimandir is seen through the trees in the distance. As this technique is said to be more efficient than the use of normal batteries to store energy, it will be interesting indeed to follow this experiment over the coming year, to understand just how much energy can be stored and generated this way

Elsewhere on the site, activity has been largely focused in two of the Gardens. The Garden of Light, being newly developed, has moved forward with the construction of its

earth, about 8 meters high that had been excavated from the Test Lake. This pile has been leveled, contoured and is now being landscaped as a new Viewing Point.

There were, in fact, two huge piles of earth built up as a result of the excavation of the Test Lake over the last few years: one was made of the red earth of the surface layer, and the second was made up of the more gravelly earth from the deeper layers of the excavation. The new Viewing Point is built on top of the gravel hill, to the south of Matrimandir.

On the other hill, some 14 meters high, which is located at the northern end of the Matrimandir compound, an interesting experiment is being set up:

This is the development of a prototype to demonstrate the technique of “up-hill power storage”. In this concept, water is pumped up, preferably using solar energy, to a small pond on the top of a hill. Then, in the evening, or during power cuts when power is needed on site, the water is allowed to flow back down from the hill through a pipe in which is installed a turbine. The turbine generates electric



central ray like stream and a lower water body. The photo here shows the designers and builders working with a full-scale model of the set of long granite pillars which will act as a bridge over the central water body. The actual granite stones are currently being prepared off site, but to move ahead, especially with such large pieces, it is always convenient to work with light weight models which can be moved and adjusted easily to get just the right position, before the heavy granite stones are brought in.



The Garden of Bliss, built about 10 years ago, continues to receive its design upgrade. The large bowls which will be set up as fountains, forming the central visual piece of the garden, are now being clad on their inner surfaces with gold tiles which had been left over from the tiling of the golden discs of the outer shell of Matrimandir more than 20 years ago. It was a happy coincidence that the quantity and type of gold tiles

needed for the bowls had been kept, preserved, in our store rooms over two decades.

Apart from these large, very visible projects, there is always the very active aspect of maintaining the Matrimandir, not just the daily cleaning, but repairs of all kinds and upgrades to the infrastructure. Keep in mind that many of the parts of the Matrimandir



complex have now been in place for 30 years or more, and some are showing signs of age.

One system in particular, and a very essential one, is the air conditioning system for the Inner Chamber of Matrimandir. Over the years there have already been major changes to this system, the last being in 2007. Now, as the compressors and system components age, an entirely new AC system is being installed, in phases, to replace the older one. The new system, the first half of which has just been brought online in July, is located at the foot of the Matrimandir, between the massive double walls of the Pillars which hold up the building.

We show you here a photo of part of this installation, which is just now receiving its final touches.

Thus, as we move into August, the Matrimandir site sees activity on several fronts, as we balance new adventures of construction with the quieter, less visible ongoing works of refreshing, renewing and upgrading all the material aspects of the site.



Offering 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 made towards, 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.donation@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