



NGT stays tree felling at auroville as residents protest road project

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The National Green Tribunal has stayed the felling of trees at Auroville, a spiritual township in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram. The residents have been on protest path since a week after the township administration razed a building and fell trees for a road project.

On the morning of 9 December, several excavators arrived at the Youth Centre in Auroville – a spiritual township in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram, near Puducherry – to demolish buildings and cut down trees.

The clearing is to make way for development of the Crownway – a 16.7 meters-wide peripheral road meant to be laid around Auroville. The Crownway was designed based on a masterplan.

The residents told **The Quint** that at 7 AM over 100 locals reached the location without any police escort. The people of the community rushed to the scene and held on to the JCBs in an attempt to stop them from demolishing.

In a personally drafted note to Dr Jayanthi Ravi, the secretary of the Auroville Foundation who was appointed by the Centre, a resident wrote, "I ask you to stop this action and the method you are applying to build the city of Auroville."

Some of the youngsters who were sleeping outside the centre and all of us were rattled. We couldn't even figure out what was happening as it was late in the night and everyone was sleeping in their respective houses," said a resident on the condition of anonymity.

Following protests, the police called the demolition off and urged the secretary to hold discussions with the Auroville residents.

On 5 December, around 500 residents met peacefully and decided to request the community's internal planning body to pause the development work until further notice from the Residents Assembly.

"First, the secretary called the youth and asked them for their opinion and they strongly objected to it," a resident alleged.

"But later a compromise was arrived at between the secretariat, a member of Auroville's planning body, a member of the working committee and a few residents," read a statement from the residents. An ultimatum was issued to the Youth Centre, which stated that clearance will be carried out even if they do not agree to it. The Youth Centre agreed "to work towards peace and progressive harmony" and agreed that they will clear out the area themselves. The management, however, did not wait for this, the residents allege.

Source: <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/helpless-auroville-residents-building-crown-road-youth-centre-demolished-jcb-police#read-more>