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### FOLLOWING URBAN RAPTORS

Project Raptor Watch 2.0 by Madras Naturalists' Society in the Chennai Metropolitan Area has spread its wings and achieved elevation **P4&5**



### THE LONG WAIT FOR AN E-SEVA CENTRE IN PERUMBAKKAM

The building meant to be used for this purpose is under lock and key for more than a year **P7**



Some of the projects that were displayed in the open house.  
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## Art of analog photography

The Forum Art Gallery is hosting 'Alt: Analog', an exhibition celebrating the timeless art of analog photography. Featuring works by talented artists from India and the U.K., this showcase is the culmination of the CPB-Photoworks Darkroom Residency, supported by the British Council.

This exhibition brings together three artists who explore the evocative medium of analog photography: Holly Birtles (London, UK); Arun (Chennai) and Soham Joshi (Brighton, UK)

This residency is a pioneering initiative that bridges two vibrant photography ecosystems, fostering cultural exchange and collaborative art-making between India and the UK, said a release.

The exhibition is on till February 15 at Forum Art Gallery, Adyar.

Monday to Saturday, 10:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
For details, call 8884122112



## A school project brings local context to global challenges

A new programme for students underscores the importance of localising the climate change narrative

**S**unnyside, an experiential learning school in Palavakkam, embarked on a transformative journey to address climate change education with a refreshing perspective. They launched 'Climate Nexus Programme' to bring the discourse on climate change to the local context so that children not only understand its implications but also connect with it meaningfully.

Two educators, Rahul Sridharan and Maya Sheshadri, were brought on board. Together, they redefined how climate education is approached by weaving in local stories, ecological histories, and community voices, said a release.



The programme focused on taking the students out of the classroom which included nature walks, field trips to ecologically sensitive areas, interviews with local communities, and deep dives into historical and environmental archives.

The results of these explorations culminated in an open house where students showcased four key projects.

In 'Ecological History of Kottivakkam' students rediscovered waterbodies. They found that

spaces now occupied by fuel stations, hotels and hospitals were once thriving waterbodies.

In the project 'Impact on the Fishing Community' students investigated the changes in fishing practices over the years, drawing connections to climate change and its cascading effects.

In the third project 'The History and Decline of the Buckingham Canal' students traced the canal's origins and its pivotal role in local economies through visits to the Connemara Library and conversations with older residents.

The final project 'Food and Lifestyle Evolution' revolved around understanding the food habits and lifestyle evolution of the local community in Kottivakkam. The students explored how traditional practices were deeply interwoven with the region's natural resources.

Through their journeys into Kottivakkam's past and present, our students have not only gained knowledge but have also become torch-bearers for a more sustainable future, added the release.

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## In restart mode

By the time an ambitious community initiative achieves critical mass, those driving it will experience the queasiness that goes with high-altitude climbing. Imagine managing that uphill task only to find themselves being swept thousands of metres downhill in an avalanche, and lying alongside the initiative that is now a mangled mess. Resident groups that drove community initiatives admirably and brought them to maturity experienced that sickening thud, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. Talk to any residents welfare association, and they would have use for this line: “We did this, and it was running smoothly and the pandemic slammed the brakes on it.”

Certain misfortunes cannot be foreseen, much less prevented. Here are initiatives that had to give up the ghost suddenly on account of the pandemic, but reincarnated later putting on fresh flesh and a new vigour and renewed purpose. In some cases, the restart lacks the punch it has, but the residents are labouring to start again the right way

### Raja Street: considerable ground waits to be covered



▼ The Urbin advantage; and the RK Nagarra waste collection camp last month—.

**G**anga Sridhar of Raja Street Residents Welfare Association notes that they started off with the Urbin concept, Kabadiwalla Connect parking an Urbin in a six-unit apartment Dwaraka.

The Urbin found wider use, being placed outside this apartment during weekends for residents from across the neighbourhood – the RWA accounts Raja Street, Raja Street Extension and Velayutha Raja Street – to drop their dry waste. Every 8 to 10 days, the recycler would arrive to collect the dry waste that had filled up the Urbin.

With the pandemic, this exercise came to a standstill, as the Urbin was not allowed to be kept outside.

The six households at the apartment have persisted with the practice of depositing plastic dry waste in the Urbin.

Ganga points out one positive trend: “In the entire street, whoever had started segregating waste continued to do so even during the pandemic; and they still continue the practice. Those who had been composting at home still do.”

The neighbouring RK Nagarra conducts regular drives to collect dry waste and e-waste. Whenever they launch a collection drive, Ganga posts the info in the neighbourhood groups, and her friends and neighbours make use of it to rid themselves of the e-waste and the dry waste they have collected diligently and kept with them responsibly.

Ganga points out that these exercises by RK Nagarra are having a positive effect on Raja Street, encouraging those treating their household waste responsibly to continue the good work.

But there is still considerable work to be done. Ganga notes compliance in terms of segregation is considerably low, because this neighbourhood is thickly populated and it is difficult to reach it in its entirety with a waste-management message.

There are addresses with a warren of small-sized houses. There are also hostels. Reaching these units is the challenge the RWA is up against.



### Foundation matters

**G**ayathri Jayaraman, treasurer of the residents welfare association at Karpagam Gardens off Besant Avenue notes that before the pandemic struck, the neighbourhood had attained an impressive level of compliance in terms of source segregation of waste. Two residents welfare associations not too far away from Karpagam Gardens – one in Kasturbai Nagar and the other in Valmiki Nagar – had wielded a positive influence on it. The foundation of effective waste management practices had been laid deep. Residents had been provided with a green bin (for wet waste) and a red bin (for reject waste) and a bag for dry waste. Emulating Kasturba Nagar and Valmiki Nagar associations, Karpagam Garden representatives tasked with implementation of waste management practices would accompany waste collection vehicles and staff from door to door to ensure compliance.

Gayathri points out that



due to this, the neighbourhood managed to bounce back after the pandemic and now, the compliance level is 70 p.c., not on par with what it had achieved before the pandemic, but certainly not deplorable either.



# Six woolly necked storks put in an appearance at Nemmeli



Woolly necked stork at Nemmeli on January 5, 2025.  
PHOTO: E. ARUN KUMAR

## PRINCE FREDERICK

The human species revels in having things in its own image; this obsession sometimes manifests as a desire to name parts of the outside world in a manner that bring them closer to its reality. So, you have birds going around, bearing curious name badges. A species sporting such a badge (more on its binominal name later) showed up recently in a space considered

to be lying outside its known range – a glimpse of the woolly necked stork at the Great Salt Lake at Nemmeli off OMR. There are scattered records of the woolly necked stork (*Ciconia episcopus*) in Chennai's outskirts – considerably few and infrequent. In Tamil Nadu, the woolly necked stork, a resident species, is associated more with southern parts, being found around agricultural tracts. Its propensity for local movements would have whisked them to

Nemmeli. Past the salterns on the road from Nemmeli (East Coast Road) to Thiruporur (Old Mahabalipuram Road), the scenery shifts to an expanse of green, stretches of paddy fields – probably an incentive for these birds to hit these parts.

On the field, the woolly necked stork stands out for a neck that seems to have been rolled up in a fabric of wool. In the field guide, its scientific name *Ciconia episcopus* stokes curiosity on account of its se-

cond half denoting “bishop” in Latin (though in its current usage, episcopus is largely wrapped up in a secular meaning, “overseer”). The black patch on the its head (offset by its woolly white neck) resembling the skull cap – zucchetto – worn by Catholic clergymen is the reason.

The bird is also loosely called episcopus. And a flock of six episcopi ushered in a still-new New Year during a solemn worship of nature that E. Arun Kumar, an OMR-based birder, participated in.

The sighting of six woolly necked storks, in the words of Arun Kumar himself: “In the late evening of January 4, I sighted six woolly necked storks in the waters at the Nemelli section of the Great Salt Lake. It was not long before they took off for a they pylon where all of them settled down. I went back the next day to check on them in better lighting and found the same flock of six birds. The great salt lake had very good activity of ducks with hundreds of Northern Pintail, Eurasian Wigeons and Northern shovelers among the congregation of birds. There was also a hundred plus flock of rosy starlings. When admiring them I chanced upon the woolly necked storks.”

The woolly necked stork is a near threatened species.

## ‘Salute to Mother’ programme to be held on January 23

Sri Krishna Sweets is organising the 14th edition of Salute to Mothers programme in which mothers of celebrities are honoured. Salute to Mothers programme will be held at Narada Gana Sabha (from 5.45 p.m. onwards) on January 23.

Justice R. Hemalatha, judge, High Court of Madras, S. Sivasankari, writer and Major General M. Indrabalan will be the chief guests.

Mathru Pooja Recital will be performed by Isaikkavi Ramanan. Students of Viswasamathan School of Bharathanatyam will perform at the event. The students are trained by S.Vijayalakshmi. K.V.Subha, advocate, Chennai, will be the Master of Ceremonies.

This year, the organisers are also honouring a family – Geetha Varadarajan, R.Varadarajan, parents of Major Mukund Varadarajan who dedicated his life during a counter-terrorism operation. More than 100 celebrity mothers have been honoured so far. In this programme celebrities will speak about their mothers.

## Waste collection drive on January 25

A waste collection drive will be held on January 25 at Casagrand Elan, a gated community at Thalambur.

According to a press release, clothes, toys, books, bicycles, mattresses and furniture are accepted. For details, call 8870005455.

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## Pongal celebrated at gated community



Residents of Kottur Villa, Kotturpuram celebrated the Pongal festival with great fervour on January 12 on the premises of their gated community. Gow pooja, Kolam and pot painting competition were part of the celebrations.

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A female and a male Peregrine falcon at MRC Nagar; and a Black kite around the Perungudi landfill.  
PHOTOS: BHARATH RAVIKUMAR AND PRINCE FREDERICK

## A view from the window

On January 16, a tinkle in a WhatsApp group of Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS) made Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi jump out of his seat. A tidbit of information that arrived with that tinkle demanded an immediate response and GK (as he is known in naturalist circles) was on to it, promptly keying in an instruction that elbowed two young MNS members on to the road to MRC Nagar.

The info that cranked up the series of actions – “not one but two Peregrine falcons lord it over a rash of buildings at MRC Nagar”. It was a tipoff from Ambika C., a resident of MRC Nagar with an MNS membership.

The two MNS members landed at the spot lickety-split to ascertain the snappy report's veracity. One of the questions to get out of the way: is the new entrant really a Peregrine falcon or a “lookalike”, some other falcon being mistaken for a Peregrine? As sure as eggs are eggs, there were two Peregrine falcons, a male and a female, greeting the two naturalists, while being perched on a tall building.

Project Raptor Watch (PRW), spearheaded by GK, has been studying this patch for at least three winters, if not more, as a Peregrine falcon had helped itself to it, making it its winter stay, choosing its perch among three tall buildings. The patch is now a divided territory with another Peregrine falcon wading into the space.

Bharath Ravikumar, one of the two MNS members to study two Peregrine falcons at MRC Nagar, observes: “It was 3.30 p.m. Both of them were perched far apart. There was no hint of any unrest or an inclination to ‘ward off’ the other; they were both calmly minding their own business. Around 4.30 p.m., the male took to the air and disappeared and half an hour later, he showed up and was perched on the same ledge as the female, but on the opposite end. This seemed to have disturbed her; and she started walking towards him and pushed him off the ledge.”

If observations elsewhere are anything to go by, they will tolerate each other and might even come to hunt together, as is the case at House of Hiranandani Upscale where two Peregrine falcons – a male and a female – are at ease with each other, sometimes launch-

ing what clearly appears to be a joint hunting expedition. These observations have been made by E. Arun Kumar, an MNS member residing at Upscale.

“Of course, as this is the wintering ground, they would not pair off, but they could likely form a bond strong enough to hunt together,” says GK about the two falcons at MRC Nagar. “Based on observations, the possibility of tolerance towards each other is higher if it is a male and a female. Territorial instinct would kick in stronger if both Peregrine falcons were of the same sex.”

### Regular visits

Continual monitoring of the patches in its focus is the hallmark of PRW, in fact PRW 2.0. GK notes that as a matter of routine, members of PRW 2.0 go on a raptor survey once a week. And when a freak occurrence needs to be investigated, they lose no time in doing so.

On the scope and focus of the project, GK says, “It is a longterm raptor monitoring programme of Madras Naturalists' Society which seeks to document, study and monitor the abundance, local movements, nesting and breeding activity of the raptors found in Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Chennai and Chengalpattu (KTCC) districts – defining it a tad differently, the Chennai Metropolitan Area.”

The study area extends to Pulicat in the north and Nayapakkam in the west. Thiruporur and beyond, Tiger Lily Lake being defining, brings up the southernmost point.

GK continues: “PRW 1.0 started in 2015 aimed at documenting the different raptor species seen in KTCC. PRW took a new shape in 2020 as PRW 2.0 giving birth to species-specific projects such as Black kite population monitoring at Perungudi dump site, Peregrine falcon abundance survey for KTCC and nest monitoring of resident raptor species such as the Red necked falcon and the White bellied sea eagle. The project is carried out by a dedicated group of 45 volunteers. The volunteers survey 15 different clusters covering 45 hot-pots. Historically, 32 raptor species have been recorded in this region and PRW has documented seven more for the region over the last

Project Raptor Watch 2.0 by Madras Naturalists' Society in the Chennai Metropolitan Area has spread its wings and achieved elevation. Among the exercises that have taken substantial shape are: the data-driven study of Peregrine falcons in markedly urban sites and a close look at the fluctuating Black kite population around the Perungudi landfill and the breeding patterns of the Red necked falcon

# Following urban raptors

PRINCE FREDERICK

one decade taking the current tally to 39 raptor species.”

### Black kite monitoring

For this project nestled within the larger PRW 2.0, binoculars were trained on the Perungudi dump site where one can see swarms of black kites at certain times of the year.

“There are Black kites that are resident in

Chennai. And there are Black kites that head to Chennai from elsewhere during the south west monsoon. A majority of the Black kites that migrate to the city during this period likely fly in from the west – Kerala and Karnataka – where the south west monsoon is the primary monsoon. When south west monsoon recedes, they go back to where they came from. At the height of the South west monsoon, the number of Black kites at the Perungudi dump site swelled to around 1,300 and now, it is hardly 20,” GK begins.

### Peregrine falcon survey

Another exercise under PRW 2.0, this survey is being conducted only in parts of KTCC where the Pere-

grine falcon is known to be present as also where it could be found.

Here is a break-up of the wintering Peregrine falcon population in apartments across Chennai.

Two at TVH Oranya Bay in Padur, Old Mahabalipuram Road; two at House of Hiranandani in Egattur; One at Bashyam OMR; one at Appaswamy OMR; one at DLF Garden City in Semmancherry; two at MRC Nagar; one at Trellis South in Vadapalani and one at Taisha in Saligramam. In

urban sites with a Peregrine falcon presence, those residing there help with data about the bird. “Through regular monitoring, we know the everyday movements and patterns of most of the Peregrine falcons,” he notes. “Now, we are on to the next stage of the Peregrine falcon survey – we are doing a pre-NE monsoon survey, the NE monsoon survey and post-NE monsoon survey to understand where the numbers differ. When the monsoonal rains subside, the Peregrine falcons return to their regular haunts. We do synchronised surveys to ensure the same Peregrine falcon is not counted again. When this study reaches the third year, we ex-

pect to have in-and-out data of around 30 Peregrine falcons.”

### The parameters

GK continues: “As we undertake a scientific study in these projects, certain parameters come into play – namely, weather, external disturbances, wind and rain. Through these parameters we see patterns. When JCB dredges up the dump site, the Black kite numbers will shoot up – this we would put down to external disturbance even as we ascertain the extent of the increase in numbers. When wind and rain cease, the Black kite numbers will go up. During rains, peregrine falcons will go into “hiding”.”

## Putting the air channel to good use

Peregrine falcons feel snug in declivitous landscapes – as much at ease in those crafted with human hands as with those occurring naturally.

When they shack up for the winter at House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur, the two Peregrine falcons would hardly miss the rock faces they are accustomed to back in their breeding grounds. The tall towers serve them well, probably far too well for them to long wistfully for them when they have made the return trip.

Upscale resident and MNS member E. Arun Kumar, who tracks the movements of these two Peregrine falcons – named Rana and Nandini – has studied how these towers are an incredible aid in these raptors' hunting expeditions.

Arun explains the science behind it. An air channel inevitably forms between the towers facing. Depending upon the direction in which they



A Peregrine falcon in flight at House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur.  
PHOTO: E. ARUN KUMAR

are flying, the pigeons find their flight aided or impeded by the air channel. When the air is blowing against the pigeons and slamming the brakes on

them, the Peregrine falcon that has soared high above the towers (where the air flows freely) takes advantage of the situation.

And then Arun goes on to discuss the artistry and the subterfuge that complement the science –narrating a hunt underpinned by this principle that he witnessed on a windy day just ahead of a massive wet rag of a day.

Arun narrates that given the weather, he was hoping, even expecting a pelagic bird to be buffeted about and finally fly his way. But he was instead treated to “a midair hunt by the fast and furious peregrine falcon”. And he is not complaining. With the aerial show put up by the Peregrine falcon, the disappointment disappeared into thin air.

The Peregrine falcon was slowly hovering around the apartment blocks and seemed view the pigeons' presence dispassionately. But the Peregrine falcon's presence unsettled some of the pigeons, he says, there was a frenzied scampering among them.

After surveying the scene stationed on a window parapet for a few minutes, the Peregrine falcon swept away “towards the open space in the midst of different towers”, its

flight marked by palpable intensity.

When the falcon was gaining elevation, for a fleeting moment Arun got the impression it was leaving the vicinity.

The elevation was being achieved to launch an aerial attack. There was speed, suddenness and flawless execution. Before Arun could realise it, the hunt had been brought to a successful completion. The falcon was in front of him, a pigeon in its talons, before it faded away.

Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi (GK), who helms Madras Naturalists Society's Project Raptor Watch 2.0, underlines the Peregrine falcon's ability to turn its regular hunting strategy on its head and still pull off an attempt in style.

GK notes that knowing the Peregrine falcon's ability to gain elevation and swoop down on its prey stunning it with speed, some birds would push themselves up and try to soar much higher than the falcon.

In such a scenario, the Peregrine falcon might choose to strike from below, dipping and taking a U-turn upwards and pursue the prey.

## Hunting in tandem



Whatever the vexations that sear the rufous crown of a red necked falcon, an absentee spouse is certainly not one of them. The male and female of this species are co-workers. Truth be told, that description is not spot-on, hardly setting the species apart from most others. To varying degrees, the male and the female in almost every avian species divide the drudge work that goes with raising the young. What makes the red necked falcon a touch better than most other species in this matter is that both the male and the female have teamwork and partnership developed to the nth degree.

The male and female Red necked falcon hunt in tandem with a level of coordination that would make any doubles pair in a racquet sport proud.

Bharath Ravikumar lives in a place wedged between ECR and OMR and is characterised by transmission towers, and also marsh-like patch.

He gets to see a red necked falcon pair up close.

Listen to Bharath: “A Red necked falcon pair have a hunting technique down to art, and it requires simultaneous participation from the male and the female. Sometimes, the female will launch the attack by flushing the birds parked on the ground and directing them to go in a particular direction. The male red necked falcon would be flying parallelly but at a higher elevation, and when these flushed birds have been guided in a particular direction, the male would go for the kill.” There would also be reversal of roles, with the male doing the flushing and the female completing the hunt by going for the kill.

E. Arun Kumar, a resident of House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur, OMR who has witnessed this teamwork by a Red necked falcon pair being orchestrated to perfection at Kaveripakkam, notes that this behaviour is well-entrenched in this species.

A Red necked falcon pair in the outskirts; and another pair in the ECR-OMR region. PHOTOS: E. ARUN KUMAR AND BHARATH RAVIKUMAR





Here is why those who have saved a road accident victim could think twice before applying for the Good Samaritan award despite a five-fold increase in its reward money

LIFFY THOMAS

**U**nion Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari recently announced five-fold increase in the reward amount for the “Good Samaritan” scheme.

Launched in 2021, this award is extended to anyone who has saved the life of the road accident victim by administering immediate assistance and rushing the person to a hospital or trauma care centre within the Golden Hour. Currently, an award amount of ₹5,000 is given to the Good Samaritan, which the Minister said would be increased to ₹25,000.

As per reports, the Good Samaritan Award money was given to 80 people until December 2022 according to government data tabled in the Parliament.

The *Hindu Downtown* spoke to a cross-section of NGOs working in the area of road safety and found out the scheme is not popular among most citizens.

The RTO or the traffic police in the jurisdiction where the accident occurred is required to certify the individual as a Good Samaritan and share their details to the Transport Commissioner.

“During our workshops I ask volunteers if they had ever wanted to nominate themselves for the Good Samaritan Award and the response I got was we hand over the accident victim to the ambulance driver and leave the place,” says Karthik Venkatesan, manager - training and public affairs, Alert.

He has not come across any person who has applied or won this recognition since it was started.

Most of the workshops that train

people on giving support during the Golden Hour also covers the Good Samaritan Law. “We encourage participants to come forward to be recognised as a Good Samaritan but there are gaps in the system that put off people. One is required to provide contact details to the doctor, introduce oneself as the one who handed over the victim to the hospital but how many of us have the time to stay till the end,” says Karthik.

Thozhan, another NGO that regularly runs road safety programmes, says none of its volunteers has been nominated for the Good Samaritan Scheme because the reporting format is hugely complicated.

“In a typical case, a first responder would either leave once the ambulance arrives or wait in the hospital till a family member attends to the victim. The Scheme requires verification from a police personnel which puts off many people,” says M. Radhakrishnan, founder of Thozhan.

The Road Transport and High-

## NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

**Keep it simple**

ways Ministry announced this scheme so that taking a road crash victim to a hospital is not just hassle-free but there is also the incentive of a reward and recognition.

The Ministry’s website has instructions for filling road accident cases and reporting form including particulars such as certification by the police department and by the hospital.

The nomination for the Award is sent by the Transport Department of the State to the Ministry.

Thozhan has many volunteers who have helped accident victims but none of them is keen on applying for this Award. “Award is secondary especially when you know there are too many processes to be followed,” says Radhakrishnan, adding that they honour those who have helped accident victims every year during its annual day.

Many NGOs have been working with the government to empower private hospitals to attend to an accident case during the Golden Hour.

“Private hospitals do not take accident victims. In many cases, the nearest government hospital is far away which is the reason for increasing fatality rates, so this rule must be relaxed,” says Radhakrishnan.

He says the process to submit the application for the Good Samaritan scheme must be simplified. “A majority of accident victims are taken through 108 Ambulance, so why not empower them to verify a first responder?” asks Radhakrishnan.

NGOs also want the Government to publish names of Good Samaritans on its platforms.

## Other awards

\* Every year, in the month of December, ALERT, a non-profit organisation that empowers people to act effectively during a crisis and save lives, invites nominations for its annual “Alert Being Awards”.

Individuals and organisations that have created an impact through life-saving acts or initiatives can send their nominations to [www.aba.alert.ngo](http://www.aba.alert.ngo)

\* The Cheistha Kochhar Good Samaritan Award is being instituted by Centre for Digital Economy Policy Research (C-DEP.org) in memory of Cheistha Kochhar. The award is being instituted at the behest of Sujit Bhattacharya, a young scholar who wants to use the nudge theory that Cheistha used to work on, to bring about change in society, says a note on the website.

The award will be given annually to those who have contributed to the betterment of society and who have consistently helped fellow humans in need. Deserving candidates may be nominated through C-DEP.org for consideration.

## The hindrance to offering help

**A**ccording to a study titled “Exploring the obstacles preventing good samaritans’ attending to the road crash victims: A case of a developing nation”, legal harassment, the bystander effect, fear of bloodshed, lack of altruism, and knowledge deficits are among obstacles hindering Good Samaritan behaviour.

The authors - Aditya Saxena from Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and Binayak Choudhury from School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal - surveyed 551 respondents to bring out the study published on Sciencedirect.

According to the World Health Organisation, during a road crash, bystanders can save lives in situations where established emergency medical services are not available. They can administer first-aid to the injured and even rush them to the nearest hospital.

The report also notes that there is no study in India that looks into the role of Good Samaritans in road crash incidents.

The study points out that there is a pressing need for public awareness campaigns to educate people about their legal rights and protections as Good Samaritans. Besides, efforts should be directed towards enhancing education and training programmes, particularly targeting individuals with lower levels of education and income.







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▼  
The prize distribution ceremony.

## Rap battle showcases literary innovation

**A**s part of The Hindu Lit for Life, a dynamic rap battle finale was hosted on January 12 at Brigade Xanadu, featuring finalists selected from over 100 entries.

Rappers performed in Tamil and English, delivering impressive lyrical skill and energy that captivated the audience. The event offered a vibrant platform for emerging artists to showcase their talent, celebrating the evolving art form of rap within the literary space.

**Judges:** Jords, a British singer and rapper for English; Senthuzhan, rapper for Tamil

The rap battle contest was curated by Catalyst 28. The rap beats by Gurumarx from Catalyst 28.

## The long wait for an e-seva centre in Perumbakkam region

The building meant to be used for this purpose is under lock and key for more than a year

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

**P**erumbakkam residents have requested the Perumbakkam Village Panchayat to open an e-seva centre on the sprawling panchayat office premises.

N. K. Raja, president of Nesamani Nagar Residents' Welfare Association, says: "More than a year ago, a building was constructed to house the centre, but it is under lock and key."

He says close to 1.5 lakh people reside in the region and are dependent on the



▼  
The e-seva centre building in Perumbakkam. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

e-seva centres in the Sholinganallur and Pallikaranai regions.

The public can apply for community certificates, widow pensions, old age pensions, encumbrance certificates, electoral voter identity cards, and changes to details provided by Aadhaar at the e-seva centres. They can also apply for government documents online.

"The Sholinganallur E-

seva facility witnesses a good crowd, so some people go to the centre in Pallikaranai. It takes half a day to apply for the documents, and after a few days one has to again go to collect the documents," says Raja.

Residents have sent many petitions to the CM's Cell to open the centre in Perumbakkam.

A Chengalpattu District Collector official said,

"We have written to the State government to open an e-seva centre in the region. The village panchayat authorities and St. Thomas Mount Panchayat Union have also written to the government in this regard. But the approval is yet to come. The one-year-old building is used by Tamil Nadu Fibrenet Corporation Limited to provide internet services to households in the region."

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## TIMESNOW.in Academic Excellence Awards 2025 Tamil Nadu

### TN Schools, Pre Schools and Education Institutions Survey 2025

The TIMESNOW.in Academic Excellence Awards 2025 event was held on January 10, 2025, at Chennai. This prestigious occasion celebrated the outstanding achievements of schools, preschools, and educational institutions for their exceptional efforts during the 2024-25 academic year. The event was proudly presented by Shrimathi Devkunvar Nanalal Bhatt Vaishnav College For Women, Chennai with the awards ceremony graced by the esteemed Chief Guest, Mary Kom, who felicitated the winners.



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