

## **In Chennai and its surroundings, a long tale of police encounters: 14 deaths, 10 encounters since 2019**

Updated - September 18, 2024 08:42 pm IST

Armstrong murder case assused K. Thiruvankadam, S. Vallarasu, Shankar, Murthaza, Deena alias Dinesh, Biscuit alias Mohammed Moideen, Chotta Vinodh and Ramesh were among the history-sheeters killed in encounters since 2019

From 2019 onwards, the city and its surrounding areas witnessed 10 encounter-deaths by police. involving 14 men, including history-sheeters.

### **Vallarasu, Madhavaram**

On June 15, 2019, S. Vallarasu, 21, of Vysarpadi was gunned down by the police in Madhavaram. The police said he was a notorious history-sheeter and they were forced to shoot him because he had injured at least three police personnel. Vallarasu is said to have been involved in cases of murder, attempt to murder and other criminal activities. The previous night, a resident of M.M. Garden, Vyasarpadi, called the police to complain that a few youth were causing a ruckus in the area. Two constables, S.Paunraj and Ramesh, went to the spot. They found Vallarasu drinking with his associates. On seeing the police, he whipped out a long knife and attacked Mr. Paunraj, and made good his escape. Special teams were constituted to trace him. Police teams went in search of Vallarasu. He was traced to a truck terminal near the Madhavaram bus stand. There he attacked two sub inspectors, Premkumar and Deepan, of the Vyasarpadi station. Sources said the police were left with little choice but to open fire at him.

### **Sankar, New Avadi Road**

On August, 21, 2020, the city police gunned down a 48 year-old history-sheeter, Shankar, when he allegedly attacked a police constable with a knife on New Avadi Road. Shankar had been detained under the Goondas Act on nine occasions. He was acquitted in a few cases. He had been involved in the attack on a Congress functionary and the owner of a supermarket. The previous night, Ayanavaram Police Inspector had detained Shankar in connection with cases related to murder and possession of ganja. At 6.30 a.m., he was taken to recover contraband, which was concealed in the debris dumped on a vacant plot near the Ayanavaram RTO on New Avadi Road. At the time, he allegedly whipped a knife from the place and allegedly attacked the police.

### **Murthaza from Jharkhand, Mevalurkuppam village near Sriperumbudur**

On October 10, 2021, a 28-year-old robbery suspect who was roaming with a weapon was shot dead in an encounter with police in Mevalurkuppam village near Sriperumbudur. The victim Murthaza, 28, a robbery suspect from Jharkhand was staying in a nearby village. He along with another associate allegedly indulged in at least three snatchings in Sriperumbudur previous night. The duo allegedly attacked a 55-year-old woman who was walking towards a bus stand and robbed her chain despite her resistance. On hearing her cries, the villagers launched a search to nab the duo who hid in a lake surrounded by forest area with thick bushes. Police also joined them and secured a suspect named Naem Akthar, 39, and another suspect was found in touch with him. A team went inside the adjoining area of a lake and the suspect Murthaza attacked one of our head constables using a knife. When the suspect went for a second attack, the inspector of the team opened fire on him in retaliation. The two men had been involved in the stabbing of a Tasmac staff member in the previous week.

### **Deena alias Dinesh and Biscuit alias Mohammed Moideen, near Mamandur**

Two history-sheeters, who were reportedly involved in a double murder, were gunned down by the police near Mamandur in Chengalpattu district on January 7, 2022. The dead were identified as Deena alias Dinesh, 24, and Biscuit alias Mohammed Moideen, 20, of Chengalpattu. Deena and Moideen were part of a six-member armed gang which murdered two rowdies — Appu alias Karthik, 30, of K.K. Street and Mahesh, 24, of Mettu Street — in the previous night in Chengalpattu. When a special team of police which went in search of him tried to round up the suspects at a forest adjoining the Palar at Irunkundrampalli, they threw bombs and attacked it with knives. An inspector opened fire in self-defence, said police.

### **Chotta Vinodh and Ramesh, near Guduvanchery**

At around 3 a.m. on August 1, 2023, police personnel who were conducting the checks on Karanai-Puducherry-Arungal Salai attempted to stop a speeding car. It came to a halt after bumping into a stationary police jeep. When police personnel tried to nab them, they attempted to use weapons. Police said the situation forced them to open fire on them. Vinodh alias Chotta Vinodh, 35, and Ramesh, 32, were shot dead by the police. Vinodh had a history-sheet on him at the Otteri police station and was an A+ category history-sheeter. He was involved in more than 50 offences — 10 murders, 15 attempt-to-murder cases, 10 robberies and 15 assault and extortion cases. Ramesh was an 'A' category history-sheeter at the Otteri station, and had more than 20 criminal cases pending against him.

### **Kulla Vishwa, near Sunguvarchatram**

On September 16, 2023, a 34-year-old history-sheeter namely A. Viswanathan alias 'Kulla' Vishwa was gunned down by the police on Saturday at Sogandy village near Sunguvarchatram as he allegedly tried to escape after attacking a police team that went to nab him in connection with a criminal case. He was from Kiloy village in Sriperumbudur taluk and was categorised as an A+ criminal in police records and had at least 25 cases for offences, including murders and attempt to murder, pending against him in Sriperumbudur, Oragadam, Sunguvarchatram and surrounding areas. The police said he had indulged in extortion from the scrap businessmen and used to hold kangaroo courts in and around Sriperumbudur.

Ragu alias Raguvaran and Hassan alias 'Karuppu' Hassan alias Batcha, Kancheepuram

Two murder suspects — Ragu alias Raguvaran, 38, and Hassan alias 'Karuppu' Hassan alias Batcha, 30 — who were involved in the murder of a history-sheeter in public were shot dead by police in Kancheepuram in the early hours of December, 27, 2023 when they reportedly attacked a police team who attempted to nab them. The special team who were searching for the suspects reached Indira Nagar following information that two of suspects were hiding there. When our personnel surrounded them at 5.30 a.m., they asked the duo to surrender. "Instead of surrendering, they attacked two of our personnel using knives. A sub-inspector in the team had to open fire in self-defence and to protect others," said a police officer.

### **Muthusaravanan and 'Gnayiru' Sathish, near Ponneri**

On October 12, 2023, Muthu Saravanan, 27, of Edapalayam and 'Sunday' Sathish of Gnayiru village near Redhills were gunned down by a special team of police personnel while they were hiding in a dilapidated house at Marambedu Kandigai on the Minjur-Vandalur Outer Ring Road. Both had been involved in murders and attempt to murders in the city and suburban areas..Muthu Saravanan and Sathish were hiding after they were involved in the murder of one Parthiban. Following receipt of information about the whereabouts of the duo, the special team proceeded to arrest them. The police claimed that the suspects had two pistols and fired them. Three police

personnel were injured in the firing. In retaliation, the police opened fire at the suspects, said police.

### **Thiruvengadam, near Puzhal**

On 14th July 2024, K. Thiruvengadam, 33, a history-sheeter, one of the suspects who were arrested for the murder of Bahujan Samaj party (BSP) leader K. Armstrong was killed in the Puzhal Police station limits. Thiruvengadam had been involved in at least five criminal cases for offences including murder and robbery. Police said based on their confession, they took Thiruvengadam with adequate security in a government vehicle to a house in Manali on Sunday morning to recover the weapons used for the murder. Then, he escaped from the police custody after getting down from the vehicle on the pretext of attending nature's call and ran, pushing police personnel near Retteri. When a police team surrounded Thiruvengadam who holed up at a place called Vegetarian village in Puzhal Police station limits early Sunday, he opened fire from an unlicensed weapon towards police personnel. Immediately, the police inspector opened fire from his service weapon towards Thiruvengadam for self-defence.

### **Kakkathoppu Balaji, in Vyasarpadi**

On September 18, 2024, notorious history-sheeter Kakkathoppu Balaji was gunned down by police at a secluded place in Vyasarpadi. Police said Balaji had more than 50 criminal cases and was also wanted in a murder case. When he was surrounded, he opened fire at a police vehicle, and a police inspector retaliated by opening fire at him.

Human rights activists and advocates have condemned the series of encounters and said it should be prevented. People's Union for Civil Liberties(PUCL) General Secretary V.Suresh said Tamil Nadu has always been a police state, irrespective of who is ruling the State. "If the police want to stop the crime it is not rocket science to bring it under control. Except, in Tamil Nadu, the nexus between the police force, politicians and various crime syndicates is too thick," said Mr. Suresh.

Human Rights Advocate M.Pugazhendhi said in the last five years, a dozen cases of encounter deaths were reported in Chennai and suburbs. He said police personnel are continuing human rights violations. All these years, no police officers were properly prosecuted and sentenced for gunning down the accused. It is clear extra judicial killing." "Self defence can be only proven in the court based on criminal laws until it is proven the police officer should be the murderer," said Mr. Pugazhendhi.

I. Aseer, State coordinator of the Joint Action against Custodial Torture, said "As per our calculation, from 1998 onwards, approximately 100 encounters were reported in the state. Wish to know whether the crime rate has decreased because of this."

Henri Tiphagne of executive director of People's Watch said, "I want rowdyism to be controlled; there is no second opinion about that. This is a very sad state of affairs. I want the people who break the law to be handled, but within the parameters of the law."

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/in-chennai-a-long-tale-of-police-encounters-14-deaths-10-encounters-in-last-five-years/article68656312.ece>