

3 women and a one-year-old child die in Theni forest fire

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Three women and a one-year-old child were killed in a forest fire in the Western Ghats in Theni district on Tuesday. According to the police, the deceased have been identified as Kiruthika (1), Vijayamani (45), Maheswari (36), and Manjula (38). Five others – Kalpana (48), Badrani (43), Onduveeran (49), Anand (27) and Lokesh (25) have been admitted to Theni Medical College Hospital with injuries.

The group of eight adults and a child was trapped in the middle of a forest fire on Tuesday afternoon. They were all residents of Rasingapuram in Bodinayakanur taluk in Theni district and worked in cardamom estates in Paethotti in Idukki district, Kerala. On Monday, they had reportedly chosen to come back home through the forests since the state borders were closed to prevent the spread of coronavirus, and got stuck in the fire.

One of the relatives of the group members had alerted the district fire and rescue services around 2.30 pm on Tuesday about the fire. Following the distress call, a team of around 100 personnel from various departments, like the forest department, police department including 30 commandos, were pressed into service to rescue those who were trapped in the fire. Fire

Forest fire in this region of Western Ghats is common in the summer. In 2018, 23 people were killed in a forest fire in Kurangani hills in Theni district. The group of trekkers included many from cities like Chennai and Erode who were part of trekking and tourist groups. In July 2018, a report submitted by a one-man Commission of the then Principal Secretary of Revenue and Disaster Management Atulya Misra revealed severe lapses on the part of the district forest officials for the tragedy.

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