



Bookings for trekking expeditions throughout Tamil Nadu to open this month

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Tamil Nadu has announced the reopening of its trekking routes, six years after the tragic Kurangani Hills forest fire, which claimed 36 lives in 2018. This news has been warmly welcomed by trekking enthusiasts, who will once again be able to explore the verdant landscapes of the state. The government plans to open 40 'safe' trekking routes across 15 forest divisions, with public bookings expected to commence by the end of July, provided all goes as planned.

The state has allocated Rs 4 crore to establish basic amenities along these routes. Supriya Sahu, the Additional Chief Secretary of Environment, Climate Change & Forests Tamil Nadu, shared the news on X, stating, "Trekking can rejoice. Tamil Nadu Forest Department is coming up with an online trekking trails atlas to enable people to go on their favourite treks in beautiful TN by booking treks online. Initially, 40 trekking routes will be made available online. These are existing trekking trails which have been reworked with the local community to be jointly operated by them and the Tamil Nadu Forest Department professionally. This will provide a fascinating way for people to connect with nature.

These revamped trails, although existing, have been significantly upgraded through a partnership between the Tamil Nadu Forest Department and local communities. This initiative not only aims to enhance the trekking experience but also to provide livelihood opportunities for the local tribal population. The collaborative grassroots conservation project is set to familiarise trekkers with lesser-known spots while actively engaging and benefiting local communities.

In Coimbatore, trekking will be permitted on four routes: a 7-km stretch between Sembukkarai and Perumal Mudi in the Coimbatore forest range, a 20-km stretch between Sadivayal and the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border in the Siruvani forest, a 14-km route in Velliangiri in the Boluvampatti forest range and a 4-km trail between Kallar and Burliyar in the Mettupalayam forest range. Tribal guides, employed through the Eco Development Committee (EDC), will accompany trekkers, enhancing their experience while improving the guides' livelihoods.

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department has also released posters showcasing the state's first trekking atlas and announced that the portal for bookings will be live by the end of July. This initiative marks a significant step towards promoting eco-tourism and sustainable development in the region. Additionally, the officials have identified 119 trekking routes and in the first phase, 40 routes will be opened while working on various other modalities. Before the bookings are opened, jurisdictional district forest officers will be sourcing videos and photos of approved trek routes for familiarisation.

Source:<https://www.newindianexpress.com/xplore/2024/Jul/11/bookings-for-trekking-expeditionsthroughout-tamil-nadu-to-open-this-month>