



Child Abuse Incidents

Reported in the Media for December 2023

This information is the result of the aggregation and verification of reported cases of violence against children in the media for December 2023. We at PEaCE/ECPAT Sri Lanka believe that sharing this information with a wider audience will help us connect, perform better, and become stronger in the field of Child Protection.

The Media Monitoring Team of ECPAT Sri Lanka has collected and collated information on incidents concerning all forms of child abuse reported in the media during December 2023. We have gathered information on 86 such incidents, skimming through various media outlets, which fall under 12 main categories of violence against children and these cases included 111 child abuse victims.

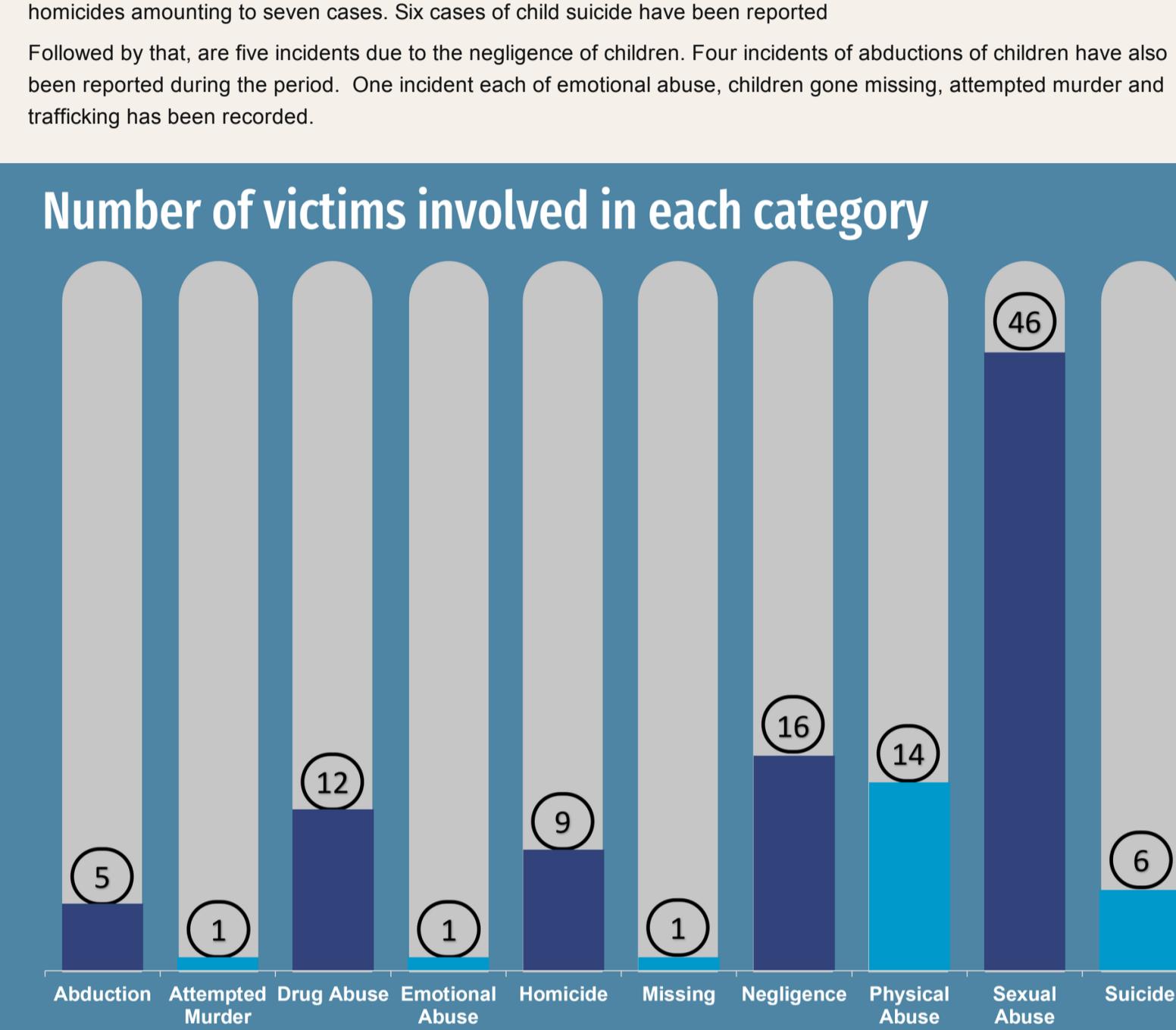
According to our data, the highest number of reported incidents are related to sexual abuse, amounting to 34 cases of all reported cases. Following closely behind this month as well is physical abuse with 14 reported incidents. Incidents of child drug abuse have taken third place with 12 cases reported.

According to our data, in December 55 victims of child abuse were girl children while 25 were boy children. The gender of 17 victims was unspecified in the reports. Out of the 86 incidents reported 34 victims are in the age group category of 11-14 years old and 26 victims in the age group of 15-18 years old.

In a report from 1st December the Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms stated that 2403 cases of child abuse have been registered nationwide during the last nine-month period. He states that this situation is worrying and that out of these cases, 1167 cases have been completed. He further stated that appropriate steps will be taken to introduce new laws to prevent violence against children and women. In another report a doctor at the Kandy National Hospital said that 132 girls under the age of 16 have been subjected to sexual abuse in the district of Kandy within the last 3 years.

Types of Child Abuse Incidents

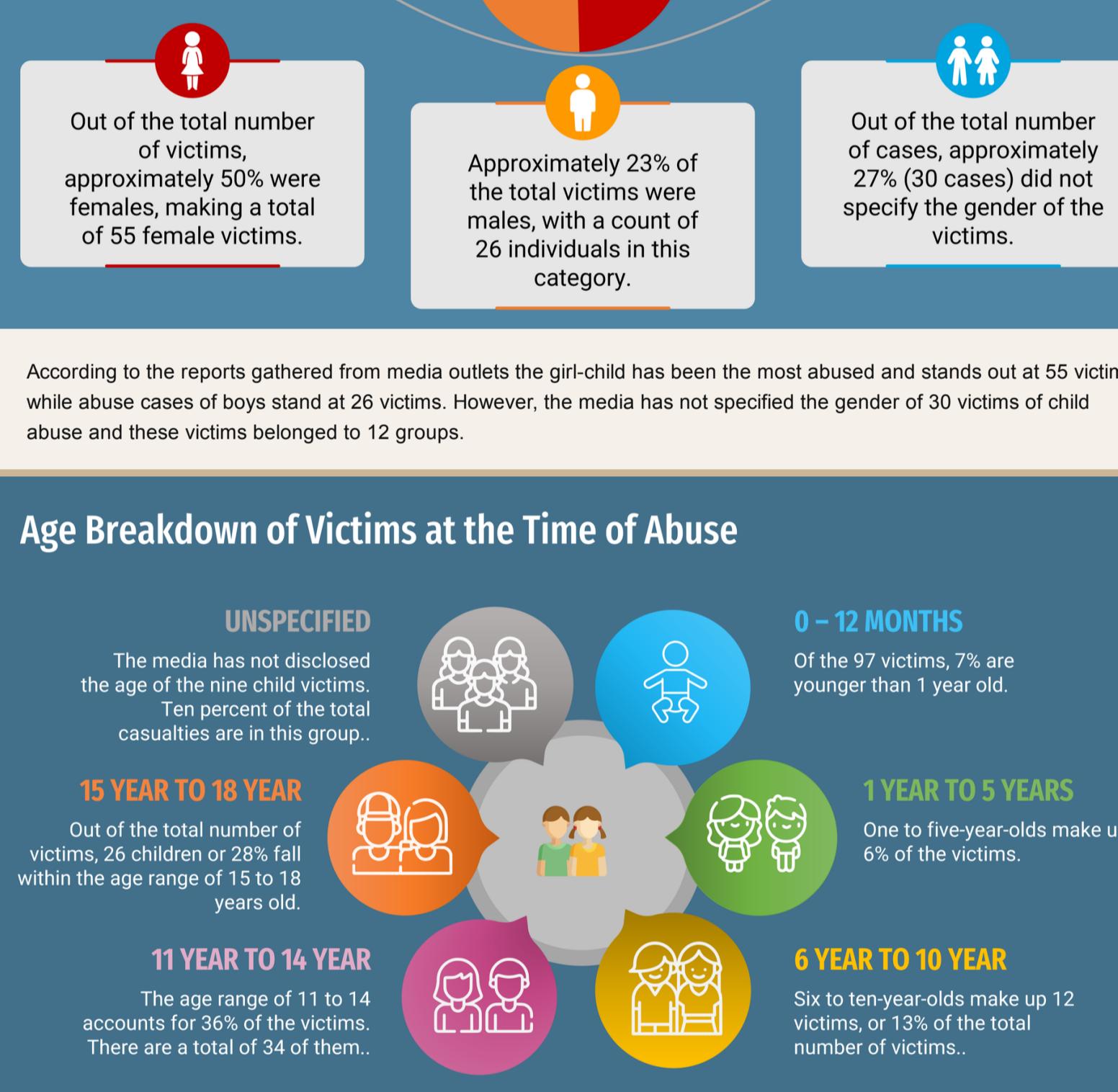
No of child abuse incidents



Once again out of the 111 cases recorded, sexual abuse is the highest crime against children in December 2023 with 35 incidents. Second, in place is physical abuse of children recording 14 incidents and third in place is the number of drug abuse cases among children which is also on the rise with 12 such cases being reported. Next in place are child homicides amounting to seven cases. Six cases of child suicide have been reported.

Followed by that, are five incidents due to the negligence of children. Four incidents of abductions of children have also been reported during the period. One incident each of emotional abuse, children gone missing, attempted murder and trafficking has been recorded.

Number of victims involved in each category



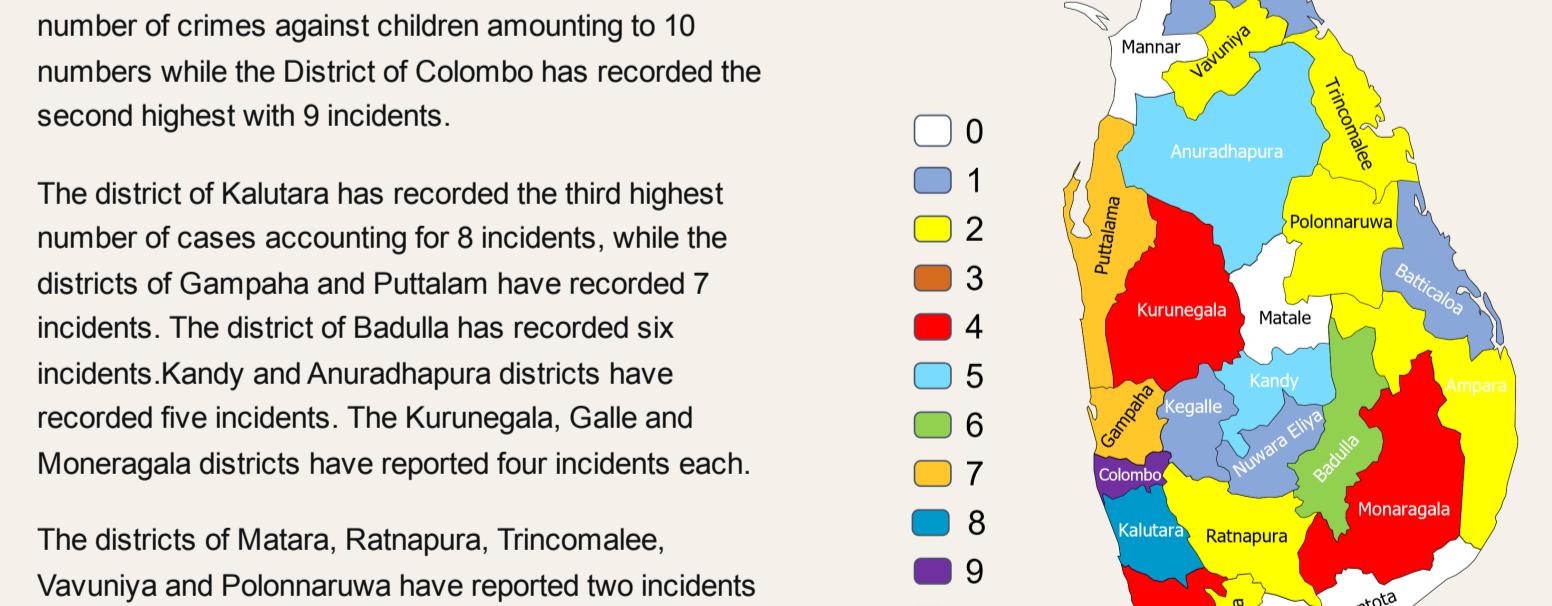
As per our records, the category of sexual abuse involved 46 victims. Child sexual abuse is a deeply concerning issue that requires urgent attention and support for both the victims as well as implementing preventive measures. 16 victims of child negligence have been reported while 14 child victims of physical abuse were reported. Twelve children have fallen victim to drug abuse. Nine children have been victims of homicide while six children have committed suicide. Five children have been victims of child abduction. One victim each has been recorded under the categories of drug abuse, emotional abuse, children gone missing and attempted murder.

Gender distribution of 111 victims



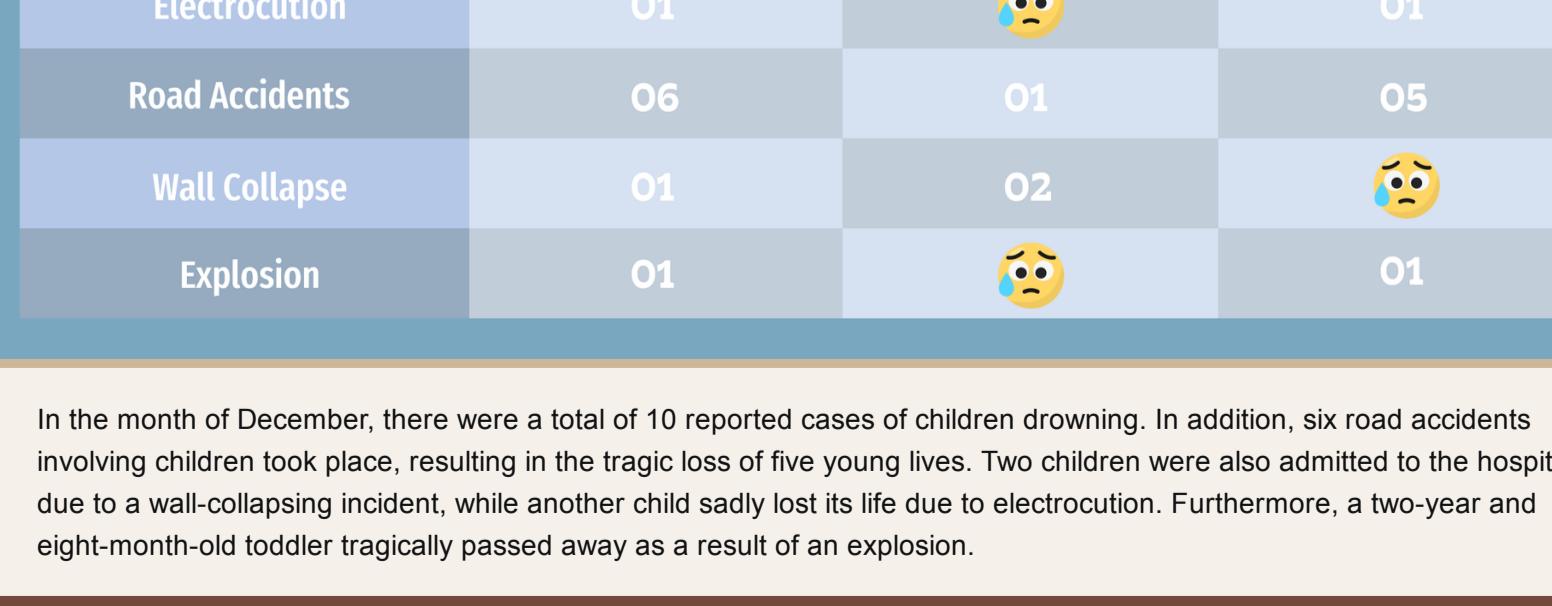
According to the reports gathered from media outlets the girl-child has been the most abused and stands out at 55 victims while abuse cases of boys stand at 26 victims. However, the media has not specified the gender of 30 victims of child abuse and these victims belonged to 12 groups.

Age Breakdown of Victims at the Time of Abuse



The age category of children between 11 to 14 years has been the most affected with 34 victims, followed closely behind by the age category of 15 to 18-year-old with 28 victims. Adolescence can be a challenging time, and these statistics highlight the vulnerability of these young individuals. The age category of 6 to 10 years old comprised of 12 victims. While the age category of 1 to 5 years old comprised of six victims and the age category of 0-12 months old included seven victims. These numbers are distressing, especially considering the vulnerability of such young children. The age of nine victims has not been specified in reports.

Relationship between the abuser and the victim when the abuse happened



Based on the data gathered 110 perpetrators are responsible for these incidents and the majority of them are persons very well known to the victims amounting to 56 numbers which included three groups while 28 of the perpetrators belonged to the victim's immediate family or people who are close relatives. It is rather alarming that many of these cases involve individuals close to the victims. Abuse within trusted circles can be particularly devastating. It underscores the importance of both prevention strategies and support systems to protect children from harm, especially from those they know and trust the most. Twenty of the perpetrators have been strangers and the relationships or connections of the 46 individuals were not specified in the media reports.

Geographic Distribution of Cases

As per the data we have gathered from various media outlets during the month of December 2023 and analyzed, the District of Jaffna has recorded the highest number of cases against children amounting to 10 cases while the District of Colombo has recorded the second highest with 9 incidents.

The district of Kalutara has recorded the third highest number of cases accounting for 8 incidents, while the districts of Gampaha and Puttalam have recorded 7 incidents. The districts of Badulla and Anuradhapura have recorded 6 and 5 incidents respectively. The districts of Kandy and Anuradhapura have recorded 4 incidents each. The districts of Matara, Ratnapura, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Polonnaruwa have reported two incidents each. The districts of Mannar, Matale and Hambantota did not report a single incident during December 2023.

In the month of December took place, resulting in a total of 10 reported cases of child drowning. In addition, six road accidents involving children took place, resulting in the tragic loss of five young lives. Two drowning victims were also admitted to the hospital due to a wall-collapsing incident, while another child sadly lost its life due to electrocution. Furthermore, a two-year and eight-month-old toddler tragically passed away as a result of an explosion.

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