

Nagarahole Adivasi federation condemns Big Cat Summit

The initial proceedings of the Global Big Cat Summit are being held in Bandipur and Nagarahole

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Nagarahole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samithi registering their protest against the Big Cat Summit to be held in Nagarahole and Bandipur. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

Ahead of the initial proceedings of the Global Big Cat Summit set to be held in Bandipur and Nagarahole between February 9 and 13, the Nagarahole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samithi (NAJHSS), a federation of gram sabhas in Nagarahole forests, have alleged that the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) is a facade to further occupy indigenous lands and intensify their exploitation.

Terming it “extravagant”, the coalition registered appalment at the summit, which is taking place “when there is global outrage over climate change and biodiversity loss,

and in particular when indigenous people on whose territories protected areas have been imposed are facing severe human rights violations”.

“Ignoring the intense injustices faced by indigenous communities in conservation areas, governments and international conservation groups, backed by corporate funding, are using IBCA as a facade to further occupy indigenous lands, intensify their exploitation, and generate humongous profits,” said a statement from NAJHSS.

The federation also condemned IBCA, its members and allies for “aggressively pushing false and extractive agendas like nature-based solutions, biodiversity offsetting, wildlife tourism, and green credits” and seeking “to profit from indigenous lands and lives in the name of tiger conservation’.

NAJHSS further drew attention to the plight of indigenous people in Nagarahole, demanding legal and moral recognition of their community forest rights, as well as habitat rights of Jenu Kurubas under the Forest Rights Act 2006.

“Since the launch of Project Tiger in 1973, with support from international agencies, indigenous communities across India have faced forced displacement, erosion of basic rights, and violent alienation from their traditional ways of life and livelihoods,” said the statement.

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