

Karnataka

Karnataka: Adivasis to block Nagarhole forest checkposts if denied public meeting

At the end of their 13-day padayatra, Nagarhole's Adivasis have demanded that the government address their demands, two main ones being full implementation of forest rights and stopping the tiger safaris that trample over their traditional land.



The Nagarhole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samiti (NAJHSS) led a march across Mysuru and Kodagu districts between December 21, 2025, and January 2, 2026.

Written by: Anisha Sheth

Edited by: Maria Teresa Raju 

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The Nagarhole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samiti (NAJHSS) has given the district administrations of Kodagu and Mysuru a week's

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administrations of Kodagu and Mysuru a weeks time to convene a public meeting to initiate action on their demands to assert their rights to their ancestral lands. The demands were made on January 3, after the conclusion of a 13-day long march (*padayatra*) through the Nagarahole forests.

In a meeting with the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru, the protesting group demanded a meeting with the district collectors of Kodagu and Mysuru. Shivu JK, a leader of the Samiti, said, "We told him that the district collectors of both districts must convene a joint meeting in a *haadi* either in Mysuru or Kodagu district to address our demands. The meeting must be with all the people. If they don't get back to us in seven days, we will block all the six forest checkpoints inside the Nagarahole forests."

Two of their major demands include full implementation of forest rights and stopping the tiger safaris that trample over their traditional land.

The padayatra

A small group of Adivasis from 52 *haadis* (tribal villages) led by the Samiti walked over dozens kilometres and covered 29 villages in Kodagu and Mysuru districts to assert their rights to their ancestral lands in the Nagarahole forests.

The *padayatra* started on December 21, 2025, at Tithimathi in Kodagu district and ended at Kerehaadi in HD Kote, Mysuru district, on January 2. Incidentally, January 2 marked the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Forest Rights Act 2006.

The *padayatra* is an ongoing assertion of Adivasi rights that took a decisive turn in April-May 2025, when 52 families of Atturkolli *haadi* held a press

conference in Bengaluru, announcing their decision

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conference in Bengaluru, announcing their decision to return to their forest village from which they were driven out 40 years ago.



'We are right holders, not encroachers': Tribal families fight Karnataka's Forest Dept for ancestral land

The group, comprising leaders from several *haadis*, held awareness meetings in villages along the *padayatra* route and were attended by the people of nearby *haadis*, Samiti leader Shivu said. People who attended those meetings then went to *haadis* whose residents could not make it to the meetings to spread the message, he said.



Awareness meeting held in villages during the *padayatra* led by the Nagarahole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samiti (NAJHSS) between December 21, 2025, and January 2, 2026.

At the village meetings, the Samiti created awareness about the declaration of the Nagarahole forests as a protected area in 1970, then as a wildlife

forests as a protected area in 1970, then as a wildlife sanctuary, followed by national park in 1988, and critical tiger habitat in 2007. All these decisions had been made without consulting the Adivasis who had been living inside the forests for generations, the Samiti said in a press release.

Shivu had previously pointed out that many of these notifications were a violation of Section 38(v)(4) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which directs the state government to notify Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers living in the reserves and ensure that their agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests are not affected.



Nagarahole Adivasis hit out at environmentalists who accused them of cutting trees for cricket match

These discussions have led to 29 gram sabhas along the *padayatra* route passing resolutions against the tiger reserve and tiger safaris and submitting them to the relevant authorities, Shivu said.

Pressures from Forest Dept, tourism industry

Tiger safaris are run by the Forest Department and are promoted by both the government and privately-owned tourism establishments. The state government had recently stopped safaris after several instances of human-animal conflict, but is under pressure from the tourism industry to restart them.

Grama sabhas are recognised under the Forests Rights Act as a village assembly comprising all the

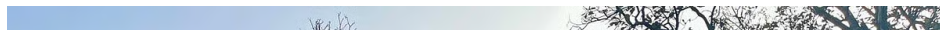
RIGHTS ACT as a village assembly comprising all the adult members of a village and are empowered under Section 5(d) of the Act to oppose any activity that would go against the interests of the forests, forest animals, and biodiversity.

Shivu said that during the *padayatra*, people from different *haadis* had reiterated the harassment they allegedly faced at the hands of the Forest Department.

For instance, Shivu said that in Balla *haadi*, which is in Kunthuru *jamma* (Ponnampet taluk in Kodagu district), the safari route passes over a burial ground of the Jenu Kurubas. *Jamma* is a word the Adivasis use to describe the land bound by their traditional boundaries.

“That land was submerged by the Kabini river when the dam was built. If there is a death when the water dries up, we bury the body there. The safari route passes right over it. They heap disrespect on our ancestors like that. The Forest Department has turned us into their slaves, they behave as if they are the lords of the forest. The Chief Minister came to Kerehaadi and went, but the Forest Department’s atrocities have not stopped,” Shivu alleged.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had visited Kerehaadi in November in a much publicised event and had assured that he would ensure that Adivasi demands are met.





Awareness meeting held in villages during the padayatra led by the Nagarahole Adivasi Jamma Paale Hakku Sthapana Samiti (NAJHSS) between December 21, 2025, and January 2, 2026.

Shivu also pointed out the double standard of the Forest Department, which was bent on permanently relocating the Adivasis from the Nagarahole forests even though the FRA gave them the right to live on their ancestral land. This is while the Department runs guest houses inside the very same forests.

He said that the Gangothri forest rest house was inside the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. According to the Forest Department's website, the four-room [Gangothri](#) guest house was built in 1970 and has electricity and piped water supply.

Shivu said that the Samiti was to meet the Mysuru Deputy Commissioner on January 2, the day the *padayatra* culminated at Kerehaadi in HD Kote taluk. However, as he could not meet them, the protesting group camped overnight in Kerehaadi, insisting to district officials that they would not budge until he met them. The next day, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru received a memorandum of their demands from them. It was then that the protesting group demanded a meeting with the district collectors

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DEMANDS OF THE NAGARAHOLE ADIVASI JAMMAPALE HAKKU STHAPANA SAMITI (NAJHSS)

- 1 Stop safaris on adivasi traditional lands, burial grounds and sacred spaces in Nagarahole forests
- 2 Review the illegal declaration of the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. Form a committee of lawyers, FRA experts, community leaders, ITDP officials to look into legal violations including FRA and submit a report to the NAJHSS.
- 3 Form a committee of FRA experts, who will work with the NAJHSS to implement habitation rights of the Jenu Kurubas, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
- 4 State govt take action to implement Article 244(1) of the Constitution (administration and control of Scheduled Areas).
- 5 Start an adivasi cultural education centre at the deserted Taj Resort in Murkal haadi as decided by the grama sabhas.
- 6 Community rights over sacred spaces, traditional practices, and community forest rights should be recognised.
- 7 Withdraw cases filed by the Forest Department against NAJHSS leaders and tribal people.
- 8 Relocation of adivasis from the Nagarahole forests must be stopped.

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'You are entering our ancestral land': Adivasis put up board outside Nagarahole Tiger Reserve

Karnataka

Adivasis



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