# Farmers in Karnataka escalate protests over drastic cuts in promised electricity supply



Farmers across the Kavital region of Raichur have taken a courageous stand against the ongoing power outages that threaten their very survival — a stark reflection of a government failing to deliver basic services and support for agriculture. On Tuesday, they laid siege to the local office of the Gulbarga Electric Supply Company (GESCOM), raising urgent demands for action amidst an already dire situation that exposes the government’s neglect of rural communities. Despite promises of a minimum of seven hours of three-phase electricity daily, farmers report being left in the dark — literally and figuratively — with the supply dwindling to as little as thirty minutes. “We are being forced to wait for electricity instead of working our land,” lamented local farmer Rafi Ontibandi, underscoring a government that appears indifferent to the plight of the agricultural backbone of Karnataka.

This crisis is no isolated incident. Across Karnataka, the lack of reliable power supply is a symptom of broader governmental incompetence and mismanagement, especially as the state faces a 60% rainfall deficit. Such neglect has disastrous consequences for vital crops like sugarcane, tur dal, and maize, exacerbating existing drought conditions and jeopardising farmers' futures. With 44,000 water pumps operating under capricious power — sometimes for mere minutes — the risk of widespread crop failure has never been more imminent. The current situation reveals a government that is more concerned with political optics than delivering tangible improvements that could safeguard rural livelihoods.

Reports reveal that power outages have plummeted from promised hours to a perilous half-hour window, with no sign of relief in sight. Local farmers like Mounesh Hirekurabar speak of ongoing repairs in some villages, but widespread disruption persists, exposing the government’s failure to implement a systemic solution that prioritises agricultural needs. Instead of addressing their grievances, authorities remain MIA, allowing farmers to suffer the consequences of broken promises and reckless misgovernance.

The protests have spread across Karnataka. In Yadgir, farmers have staged sit-ins and delivered memorandums to GESCOM officials, demanding stable, uninterrupted power ideally aligned with the farming calendar. Their fears are valid: inconsistent supply threatens cotton, paddy, and other crops vital to the region’s economy, risking a cascade of financial losses. Even more disturbingly, in Kalaburagi, farmers resorted to a provocative protest by bringing a live crocodile — a disturbing reminder of the increased dangers faced by farmers working in darkness, amidst wildlife encounters caused by governmental neglect of rural infrastructure.

In Bengaluru’s rural districts, the impact of power shortages extends beyond agriculture to weaving and other traditional industries, further imperilling the livelihoods of countless families. Power cuts of three to four hours daily have already slashed saree production by half — a clear indication of how a government that fails to provide reliable power is crippling local economies and deepening inequality.

As protests intensify, the message from farmers remains clear: they cannot afford to be left in the dark. The government’s failure to provide constant, dependable power is not just an inconvenience — it is a direct assault on their livelihoods and the safety of their communities. Without urgent action, Karnataka’s farmers face a bleak future, symbolising the profound failures of a government that prioritises political expediency over the needs of its people.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hubballi/power-outage-farmers-lay-siege-to-gescom-office/articleshow/121759843.cms> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/crops-at-risk-as-erratic-power-supply-hits-irrigation-in-karnataka-2666951> - Farmers in Karnataka are facing significant challenges due to erratic power supply, which is disrupting irrigation and threatening crop yields. With a 60% rainfall deficit, these power interruptions could lead to large-scale crop failures, impacting food security. The state has 44,000 water pump sets, many of which are operating at reduced capacity. Farmers are receiving less than half of the promised seven hours of electricity, jeopardising crops like sugarcane, tur dal, black-eyed beans, and corn. The situation is exacerbated by severe moisture stress in 113 taluks across 29 districts.
3. <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/now-erratic-power-supply-hits-drought-stricken-farmers-in-karnataka-2726364> - Farmers across Karnataka, already grappling with drought conditions, are facing further hardships due to erratic power supply. The duration of three-phase power for pump sets has drastically reduced from the regular seven hours to as low as half an hour in some areas. This disruption hampers their ability to irrigate crops like jowar, green gram, and maize, leading to withering plants and potential crop loss. Farmers are protesting against the power distribution companies, demanding consistent power supply to save their standing crops.
4. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/farmers-stage-protest-in-yadgir-seeking-seven-hours-uninterrupted-power-supply-for-farm-pumpsets/article67438423.ece> - In Yadgir district, farmers have staged protests demanding seven hours of uninterrupted power supply for farm pumpsets. They argue that the reduced power supply is jeopardising crops like cotton, green chilli, red gram, and paddy. The farmers submitted a memorandum to GESCOM officials, emphasising the need for consistent power to irrigate their fields and protect their livelihoods.
5. <https://news.abplive.com/news/india/karnataka-farmers-bring-crocodile-to-electricity-office-in-kalaburagi-to-protest-power-crisis-watch-1753144> - Farmers in Kalaburagi district, Karnataka, staged a dramatic protest against frequent power outages by bringing a live crocodile to the local GESCOM office. The protest highlighted the dangers posed by working in the dark due to inadequate power supply, which increases the risk of encounters with wildlife. The farmers demanded a shift in the power supply schedule to daytime hours to ensure safety and productivity.
6. <https://www.thehansindia.com/news/cities/bengaluru/power-woes-in-bengaluru-rural-dist-affect-agriculture-weaving-830471> - In Bengaluru rural district, power outages are severely impacting agriculture, weaving, and other industries. The district, known for its extensive agricultural land and weaving industry, is experiencing daily power cuts of 3-4 hours, leading to a 50% decline in saree production. Farmers and weavers have appealed to the government for improved power supply to sustain their livelihoods.
7. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2023/oct/12/weak-winds-in-gadagresult-in-power-shortage-farmers-protest-2623172.html> - Farmers in Gadag district, Karnataka, are protesting against power shortages caused by weak winds affecting wind energy generation. With only 3-4 hours of power supply per day, farmers are unable to operate water pumps, threatening their crops. They demand uninterrupted power supply to protect their harvests and livelihoods.