

New cyber-ID law lacks the teeth to track, prosecute hackers. **Page 3**

Smoked out: one year later victims of slum fire still without housing **Page 4**



Chappals greet CM at rally

■ Dharam Singh, Rajkumar amidst drama at dharna
 ■ Memorandum delivered, crowd goes on rampage

BY CASEY JOHNSON

Declaring the time for negotiations over, Rajkumar led the Kannada film industry in a rowdy, one-day agitation at the Vidhana Soudha on November 25. The protest demanding a moratorium on non-Kannada films turned aggressive when Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh mounted a mini-lorry amidst a packed crowd to accept a signed memorandum from thespian Rajkumar. Activists and agitators in front of the lorry hurled several pairs of chappals at the CM before the police subdued the crowd with lathi charge.

But it wasn't until the agitation broke out that the crowd turned into a mob. On Race Course Road the mob stoned one car, ransacked a Corporation Bank ATM and shattered windows of a government office at Khanija Bhavan.

Kannada miscreants smashed the windshields of five cars, setting fire to one of them, outside the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce office near Shivanananda Circle. Activist Vatal Nagaraj and 30 others were arrested and later released in connection with the rampage.



Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh and Matinee Idol Rajkumar address the crowd from a mini-lorry. Srinath and Rajendra Singh Babu are seen to their right. Rajkumar delivered the Kannada Film Industrie's memorandum to the CM before the crowd began hurling chappals.

The violence was, however, out of place with the concert-like atmosphere of the dharna itself. Actors like Srinath, Sudeep, Darshan, Murali and, most conspicuously, Rajkumar's wife and sons provided the opening acts, before a frail but determined Rajkumar arrived to address the crowd of 4,000 pro-Kannada supporters.

"I am ready to take part in any number of agitations in the future for the survival of Kannada language. As long as I have

God's blessings and the affection of my fans, I will do that," Rajkumar said.

The morning dharna in front of the Kengal Hanumanthaiiah statue behind the Vidhana Soudha was called after Bangalore theatre owners defied a gentlemen's agreement for a three-week moratorium on the release of non-Kannada films by screening *Veer-Zaara*.

In an attempt to strengthen the movement, the Kannada film industry announced earlier in the week its intention to include activists and artists from all branches of Kannada culture. The agitation appears to be running along the same lines as the "Kannada, Karnataka, Kannadiga," Gokak agitation launched in the 1980's to ensure primacy for Kannada

schools.

The rally culminated when Rajkumar handed Dharam Singh a memorandum with a list of demands. The demands include a ban on non-Kannada films until the moratorium debate is settled, action against violation of this norm, compulsory screening of Kannada films in all cinemas, and a 100 per cent entertainment tax on new non-Kannada films. Singh, addressing the crowd before the chappals sent him scurrying, promised that his cabinet would convene to discuss the issue. But before leaving the scene the CM made it clear that he would not have terms dictated to him, telling *TWO*, "My arms are not twisted."

Inputs from Barsha B. Barua and Bhargavi Kerur

Lights, Camera, Agitation!

Key events in the Kannada film saga

Aug 13: Kannada Film Producers' Association requests distributors to refrain from screening new non-Kannada films for seven weeks.

Aug 19: Film exhibitors meet CM N. Dharam Singh to seek support.

Oct 15: Government decides to intervene, after attacks on Innovative Multiplex, Menaka and Cauvery theatres.

Oct 16: Supreme Court stays the seven-week moratorium.

Oct 20: Deputy CM Siddaramaiah convenes a meeting of exhibitors, distributors and producers to reduce the seven-week moratorium to three weeks.

Nov 5: The Karnataka Film Exhibitors' Federation announces their decision to screen new non-Kannada movies.

Nov 25: Seeking strict implementation of an unofficial three-week ban on release of new non-Kannada movies, Representatives of the Kannada film industry, led by thespian Rajkumar, stage a dharna at the Vidhana Soudha.

Stars remain centre stage

TWO NEWS TEAM

In a move to broaden the scope of their troubled film ban, the Kannada Film Producers Association decided that henceforth everything having to do with Kannada culture would be included in their agitation against the release of non-Kannada films. November 25 was to be a rally "Of and for Kannada" and thus prominent poets and personalities of the Kannada language were expected to add colour to the dharna. It was indeed a show of charm and lure but the cast of Kannada film stars, led publicly for the first time by Rajkumar, remained firmly in the spotlight.

Opinions differed in both the camps. Actors Ramesh Bhatt, Sarigam Viji, and Kashinath spoke for Karnataka when they said, "It has become difficult for us to survive in our land. We are going to fight for our land, language and culture." But the fact remains that the rally revolved around the focal point of Kannada movies.

Kagodu Thimmappa, leader of the 1992 Kagodu agitation said, "Non-Kannadigas coming into Karnataka must be encouraged to learn our language and films are the best way to teach the language." However, prominent Kannada poet, Sumateendra Nadig, differed with Thimmappa when he

The Kannada film industry wanted to turn the ban into a cultural crusade

said, "If we do not produce quality movies we cannot expect people of other regions to watch them."

Well-known producer, Rajendra Singh Babu proclaimed, "Henceforth we are not going to allow any non-Kannada movie to come into our land." The moderate voices like those of Vishnuvardhan and Suresh Heblikar said they believed in dialogue and expected co-operation from the non-Kannada movie world.

Actor Upendra seemed nonchalant about the whole agitation, saying, "I am not bothered much about the purpose. It is a three-week moratorium and after that let anything happen."