

If people keep fighting over faith, it will affect district development: Rai

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State forests minister Ramanath Rai, who is in charge of Dakshina Kannada district, was tipped to be home minister but missed out due to political compulsions. In an interview to TOI, Rai, 65, opened up about the communal tensions in the coastal district, how differences are being stoked among communities and why BJP has been targeting him.

Why are fewer industries and investments coming to Dakshina Kannada? Why is it seen as an investment-unfriendly district?

If any place witnesses constant conflict between different sections of society, it will definitely affect development



Did you miss out on the home portfolio because you are often in the spotlight when there are communal incidents in Dakshina Kannada district?

No, never. It is up to the chief minister to decide about cabinet expansion or reshuffling. They felt that a Bengaluru legislator should become home minister. To be frank, I am free now. I have to work for my constituency. It would have been a tough job for me if I had been given the home portfolio

The Interview

of that region. This is applicable to any place in the world. Development of Dakshina Kannada will also be affected if people continue to fight in the name of faith.

As district-in-charge minister, have you failed to prevent recurrence of frequent communal flare-ups?
We have been witnessing

communal flare-ups that divide society in our district for many years. However, the recent instances are different from those reported earlier. Prima facie, there is no communal violence here. The instances of murder that are being reported now are planned attacks. The police have been able to solve murders that were not related to any communal tension. Communal elements from both sides do

not want truth to prevail. They want issues to target the government — an example is the murder of Karthikraj (police arrested his sister and boyfriend for the murder but BJP went into an overdrive and BJP MP Nalin Kumar Kattel said he would set the district on fire if the culprits were not arrested).

What steps have you taken to prevent such incidents in

Dakshina Kannada district? Why are we facing this situation if the government is doing its job?

Police in Dakshina Kannada district and Mangaluru city have been doing their job very effectively. All measures have been taken to contain the situation in the district. However, I have been blamed by opposition parties only for political reasons. Let them recall instances of attacks on churches and Christians and the assault on young people at homestays that occurred during BJP rule. In the killings of Sharath Madiwala, Ashraf Kulai, Praveen Poojari, Vinayak Baliga, Jaleel Karopady and many others, there is the hand of communal political parties like the BJP and SDPI. Advocates of their parties provide legal support to killers on both sides.

Wildlife board eases OFC norms; greens see red

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Bengaluru: The standing committee of National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has empowered chief wildlife wardens of states and Union Territories to approve proposals for laying of drinking water pipelines and optical fibre cables (OFCs) inside national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves. Environmentalists have opposed the decision, which was taken at a recent meeting.

Till now, proposals had to be recommended by the State Board for Wildlife and approved by the national board's standing committee. The delegation of complete power to the state, say environmentalists,

NATIONAL PARKS

could have a detrimental effect on protected areas as there are chances of wardens bowing to local political pressure.

"Proposals to lay OFCs through Bandipur and Nagarhole forests have already been floated. The move to ease the procedure of getting approval could hamper habitat protection efforts, given the large number of tigers and elephants in the areas. Even Dandeli forest division in Uttara Kannada is part of another such proposal," said a wildlife enthusiast, on condition of anonymity.

Praveen Bhargav, former member, NBWL, said, "The board's decision amounts to yet another serious dilution of the regulatory mechanism. Since

GRAVE VIOLATION OF LAW



NOT ON BOARD: Greens feel laying of pipes and cables in national parks will endanger habitats

"The fundamental question NBWL must answer is how its decisions comply with Section 29 or 35(6) of the Wildlife Act which unambiguously mandates that there shall be no destruction or diversion of habitat unless it is for the improvement and better management of wildlife. These dilutions amount to a grave violation of the law and Supreme Court orders

Praveen Bhargav |
FORMER MEMBER, NBWL

2014, the Centre has been systematically diluting various regulations through circulars, guidelines and general approvals. Ensuring 'ease of doing business' appears to have become the main business of the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF), which is tantamount to abdication of its constitutional and legal duty. This is reflected in the abysmally low rejection rate of under 1.5%, which establishes that NBWL has turned into a project-clearing house."

The NBWL meeting was chaired by Union minister of environment Dr Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi on September 4.

A senior forest official from Karnataka said they would be careful before approving drinking water pipelines or OFCs. "NBWL has told chief wildlife wardens of states to furnish details of all such sanctioned projects every month. Also, most of these

proposals will be along existing roads passing through forest areas and hence, they won't cause much disturbance to wildlife or forest cover. State wildlife wardens will be answerable if anything goes wrong," he added.

The directive from NBWL comes after the Gujarat government proposed delegation of power to the state regarding water pipeline proposals in protected areas. The western state said projects involving supplying of drinking water to people cannot be delayed due to long procedures since water is a basic need for both humans and livestock.

Dr HS Singh, NBWL member, opined as long as the fibres are to be laid along roads inside national parks and sanctuaries, the responsibility of sanctioning proposals can be vested in the state board. He suggested that details of clearances given to such proposals be submitted to NBWL.

Speech was wrongly interpreted: Ghanti

Continued from page 1

Ghanti's statement came a day after the CM said if the VC sends a request on filling vacancies, he would approve it. From the dais, he asked Ghanti how many posts were vacant. She said 180, and he replied: "I'll sanction all."

The next day, Ghanti said, "To whom should we explain our university's problems? If we take our problems to the government, they need a suitcase full of cash to solve it. Earlier, they would send the suitcase full of cash to develop the university. Now, I need to take a suitcase full of cash and plead with them to develop university."

Ghanti told the dignitaries on the dais that they shouldn't be under the impression that the government will help the university, which is facing faculty shortage and funds crunch for research.

After her statement went viral on social media and TV channels, Ghanti said: "I was reiterating the observation of previous vice-chancellors on successive governments' attitude towards the only

language university in the state. It was not meant about Siddaramaiah and his government. My speech was wrongly interpreted by the media," she said.

Soudha not a Gangotri: Minister

In Belagavi, chief minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday dismissed the allegations, saying he was not aware of the context in which the vice-chancellor made the statement. Health minister KR Ramesh Kumar in Hubballi said: "It's possible (referring to the suitcase comment) since Vidhana Soudha is not a Gangotri. But details have to be given on who took the suitcase to whom and when, and how much cash was there."

Hampi Kannada University was founded in 1991 and Mallika Ghanti took charge as the vice-chancellor in 2015. In 2016, she had alleged that the government was neglecting the university while framing policies and programmes to protect the land, water and borders of the state. "It is painful to go with a begging bowl in our own home," she had said.

Jackal and boars driven out of Mysuru airport

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Mysuru: Forest department officials cleared the Mysuru Airport campus of a jackal and two boars on Thursday following complaints of wildlife movement inside its premises at Mandakalli.

After completing the combing operation, the forest officials instructed the airport authorities to install iron grills at six points under the compound wall, left unshielded to release stormwater.

The airport authorities had raised a complaint on Monday. A preliminary survey was done the following day, and a full-fledged operation was launched early Thursday wherein a jackal and two boars were spotted.

Deputy conservator of forests (wildlife) V Yedukondalu said a total of 56 forest officers, including 50 ground-level staff, were pressed into action. "During the two-hour operation we managed to clear the entire area, about 350 acres, of wild animals. We had kept both the gates open before commencing the drive," he said.

"The airport authorities had approached us after noticing movement of the animals on their premises off National Highway 766. We drove away the wild animals using the customary



TEAM EFFORT: Forest personnel being instructed before the combing operation. They instructed the airport authorities to install iron grills at six points

method of bursting crackers at multiple locations and leaving one area open so that the animals can escape," Yedukondalu said. A quick recce was done on Tuesday. "We could see pug marks of jackals, and droppings and plough marks left by boars all along the campus," he said.

According to him, since forest officials were not supposed to catch them, the animals were driven away. "There could be a pack of Indian jackals living on the premises as an ideal habitat is already available. But during operation, we found only one jackal," Yedukondalu said.

Anganwadi workers' plea: HC refuses to stay midday meal scheme for pregnant women

Bengaluru: The high court on Thursday refused to grant an interim order on a petition filed by five associations of anganwadi workers and helpers against some of the conditions associated with Mathru-poorna Yojana. It is a scheme wherein midday meals are delivered to pregnant and lactating mothers with a unit cost of Rs 21 per head.

Counsel for petitioners said the workers have a busy schedule every day; they have

to be at anganwadi centres from 9.30am to 4pm, write 32 registers apart from running pre-school activities; provide breakfast to children, conduct meetings with mothers and also a health check-up.

"The pre-condition that anganwadi workers have to carry food/meals to the houses of pregnant women and lactating mothers would put additional burden on the petitioners. In Dakshina Kannada district for instance, the anganwadi cen-

tres are located at a 2-3km distance from each other," counsel told the court.

However, the additional advocate general, appearing on behalf of the government, said the scheme was formulated based on a report submitted by the high court-appointed committee headed by Justice N K Patil to tackle malnutrition. As per the scheme, the beneficiaries would be served midday meals through anganwadi centres. **TNN**

Prisoners of fate break free..

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Lucknow Central (Crime/Drama)

★★★★1/2
Cast: Farhan Akhtar, Diana Penty, Ronit Roy, Gippy Grewal, Deepak Dobriyal, Rajesh Sharma, Inaamulhaq, Ravi Kishan
Direction: Ranjit Tiwari
Duration: 2 hours 13 minutes
Language: Hindi (U/A)
58888 code: luc

■ *Kishan Girhotra's (Farhan) dreams of becoming a singer are shattered when he is falsely accused of murdering an IAS officer in Moradabad. Pronounced guilty, he is jailed for the crime he never committed. Deprived of the freedom he rightfully deserves, the sun shines on him once again even in captivity, as a bunch of prisoners and an NGO worker (Diana Penty) become his voice and the wind beneath his wings. Can he accomplish his dream of forming a band in the prison or does he manage to escape the dungeon?*

Based on true life events, *Lucknow Central* is a feel-good, human, prison-break drama that succeeds to manipulate you emotionally, despite being predictable and filmy in portions. While the peg is somewhat similar (barring the undertrial element) to the recent *Qaidi Band*, *Lucknow Central* has a distinct execution and is way more evolved.

What essentially works for *LC* is its classic 'winning against all odds' theme. The inmates finding a reason to live and a sense of belonging within the four walls of the Lucknow Central jail



instead of their homes is what tugs at your heartstrings. Shunned as misfits and outcasts by society, including their families, the prisoners find solace in each other's company. Ranjit Tiwari handles this aspect of human alienation and friendship beautifully. His understated sensibility resonates with his talented star cast, starting with the very impressive Ronit Roy. The actor stands out as the curt, conniving and clever jailer. Sadly, his character is reduced to being a toothless tiger eventually.

Farhan ably carries the film on his shoulders but his efforts to nail his desi character are partially visible. For instance, his flawed English pronunciation seems a tad artificial and inconsistent. (Read *corut* for court, *rohk* for rock and *naan-existent* for non-existent). Nevertheless, he gets the mannerisms and innate innocence of

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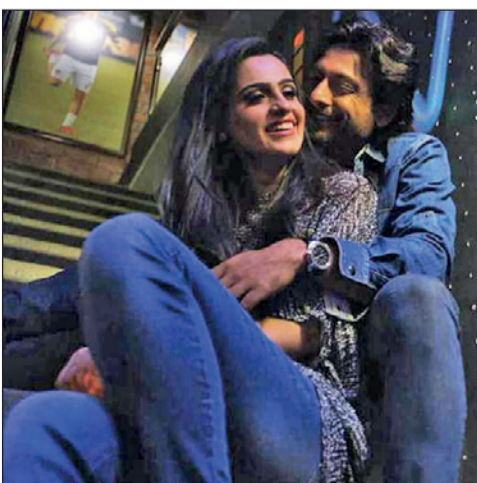
a small-town guy right and makes you weep for his misfortune. Deepak Dobriyal is excellent as always and so are Rajesh Sharma, Inaamulhaq and Ravi Kishan. Diana Penty and Gippy Grewal play their parts well.

Considering the film is about music, *Rangdaari* is a beautiful composition that sums up this fascinating tale of dreamers and fighters, who refuse to give up on life or faith.

Direction: 3.5/5 | Dialogues: 3/5
Screenplay: 3.5/5 | Music: 3.5/5
Visual Appeal: 3/5

Our rating is not the average of the above

— Renuka Vyavahare



of a relatively ambiguous movie, whose story progresses from being unpredictable to bizarre. Almost every person in it is seemingly bad, turns out to be good but is actually bad. You walk out feeling empty and confused as opposed to being shaken.

— Renuka Vyavahare

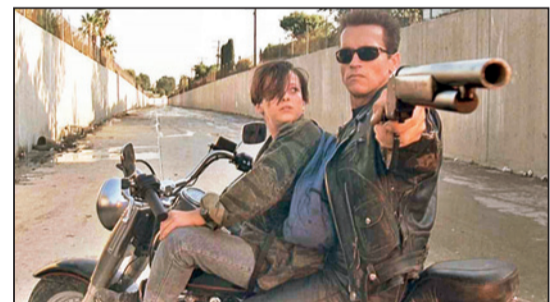
Terminator 2: Judgment Day 3D

(Action, Sci-Fi, Drama) ★★★★★1/2

Cast: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Edward Furlong, Robert Patrick, Joe Morton
Direction: James Cameron
Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes
Language: English (UA)
58888 code: ter

■ *Two humanoid cyborgs travel back in time to battle each other over John Connor — the leader of the human resistance in a futuristic war against artificially intelligent machines.*

In 1984, writer-director James Cameron created an iconic entity in the Terminator — a heartless and relentless cyborg that looked human but only on the outside. The Terminator could not be stopped or reasoned with; he would destroy everything in his path till he completed his singular mission. If there was ever an actor best suited to play a robotic, expressionless, and intimidating machine, who better than Arnold Schwarzenegger? Building on his status as an action superstar, Cameron capitalised on this genius casting by flipping the horrific antagonist into a protective warrior in the 1991 sequel. Cameron also pushed the boundaries of the visual effects industry at that point by establishing standards that are still being followed till today. What's truly astounding is how they have managed to still look new and fresh in this remastered version.



However, none of that would matter in the absence of a thrilling story that picked up where the prequel left off and took the franchise to a whole new direction. Cameron built on what worked the first time around and added crucial emotional beats here as well. There's a strong sense of family between the T-800 (Schwarzenegger) and the Connors (Linda Hamilton & Edward Furlong), even when they're all flawed in their own unique ways. This bond is what pushes them to confront the adversity they encounter in the form of the advanced liquid metal cyborg, played so despicably by Robert Patrick. His menacing, shape-shifting T-1000 is the perfect foil to Schwarzenegger's bulking juggernaut. Sparks literally fly when they collide, and it's a thrilling sight, especially in 3D. Modern superhero films can still learn a few things from this action classic.

T2 truly stands the test of time with a great story, combined with smart and efficient special effects that complement the narrative. After all, the threat of global nuclear annihilation is extremely relevant today, while artificial intelligence sits on the verge of autonomous sentience. This film raised the bar extremely high for action blockbuster and would become a game-changer in the industry — even if the *Terminator* franchise would go on to crumble under heavy expectations. Though you might have watched it repeatedly on TV, you simply do not want to miss the surreal and futuristic experience of *T2-3D* on the big screen!

— Neil Soans

4 youths create ruckus on KIA Road; arrested

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Four youths who took two of their girlfriends for a joyride to KIA late Wednesday night were arrested after they attacked policemen and staffers of Yelahanka government hospital where they had been taken for alcohol tests.

Nikhil Sadhvi, 26, from Sanjaynagar, Sridharan Pillai, 32, and Ahallad, 29, both from Madiwala; and Aslam, 22, from Jakkur were spotted by policemen on KIA road next to their car. There were two women with them.

The policemen found the youths were drunk. One youth claimed to be the son of a senior Kerala high court advocate and warned the personnel they would lose their jobs if they question them. The youths attacked the policemen even as the women took to their heels.

A Hoysala van took the youths to Yelahanka government hospital, where they attacked the policemen and hospital staffers. Police said all the youths are from Kerala and based in Bengaluru, barring Aslam who is a student of a college near Bagalur Cross.

Revamped Belagavi airport inaugurated

Belagavi: The upgraded Belagavi airport, including the expanded runway and newly constructed terminal, was inaugurated on Thursday by civil aviation minister P Ashok Gajapathi Raju and chief minister Siddaramaiah.

Airports Authority of India spent Rs 141.44 crore on the expansion of runway to handle bigger aircraft like Airbus 320 and bigger terminal of 300 capacity in peak hours, while the state government provided 370 acres along with water and electricity.

Siddaramaiah said since Belagavi district is famous for vegetables and flower cultivation and export, and being developed as a commercial place, upgradation of the airport was required.

Raju said Spice Jet is mulling operating flights to Chennai from Belagavi. **TNN**

RATING SCALE

TRASH ★ | BELOW AVERAGE ★★ | AVERAGE ★★★ | ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★★ | GOOD ★★★★★ | VERY GOOD ★★★★★ | VERY GOOD+ ★★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★★