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Kannada outfits to meet tomorrow to chart next course of action

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Criticising Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for his statements on Belagavi, Kannada organisations burnt his effigy at a protest in the city on Monday.

A coalition of Kannada outfits will meet on Wednesday to chart out the next course of action. "We need to make this a people's movement in Belagavi and our agitation will also begin from there," Vatal Nagaraj, president, Kannada Okkoota, said.

Shiv Sena's role

Condemning the Shiv Sena's role in keeping the border dispute alive for "cheap politics", Mr. Nagaraj said the dispute was settled long ago as per the Mahajan Committee report. "It was the Maharashtra government that insisted on the formation of the committee and said everyone must accept its report, which we have done. Maharashtra is unnecessarily raking up the issue," he said.

He also said that successive governments in Karnataka had failed to constructively develop Belagavi and create a groundswell of support for the State in the district. "While we built Suvarna Soudha, no departments have been moved to the dis-

trict. More than that, the Karnataka government needs to get investment to Belagavi, start industries, and create jobs which will change the narrative in the district. But sadly, all parties have a keen eye on the Maratha vote and the incumbent BJP government has created a Maratha Development Corporation too," Mr. Nagaraj lamented.

History of region

Meanwhile, T.A. Narayana Gowda, president, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, said Mr. Thackeray would do better to know the history of the region.

"Large parts of Maharashtra were Kannada speaking. Several Kannada inscriptions found in Maharashtra bore evidence to this," he said, adding it was irresponsible of Mr. Thackeray to create tension among language communities.

"Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are progressive States, whose economies have been fuelling the country. However, they have been suffering from Hindi imposition and attack on federalism. While it is time when people and leaders from these States get united and fight for federalism, it is sad that Mr. Thackeray doesn't have this sense," Mr. Gowda said.