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15

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Border row: BSY hits out at Maha DyCM Ajit Pawar

BENGALURU/BELAGAVI, DHNS.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday lashed out at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar for "stoking" the border dispute between the two states.

Maharashtra has, on linguistic grounds, laid claim on Belagavi (Belgaum), a part of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency that is currently one of Karnataka's largest districts.

On Tuesday, Pawar reportedly called for incorporation of Belagavi (Belgaum), Karwar and Nippani into Maharashtra given that these regions have a considerable Marathi-speaking population.

"The Mahajan report is very clear. Also, Marathis are living in Karnataka like Kannadigas. Marathis are core Hindutva followers. During the Belagavi Vishwa Kannada Sammelana, Marathis participated in large numbers. Still, Ajit Pawar is trying to stoke fire," Yediyurappa said. "I condemn this. He should stop speaking so defi-

Maratha Corporation: 'Won't allow Karnataka bandh'

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday appealed to pro-Kannada groups that they should not go ahead with the December 5 Karnataka Bandh.

The Kannada outfits have called for Karnataka bandh to protest against the state government's de-

cision to set up the Maratha Development Corporation.

"There's no need to create confusion. The government only wants to ensure development of the community," Yediyurappa said. "If a bandh is forced upon people, then we will take strict action," the CM warned.

antly going forward."

Echoing similar views, Yediyurappa's Cabinet colleagues S T Somashekar, Shashikala Jole and Prabhu Chouhan said Belagavi, Nippani and Karwar are integral part of Karnataka and will remain so and that there's no need to give any importance to the statements by Maharashtra leaders on the issue.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, Cooperation Minister S

T Somashekar said, "No need to give importance to the statements by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on border issue. They rake up the issue to gain political mileage."

When asked about appointing a minister in-charge of border affairs, Somashekar said, "There are four ministers from the district. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa will take an appropriate decision after consulting them.