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De-mon Strikes Deaf Film Fest, but Organisers Undeterred

● Regina Gurung

As the city is set to host the first Deaf Film Festival and the country's fourth, there is worry that there may be fewer participants from other countries following demonetisation.

The India International Deaf Film festival was held for the first time in 2011 in Delhi, followed by Kerala in 2014 and Tamil Nadu in 2015.

The Karnataka edition was planned bigger with fifteen countries registering for the film festival but a few participants may drop out, fear the organisers.

"Though the movies have been registered, the cast is reluctant to come to the country because of demonetisation. They fear that they might be stranded," says Dr T R Ramakrishnan, faculty member of the Jain University and the coordinator for the event.

The organising committee, mainly the staff and students of Jain University is planning to give their best including rolling out a red carpet for those coming. The idea behind the event is to share the joy of cinemas in the deaf community.

"India is a country where more than half the population's favourite pastime is watching films. We want to balance an imbalance and let the deaf enjoy the mainstream cinema," says Ramakrishnan. "Charlie Chaplin was the only actor who refused to speak in films. Now there are hardly any silent

movies. We want more of them."

The deaf community is eagerly awaiting the film festival because it offers a different kind of entertainment, says Ramakrishnan. "It is not like Amitabh Bachchan or Salman Khan films... It is about creative films not commercial ones."



“ Charlie Chaplin was the only actor who disagreed to speak in films. Now there is hardly any silent movies. We want the community to pick up such movies

– Dr TR Ramakrishnan, Jain University

Three auditoriums of the university will play 80 films in four categories – films that run for one minute, five minutes, 15 minutes and 30 minutes. The movies have no specific genre but

are either made by the deaf community or the deaf are featured in the movie.

Short deaf films from 15 countries – Spain, Portugal, Malaysia, Italy, Greece, France, China, Venezuela, United Kingdom, Switzerland, New Zealand, Germany, Austria, Brazil

and Iran – will be screened.

"Around 70 students have volunteered for the festival and have learned the sign language to communicate with the guests," says Vishal, student coordinator of the event and an animation student of the Jain University.

The hosts have organised games that can be played by the volunteers as well as the deaf such as building blocks. Free workshops on film-making will be conducted by the president of Hong Kong Film and Theatre Society, Mok Chiu Yu and assistant professor of animation department, B Satish. The festival will be inaugu-

rated by C Senthil Rajan, director of the film festival and from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The three day event starting today will be from 10 am to 7 pm. On the third day, there will be a red carpet event followed by an award ceremony