

Malayalam film industry awaits outcome of trade union meet

The Malayalam film industry, currently in doldrums after a factional feud led to a split in a leading film body, is eagerly awaiting the outcome of a meeting of the apex trade union for film technicians in [Chennai](#) next week.

The Indian Film Employees Confederation (IFEC) will start a two-day meet Tuesday that would decide on giving trade union status to Federation of Malayalam Cine Technicians Association (MACTA), which split into two early this week, with leading directors, actors and producers announcing formation of a new group.

For the past two weeks, Kerala's film industry has been in a flux after a feud between MACTA, the leading technicians' organisation, and the powerful actors' organisation, Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA).

The MACTA comprises 19 organisations that represent all those associated with filmmaking, from drivers to directors besides script writers and professionals from every field. Most producers, actors and actresses owe allegiance to AMMA.

The Malayalam film industry gets all its film processing work done in Chennai and studios there, so recognition and clearance of IFEC is necessary for shooting films.

Veteran director Siddique, who heads the ad hoc committee to finalise the structure of the new organisation, told IANS they have already written to IFEC stating that MACTA, led by general secretary Vinayan, has split and thus it should not be given a trade union status at the meet.

'A memorandum signed by the members of the newly floated organisation has been sent to IFEC asking it not to recognise MACTA as the trade union body of the Malayalam film industry because all those who are active in the Malayalam industry are now with us,' said Siddique.

Veteran director Renji Panicker said it would be fool hardy on the part of IFEC to recognize MACTA as the trade union body because the latter does not represent the industry.

'It only represents those who are inactive and if recognition is given to them then the industry here will come to a grinding halt. No film shooting will take place here because the new organization, which has the full backing of the producers association, will not make any new films,' said Panicker.

'Once the splinter MACTA gets recognition then a group of people who are inactive in the industry will decide and set the terms for those who are actively involved in film making here. This would be suicidal for the industry,' added Siddique.

The fears of the new organisation is that the Chennai meeting would be attended by Vinayan and four of his close aides by virtue of being the office bearers of MACTA.

But Vinayan dismissed all speculations and said his organisation is official trade union for the industry.

'We have already been recognized as the trade union of the Malayalam film industry and the official

papers for that would be handed over to us on that day. The agenda for the meeting is the crisis in the industry here. The new organization is not a trade union body and at no cost will I allow that to happen,' said Vinayan.

A top actor, on condition of anonymity, said the entire industry is hoping that better sense prevails at the meeting in Chennai among those who have just one agenda -- that to finish the industry here.

'We are all eagerly looking forward to it and expect IFEC to look at things with an open mind,' said the actor.

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