

He won't be cowed down

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Kheny will address a rally to mark a swamiji's birth anniversary in Bidar today. His cousin Sanjay Kheny is contesting from Bidar South on a BJP ticket.

Kheny said the deputy commissioners were clamping Section 144 in the districts he visited, and he would counter them with the help of the courts.

He said, "As a citizen of India, and a proud Kannadiga, I enjoy freedom of speech. The great leaders have given their lives to let us have freedom and democracy."

Political problem

Kheny is scathing about politicians, but his biggest bugbear, as all political observers know, is Deve Gowda. He is indirectly appealing to voters to choose either the Congress or the BJP, and to reject the JD(S).

"Politicians are breaking the law. When they are regarded as tall leaders why should I be punished for creating awareness among the voters?" he wondered.

He said he would visit each district in Karnataka and give away cows to poor widows.

He said at least 200 widows would get a cow each in a district. A cow costs Rs 20,000.

"The cows will be distributed in Mandya next week," said Kheny. "And we will have a series of functions in other districts."

Manjunath Prasad, deputy commissioner of

Mandya, said he would not permit Kheny's rally as it was clearly poll-related.

Not allowed

Last week Prasad had not allowed such a rally as the organisers had put up MP Ambarish's photo alongside Kheny's in their posters.

Kheny said, "It has nothing to do with the code of conduct as the rally had been planned three months in advance, and the posters had been put up much ahead of the announcement of poll dates."

He said he would obey the law and honour the Election Commission's guidelines, but would not compromise when it came to his freedom of expression.

