

Patil challenges KWDT II award in SC'

B. Patil has said the government will challenge the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II award in the Supreme Court, if necessary. Page 6

Alarming rise in infant deaths

U.T. Khader has said that 2,476 infant deaths were reported from HK region between April and September this year. Page 6



'State minister challenges award in the...

Uncertainty over book fest

Authorities refuse to let out Palace Grounds for more than three days

Bageshree S.

BANGALORE: The annual Bangalore Book Festival has hit a roadblock in its 11th edition with the Department of Public Administration and Reforms (DPAR) refusing to rent out the Palace Grounds for 10 days for the event.

While DPAR has denied permission beyond three days as per an year-old government order, the Bangalore Book Sellers and Publishers Association (BBSPA) is planning to approach the High Court seeking relaxation of rules for an important cultural activity like a book festival.

Many pleas

According to Devaru Bhat, Secretary of BBSPA that organises the annual event, they decided on approaching the court after appeals to DPAR and to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah failed to yield any result. They also wrote to 30 eminent writers in Kannada asking them to appeal to the government to exempt the book festival from the rules.

The rules cited for denying permission dates back to a Government Order issued in December 2012, that says that "only short term programmes not exceeding three days can be permitted depending on the merits of each case." It says that "no commercial activity like trade



The organisers are keen on Palace Grounds because it is big enough to hold all the stalls and is centrally located for booklovers. - FILE PHOTO

fairs and consumer fairs will be allowed." The order was in accordance with an interim order of the Supreme Court, where a dispute on the ownership of Palace Grounds is pending.

As the association now prepares to approach the court, the book festival, which was scheduled to start on November 29, is in a state of limbo. "As many as 170 publishers from all over Karnataka and other parts of India had booked 350 stalls. Nearly 100 among them were by Kannada publishers," said Mr. Bhat. Two

publishers from Bombay and Delhi had even dispatched books and are now seeking compensation for the costs incurred.

Mr. Bhat also argued that there were instances of "selective" relaxation of rules. He said that permission had recently been given for nine days for a Dandiya festival at a stretch, booked under the names of three organisers for three days each. "When we sought permission under a similar pattern, it was not entertained," he said.

However, DPAR Principal Sec-

retary Sanjiv Kumar said that there was "not a single case" of permission being given beyond three days. If there were instances of any organisation overstaying beyond the permitted period, it was a violation of the rule and had been brought to the notice of the Supreme Court by the parties in litigation.

The association is keen on the Palace Grounds, which has been the venue for 10 years, because it is big enough to hold all the stalls and is centrally located for all the book lovers of the city to visit.

