

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
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**Lok Sabha's
July session in
Central Hall?**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With social distancing norms in mind, the next session of Parliament, expected in July, may see Lok Sabha vacating its chamber for Rajya Sabha and moving its proceedings to the Central Hall.

The proposal, which will help spread out sitting arrangements for leaders, is likely to be effected ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament.

With a seating capacity of 800, Central Hall can accommodate the 543 members of Lok Sabha while ensuring adherence to physical distancing norms.

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**Parliament panel
explores possibility
of virtual sessions**

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The same purpose is proposed to be achieved by shifting the sitting of Rajya Sabha to the much bigger chamber of the Lower House.

The move was discussed at a meeting on Monday between Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The two presiding officers also discussed the possibility, in the long term, of holding virtual sessions of Parliament, allowing members to participate in the proceedings from wherever they are.

BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab recently wrote to Birla citing a list of 23 nations where parliaments and parliamentary committees were holding virtual meetings because of the Covid-19 lockdown and demanded that the Speaker frame guidelines to undo confidentiality clauses that were cited to disallow House committee meetings in India since the lockdown.

In a detailed discussion on the subject, Birla and Naidu acknowledged that the fight against coronavirus would be a long one, and plans needed to be drawn up to explore the possibility of holding virtual sessions with the help of modern technological tools.

Unlike sittings of parliamentary standing committees

BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab recently wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla citing a list of 23 nations where parliaments were holding virtual meetings



where confidentiality is crucial, Naidu and Birla noted there was no requirement of maintaining confidentiality of the proceedings of both Houses, which are telecast live.

Sources said Naidu and Birla have also, for now, decided to refer the issue of virtual meetings of parliamentary committees to the rules committees of both Houses. It was also acknowledged that while presiding officers of the Houses could suspend rules, such suspensions would require endorsements by the two Houses.

Chairmen of various committees of Parliament, including department-related standing committees, had urged the presiding officers to grant permission to hold virtual meetings in light of travel restrictions due to the lockdown.