

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
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Data protection bill referred to Joint Select Committee

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Decision allows govt to nominate BJP
member as chairman, Dep. speaker

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NEW DELHI, DHNS

The government on Wednesday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha that bars storing and processing of data entities without the explicit consent of an individual, which was referred to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament, instead of the standing committee on information technology, drawing protests from the Opposition.

The Personal Data Protection Bill, introduced by IT Minister Ravishankar Prasad, also has provisions asking technology companies to hand over "non-personal" data of their users to the government. It also empowers the government to collect any data of its citizens without consent, to serve sovereignty and larger public interest.

The decision to refer the Bill to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament, that would allow the government to nominate a BJP member as Chairman, drew protests from the Congress. Former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor, a senior Congress leader, chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology.

Tharoor shot off a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, saying the govern-

ment move to bypass the designated Parliamentary panel would set off a "dangerous precedent".

"It would effectively render our Parliamentary Committees ineffective since it will prevent them from undertaking their primary responsibility which is to provide effective oversight of the relevant government department," he said.

Tharoor alleged that in "brazen disregard" for the Standing Committee, and by extension the parliamentary convention relating to such panels, this government has chosen to establish a Joint Select Committee presumably to extend its control by a chairman from the ruling party.

The Joint Select Committee will have 20 members from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. The Upper House will give names of the members it wants to send to the panel.

The Bill provides also for stringent ground rules for the processing of personal and sensitive information of children while mandating the processing of "critical" personal data only in India.

But data concerning health services and for complying with any law or court order could be processed without the consent of the owner, the draft bill said.