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## RS Chairman writes to panel heads on rules

He stresses keeping meets confidential

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A day after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla wrote to chairpersons of parliamentary standing committees advising them to ensure confidentiality of panel meetings, Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu too wrote an advisory on similar lines.

Writing to heads of eight standing committees that come under the Rajya Sabha purview, Mr. Naidu said the committees were mandated to carry-out a detailed scrutiny of legislative proposals which was not feasible for Parliament to do so in transaction of its day-to-day business. While commending the standing committees, he wrote, "However, for some time now, it has been observed that the media has been found quoting, in their reportage, the proceedings of the committees related to the subject matters or the legislative Bills under their consideration and examination".

He reiterated the rules and procedures that govern the meetings of the parliamentary panels. The meetings are confidential and "it is not permissible for a member of the committee or anyone who has access to its proceedings to communicate, directly or indirectly, to the media any information regarding its proceedings, including any part of the report or any conclu-



M. Venkaiah Naidu

sions arrived at by the committee finally or tentatively before the report has been presented to the House". Violation of this would tantamount to "breach of privilege of the House," Mr. Naidu said.

### Rule 270

On Tuesday, Mr. Birla, in a letter, had sought to remind the panel chairpersons to Rule 270 of the 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha', which says that a "Committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records". However, "if any question arises whether the evidence of a person or the production of a document is relevant for the purposes of the committee, the question shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final".

Mr. Birla's letter came days after BJP MPs wrote to him demanding removal of Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who heads the parliamentary panel on IT, after he summoned Facebook.