

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ
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Opposition, NDA divided on online House panel meetings

Akali Dal, LJP support the idea, while SP and BSP oppose it

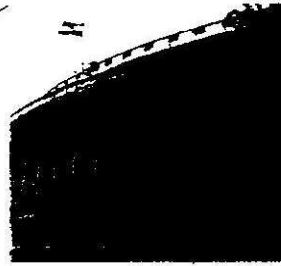
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NEW DELHI

The Opposition and the ruling alliance are divided on the issue of holding meetings of parliamentary standing committees through videoconference, allowing members who can't travel to Delhi to participate in them. Two key National Democratic Alliance constituents – the Akali Dal and the Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) – support the idea, while two Opposition parties, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), oppose it.

On Monday, Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla referred the matter to the rules committees of the Houses. The panels, headed by Mr. Naidu and Mr. Birla, draw members from all major parties.

Confidentiality clause

SP leader and chairman of the standing committee on Health Ramgopal Yadav said that at present it was far more critical to save lives.



The House committees draw members from all major political parties.

“The views expressed in a standing committee by the members and the officials are confidential till they are tabled in Parliament in the form of a report. If meetings are held via videoconference, the confidentiality clause can't be maintained and this would mean that no government official will speak freely for the fear of their own supervisors.”

The last meeting of the health committee was held on March 22 to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic.

BSP floor leader and member of the standing committee on External Affairs Ritesh Pandey also

called for a 'foolproof mechanism' to ensure confidentiality. Both the SP and the BSP had skipped the Opposition parties' May 22 meeting.

On the other hand, Akali Dal Rajya Sabha member Nareish Gujral argued that the principle of accountability could not be suspended just because there was no vaccine for COVID-19. “I believe, some way has to be found. If we don't find a cure for Coronavirus, will we not have standing committee meetings?” he said.

LJP president Chirag Paswan said there were far too many critical issues pending before the standing committees and their meetings should be immediately called.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the standing committee on Information Technology, scheduled for June 10, has been cancelled, making it the second meeting to be cancelled in a week after the meeting of the panel on Home Affairs scheduled for June 3 was called off.