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# Panels should not discuss issues which are sub judice: LS Speaker

## Abide By Rules Of Not Disclosing Agenda: Birla

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The letter will have an immediate bearing on the standing committee on information technology, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday wrote to all parliamentary panel heads not to discuss issues which are sub judice and also abide by the rules of not disclosing the agenda or deliberations until the report is presented in the House.

The letter will have an immediate bearing on the standing committee on informa-

tion technology, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor who has convened a meeting of the committee on suspension of 4G services in J&K, an issue which is pending in the Supreme Court.

"Committees should give due consideration to Rule 270 and other necessary rules and directions while selecting subjects for examination. In addition, I would like to point out that as per con-

vention, the committees do not take those subjects for examination where the issue is pending in the courts," Birla said in a letter marked to heads of all committees.

As per Rule 270, a committee "shall have power to send for persons, papers and records: provided that 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".

The rule also says the government may decline to produce a document on the ground that its disclosure would be prejudicial to the safety or interest of the state.

Tharoor had on August 20 called a meeting in which officials from the home ministry and department of telecommunication of home affairs had been summoned on September 1 to explain "suspension of 4G telecom services/internet and its impact in J&K".

Jammu and Kashmir has been without high-speed internet service since August

last year when the Centre announced withdrawal of special status to the erstwhile state under Article 370.

The Centre recently told the apex court that a special committee has taken the decision to start 4G internet services on a trial basis in less sensitive areas of the UT.

Birla has maintained that it is imperative that the parliamentary committees and government work in harmony to achieve the goal of the welfare of the people more effectively. "The proceedings of the Committee shall be treated as confidential and it shall not be permissible to communicate to the press," the Speaker said.