

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ

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PAPER CLIPPINGS

19

ಶಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Parliament

ಕೆಲಸದ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 23/8/20

Parliamentary panel calls DNA Bill premature

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The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, in a draft report, has called the DNA Technology Regulation Bill "premature".

The Bill proposes DNA sampling and profiling of citizens accused of crime or reported missing and storing their unique genetic information for administrative

purposes. The committee said in the absence of a robust data protection legislation, the security of a huge number of DNA profiles that will be placed with the National DNA Data bank and its regional centres is questionable. The draft report also red-flagged certain provisions of the Bill.

The Bill permits retention of DNA found at a crime scene in perpetuity, even if

conviction of the offender has been overturned. The committee urged the government to amend the provisions to ensure that if the person has been found innocent his DNA profile must be removed immediately from the data bank.

The committee recommended that independent scrutiny must be done of the proposals to destroy biological samples and remove

DNA profiles from the database.

The Bill also provides that DNA profiles for civil matters will be stored in the data banks, but without a clear and separate index. The committee questioned the necessity for storage of such profiles, pointing out that this violates the fundamental right to privacy and does not serve any public purpose.