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H.K. Patil to hold meeting with Speaker to resolve hurdles

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The State legislature's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman H.K. Patil has decided to hold a one-to-one meeting with Legislative Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri to overcome hurdles on the proposed committee's visit to various health facilities and probe into alleged corruption in the procurement of COVID-19 equipment.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Patil said the PAC held a meeting with its members and discussed various options before it to convince

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the Speaker about his order on stalling the PAC's probe into alleged siphoning of public funds in the procurement of devices and protective equipment to fight COVID-19 by the Department of Health and Family Welfare. A few days ago, Mr. Kageri issued an order to stop PAC's probe into alleged corruption in the procurement of COVID-19 equipment by government agencies.

In a letter to the Speaker, Mr. Patil alleged that Mr. Kageri's order was "tanta-

mount to promoting corruption and curtailing rights and privileges of legislators and members of the PAC".

However, the Speaker's office said that the visit was stopped in the wake of lockdown and spread of the contagious disease.

Former Assembly Speaker and panel members K.R. Ramesh Kumar (Congress), K.G. Bopaiah (BJP), and A.T. Ramaswamy (JD-S) were among the members who attended the meeting that authorised committee's chairman to hold the meeting with the Speaker to resolve the differences.