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PAC may move privilege motion against speaker

TOI
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Bengaluru: Public accounts committee (PAC) chairman and Congress MLA HK Patil is mulling moving a privilege motion against speaker Vishweshwara Hegde Kageri for denying permission to members to visit government-run quarantine centres and Covid-19 hospitals to check the quality of medical equipment.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

"By denying permission, the speaker has obstructed the PAC from performing its duty. All members are upset. The committee, which will meet on June 2, will decide its next course of action which includes moving privilege motion against Kageri," Patil told reporters.

The committee wanted to visit quarantine centres and designated hospitals on May 28 to check quality of ventilators, syringe tubes and other equipment, taking cognizance of the complaints of financial irregularities in purchasing them.

However, Kageri denied



Photo for representation only

UNDER LENS: The committee wanted to visit quarantine centres and Covid hospitals to check quality of equipment

permission stating it was not advisable for the committee to visit the hospitals during the pandemic.

Patil had also written to chief secretary TM Vijay Bhaskar to ensure safe keeping of documents pertaining to purchase of masks, sanitisers and other medical equipment. The government had given exemption from the Transparency Act to the Karnataka Drugs Logistics & Warehousing Society

Good intention

“The visit was deferred by the speaker only with a good intention to ensure the team does not get infected by the virus. This was done in line with the health guidelines issued by state and central governments. Unfortunately, it is being portrayed as if the speaker is trying to protect the corrupt. Once the situation returns to normal, we'll seek the attention of the speaker to reconsider the order

MK Vishalakshi |
STATE ASSEMBLY SECRETARY

to purchase PPE kits, masks and other ventilators. There are allegations that the procurements were made at higher prices.

"The committee has an obligation to look into such procurements when it gets complaints alleging that the government has purchased the same PPE kits at different prices. Similarly, sanitisers were purchased from the same company for two different prices," Patil added.