

Title: Need to look into the hardships being faced by the Haj Pilgrims in the State of Kerala and sanction direct flights from Cochin Airport for the Haj pilgrims.

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM (BADAGARA): Sir, through you, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government and also to this august House, the hardships being faced by the Haj pilgrims in the State of Kerala. The State of Kerala has got sizeable number of pilgrims going to Haj every year.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Madam, this is 'Zero Hour'. So, you should not read.

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM : This year the State Haj Committee has registered nearly 7,275 applicants and the Central Haj Committee has accepted all of them. The State of Kerala has been persistently asking the Central Government to sanction direct flights from Kerala for the benefit of the pilgrims going from the Kerala and Lakshadweep. But this request has not been accepted so far. At present, the pilgrims from Kerala have to perform their journey through Chennai. This causes a lot of hardship and also financial loss to the pilgrims of Kerala. Since the Cochin International Airport is operational now, I request the Government to sanction direct flights from Cochin for the benefit of the Haj pilgrims of Kerala.