

## **Regarding decline in Hajj Pilgrims choosing Khozhikode embarkation point amid soaring costs-Laid**

**SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN (KASARAGOD):** The number of Hajj pilgrims choosing the Kozhikode embarkation point has significantly decreased due to rising costs. Last year, there were 10,051 pilgrims from Kerala, while this year, 15,231 pilgrims were selected through the Hajj Committee. Among these, 4,026 chose Kannur and 5,422 opted for Kochi.

Kozhikode's charges are approximately Rs 40,000 higher than those at other embarkation points. This fare disparity became apparent after the tendering process for Hajj flight services was completed. The Hajj Committee quoted a fare of Rs 1.24 lakh from Kozhikode, whereas the costs from Kannur and Kochi stood at just Rs 86,000. Many pilgrims have criticized the Kozhikode fares as excessive.

In contrast, private Hajj groups operating from Kozhikode reportedly charge significantly less. Even with connecting flights or direct services, the maximum cost for a return ticket to Saudi Arabia is around Rs 75,000. Hence, I urge the Government of India to rectify this anomaly as early as possible.