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Title: Need to restore Haj Embarkation Point at Calicut Airport.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN (KOZHIKODE): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity.

I wish to raise a very serious issue pertaining to the demand for re-instatement of operation of wide-bodied aircraft and also restore the Haj Embarkation Point at Calicut Airport. This is a burning issue and it has affected the people especially of Malabar region.

Till the closure of the airport for re-carpeting in May 2015, wide-bodied aircraft were operating from this airport. With these type of aircraft, people were travelling to the Gulf at cheaper air fares. The ban has hit the 18 million strong Indian diaspora from the Malabar region of the State, who use this gateway in all spheres, including air travel, commercial exports, health care, tourism, etc.

Similarly, 85 per cent of Haj pilgrims use this airport for Haj pilgrimage. The Haj house constructed at exorbitant cost is now lying locked and idle.

The operations have been shifted to the Kochi International Airport which has affected the people of Malabar region very adversely. What I understand is that many of the air operators are willing to operate these types of aircraft. The Airport Authority also has no objections. But unfortunately the DGCA has put its foot down.

So, my humble request and my humble submission to the hon. Minister, through you, is to direct the authorities to accept the demand immediately.