

functioning of State Waqf Board and removal of encroachment etc. After the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2013 came into force, issues of implementation of Waqf Act including the functioning and encroachment have been taken up with the State Governments and State Waqf Boards from time to time on 01.09.2015, 07.09.2015, 28.12.2015, 27.07.2016 and 25.04.2017.

(b) and (c) There is no provision in the Waqf Act under which a State Government can manage the Waqf Board directly. However, some of the States appoint an Administrator temporarily to cover up the vacuum when the reconstitution of Waqf Board is delayed or the Board is superseded under Section 99 of the Waqf Act.

**Lowering of age limit for reserved category for Haj pilgrimage**

450. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the reserved category for four time applicants has been removed for the next Haj season, if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) what is the basis for fixing 70 years age criteria for confirmed reserved category;

(c) whether it implies that those below 70 years age are healthy enough to wait for next year; and

(d) whether Government has plans to reduce the age limit in this confirmed category, considering the various representations of the senior citizens?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI): (a) to (c) The Ministry has constituted a Haj Policy Review Committee (HPRC) to review Haj policies of the Government for Haj 2013-17 and to suggest framework for new Haj policies for next five years. Based on recommendations of the Committee and suggestions received from various quarters/stakeholders, the new Haj Policy for Haj Committee of India Pilgrims for Haj 2018-22 has been approved. As per the new Haj policy for HCol pilgrims, the reserved category of 70+ applicants has been retained as per the previous policy. However, the reserved category of fourth time applicants has been removed as per the recommendations of the Committee.

(d) There is no proposal, at present, to reduce the age limit of the reserved category of 70+ applicants.