

formal education and skills, and enable them to seek better employment in the organized sector and thus to equip them for better lives. As per scheme guidelines, minimum 30% seats are earmarked for minority girls/women candidates.

(c) The Ministry invited proposals from different organizations for implementation of these three schemes during 2017-18 for both boys and girls. No proposals from the Madarsa Boards or Minority Institutions for girls *per se* have been received.

#### **Sea route for Haj pilgrimage**

1267. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has signed a bilateral agreement with Saudi Arabia to revive the option of ferrying Haj devotees to Jeddah *via* sea route; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement signed including by when the sea route will be started for Haj devotees?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI):  
(a) and (b) In the bilateral discussions between the Indian delegation, led by Union Minister of Minority Affairs, with the Minister of Haj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia held on 7th January, 2018 for the arrangements of Haj 2018, the proposal of sending Indian pilgrims *via* ship was conveyed to the Saudi side. The Saudi authorities while agreeing with the idea "in-principle", conveyed that at present Jeddah Sea Port has limited capacity and indicated that further consultations would be necessary to look into logistical issues, including stay of the Indian Haj pilgrims for one or two nights at Jeddah. Considering these, no time-frame has been fixed for starting the Haj pilgrimage through sea route.

#### **Inclusion of Sanamahism as National Minority Community**

1268. SHRI K. BHABANANDA SINGH: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Sanamahism is a religion followed by the people in Manipur;

(b) whether Government would take steps to enlist the people practising Sanamahism as a notified minority community; and