

tion of all Zonal Railway Time Tables is being brought out from October '77.

(b) Does not arise.

#### Stoppage of Soda Ash Import

43. SHRI ARVIND GANESH:  
KULKARNI: SHRI M.  
ANANDAM: SHRIMATI  
AMBIKA SONI. SHRI S. W.  
DHABE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import of soda ash is being stopped as reported in a news item in the Economic Times of the 15 October, 1978; and

(b) what is the present position regarding supply of soda ash to small scale units?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no statutory control over prices and distribution of soda ash. However, Govt. have impressed upon the soda ash manufacturers the need to ensure a smooth flow and adequate availability of soda ash to various consuming industries particularly small scale units at fair prices.

All the manufacturers of soda ash have also assured Government that the requirements of all industrial consumers would be met by them and supplies would be ensured in proportion to the previous years offtake. To supplement indigenous production, two major user associations, namely, the All India Glass Manufacturers Federation and the All India Silicate Manufacturers Association have also been authorised to import 10,000 tonnes each of dense and light soda ash respectively which will be sold by them to units manufacturing Glass and Silicate on a 'No profit No loss' basis in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

#### Restrictions on Independent Candidates Contesting Elections

44. SHRI S. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Election Commission has suggested certain restrictions on independent candidates from contesting elections; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the suggestion and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Election Commission has suggested the doubling of security deposit of candidates and also the subscription of the candidature of independent candidates by ten proposers and ten seconders. These suggestions are under consideration as part of the comprehensive proposals for electoral reforms at present under examination of the Government.

#### Difference in rates of railway fare on Darjeeling Himalayan Section

45. SHRIMATI PRATIMA BOSE:  
SHRI JAHARLAL BANERJEE:  
SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN:  
SHRI AHMED HOSSAIN  
MONDAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a difference in the rates of railway fare on the Darjeeling Himalayan Section from that of other sections on the Northeast Frontier Railway;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government to revise the fare on the Darjeeling Himalayan Section and to make the same at par with the other sections of that Railway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) Yes.

(b) Due to heavy operational/maintenance costs over , the Darjeeling Himalayan section, fares have been kept at a higher slab.

(c) No.

**Contractor-Operated Halt stations on the North-East Frontier Railway**

46. SHRIMATI PRATIMA BOSE:  
SHRI JAHARLAL BANERJEE:  
SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN:  
SHRI AHMED HOSSAIN  
MONDAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of stations on the Northeast Frontier Railway have been converted into contractor-operated halt stations;

(b) if so, what are the names of these stations and what are the reasons for such conversion; and

(c) whether Government propose to revise their decision in view of the economic backwardness of the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) No.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Gap between production and demand of Fertilizers**

47. SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite the sizeable increase in the contemplated production capacity of nitrogen and phosphatic fertilizers during the Sixth Five Year Plan period the gap between production and demand of fertilizers by the end of that Plan period is likely to be wider than at present;

(b) if so, what is the likely gap between production and demand at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan and how it compares with the gap as at present; and

(c) what special additional efforts and schemes are proposed to be implemented to bridge this gap?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) and (b) The draft Sixth Plan has tentatively estimated that, in 1982-83, the demand for fertilizers would be 52.5 lakh tonnes of Nitrogen and 16 lakh tonnes of P205, and the production 41 lakh tonnes of Nitrogen and 11.25 lakh tonnes of P205. Firm projections of demand and production in 1982-83 would be available only after the Plan is finalised.

The estimated demand for and production of fertilizers during 1978-79 are as follows:

	(Figures in lakh tonnes)	
	Demand/ Consumption	Production
Nitrogen	34.00	22.50
P205	10.50	7.50

The demand for fertilizers is dependent on a variety of factors like weather conditions cost-benefit ratio between the input and the output, the coverage of high yielding varieties, etc. It may, therefore, be difficult to quantify with a degree of certainty the likely gap between demand and indigenous production at the end of the Sixth Plan period.

(c) Concerted efforts are being made to augment indigenous fertilizer capacity by taking up a number of large sized projects for implementation during the Sixth Plan period with a view to narrowing the gap between demand and indigenous production of fertilizers to the maximum extent possible. The gap would be met through imports as at present.