TN tightens wet-land conversion: NOCs from RDO, Agriculture and WRD made mandatory (4 Nov G.O.)

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News

By a Government Order dated 4 November 2026, the Housing and Urban Development Department amended the Tamil Nadu Change of Land Use (From Agriculture to Non-agriculture Purposes in Non-planning Areas) Rules, 2017. Under amended Rule 4, before processing an application to convert wet (nanjai) land, the Director of Town and Country Planning must obtain NOCs from (1) the Revenue Divisional Officer, (2) the Joint Director of Agriculture and (3) the Executive Engineer of the Water Resources Department. Revenue, agriculture and water-resources checks thus become mandatory before any conversion. Applications are accepted only online through the single-window portal, with nine categories of documents – title deed, patta-chitta-adangal for the preceding three Fasli years and the current Fasli year, a drainage plan, a topographical plan covering 500 m, and an affidavit that no poramboke or government land is included. Earlier, the District Collector's prior concurrence was needed for wet-land conversion; a 2026 amendment of the Act shifted that power to the Director of Town and Country Planning (DTCP), and these safeguards now protect farmland and water bodies. Conversion is not automatic; other permissions are still required.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
G.O.	4 Nov 2026 – Housing & Urban Development Dept

Point	Details
Rules	TN Change of Land Use Rules, 2017 (non-planning areas)
Parent Act	TN Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 – Sec 47-A
Prior concurrence	Director of Town & Country Planning (earlier – Collector)
NOC 1	Jurisdictional Revenue Divisional Officer
NOC 2	Joint Director of Agriculture concerned
NOC 3	Executive Engineer, Water Resources Dept
Scrutiny fee	₹1,000 per plot (2017 Rules)
Application	Online single window only; 9 document categories

Background

- Nanjai – punjai – manavari: Tamil Nadu revenue records classify land. 'Nanjai' is wet land irrigated by tanks, canals or rivers, mostly under paddy. 'Punjai' is dry land growing millets, pulses or cotton. 'Manavari' is purely rain-fed. 'Poramboke' is unassessed government land kept for common use (water bodies, grazing, roads).
- Land records: the 'patta' shows ownership and liability to pay land revenue; the 'chitta' is the village register of holdings; the 'adangal' records the crop and irrigation on each survey number. They are kept by the 'Fasli' year – a harvest-based revenue year introduced by the Mughal emperor Akbar; in Tamil Nadu the Fasli year begins on 1 July.
- Legal background: the 2017 Rules were framed under Section 47-A of the Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 (Act 35 of 1972). Originally, wet land needed the Collector's concurrence and dry land a report from the Joint Director of Agriculture. The 2026 amendment Bill (L.A. Bill No. 15), introduced on 1 September 2026, replaced the Collector's concurrence with the Director's to cut delays; the Left parties and the AIADMK opposed it. The three NOCs have now been added to stop farmland turning into housing plots.
- Economy and environment: loss of farmland hurts food security. Wet paddy fields hold rainwater and recharge groundwater; building on tanks and channels worsens floods – the 2015 Chennai floods were a lesson. 'Land' is in the State List (Entry 18) of the Seventh Schedule, so land-use rules are framed by the State.

Tamil Nadu link: this is wholly a Tamil Nadu story. The Cauvery delta districts – Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam – hold much of the State's wet land; Thanjavur is called the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'. The rules mainly aim to curb wet lands near Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai turning into housing plots.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

By a Government Order dated 4 November 2026, the Housing and Urban Development Department amended the Tamil Nadu Change of Land Use (From Agriculture to Non-agriculture Purposes in Non-planning Areas) Rules, 2017.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

G.O.: 4 Nov 2026 – Housing & Urban Development Dept; Rules: TN Change of Land Use Rules, 2017 (non-planning areas); Parent Act: TN Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 – Sec 47-A; Prior concurrence: Director of Town & Country Planning (earlier – Collector).

What is the background to this news?

Nanjai – punjai – manavari: Tamil Nadu revenue records classify land. 'Nanjai' is wet land irrigated by tanks, canals or rivers, mostly under paddy.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Under the 4 Nov 2026 amendment, besides the RDO and Joint Director of Agriculture, whose NOC is needed for nanjai conversion?

A) District Forest Officer

B) TN Pollution Control Board

C) Tahsildar

D) WRD Executive Engineer

Answer: D – Explanation: The Executive Engineer, Water Resources Department – the department that maintains tanks, rivers and irrigation channels, so impact on water bodies gets checked.

2. Under which List of the Seventh Schedule does 'Land' (Entry 18), including transfer of agricultural land, come?

A) Union List

B) Concurrent List

C) State List

D) Residuary powers

Answer: C – Explanation: State List, Entry 18 – rights in land, land tenures, transfer of agricultural land; so the State frames conversion rules. Transfer of non-agricultural property is in the Concurrent List (Entry 6).

3. In Tamil Nadu revenue records, what type of land does the term 'nanjai' denote?

A) Irrigated wet land

B) Rain-fed dry land

C) Government common land

D) Hill-slope plantation land

Answer: A – Explanation: Nanjai is wet land irrigated by tanks, canals or rivers, mostly paddy. Punjai is dry land; poramboke is government common land.

4. Who introduced the harvest-based 'Fasli' revenue year still used in land records such as the adangal?

A) Sher Shah Suri

B) Shah Jahan

C) Akbar

D) Aurangzeb

Answer: C – Explanation: The Mughal emperor Akbar – to align revenue collection with the harvest. In Tamil Nadu the Fasli year begins on 1 July.

5. Which wet-land-rich region is known as the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'?

A) Kongu region

B) Chettinad

C) Thondai Mandalam

D) Thanjavur (Cauvery delta)

Answer: D – Explanation: Thanjavur and the Cauvery delta – three paddy seasons (kuruvai, samba, thaladi), irrigated by the Grand Anicut and Mettur dam.

Sources: DT Next, 5 Nov 2026; DT Next, 2 Sep 2026; TN Gazette Extraordinary, L.A. Bill 15 of 2026; TN HUD G.O. (2017 Rules). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.