Tamil Nadu enforces Centre's paraquat ban; 35,415 litres seized

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News

Tamil Nadu's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department announced on 28 November 2026 that the manufacture, import, transport, distribution, sale and use of the herbicide paraquat dichloride are banned across the State. This is not a separate State ban: Gazette notification No. 501 dated 25.11.2026 was issued to enforce in Tamil Nadu the nationwide ban imposed by the Union Agriculture Ministry. Registration certificates issued under Section 9 of the Insecticides Act, 1968 are deemed cancelled, no new registration will be given, and manufacturers must surrender certificates to the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIB&RC). Special district squads led by Assistant Directors of Agriculture (Information and Quality Control) inspected firms and seized 35,415 litres of paraquat. Violators face action under the Insecticides Act, 1968 and the Insecticides Rules, 1971. The Centre published a draft order in July 2026 with 30 days for objections; the final order (S.O. 5234(E)) dated 22 September 2026 was reportedly issued under Section 27(2) read with Section 28. No end date is given: it is a permanent cancellation of registration, unlike a temporary ban that a State can impose on its own under Section 27.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Banned	Paraquat dichloride (herbicide)
TN notification	Gazette No. 501, 25.11.2026

Point	Details
Central final order	S.O. 5234(E), 22.9.2026 (reported)
Draft order	July 2026; 30 days for objections
Law	Insecticides Act 1968 – Sec 27(2), 28; registration Sec 9
Duration	No end date (registration cancelled)
Seized	35,415 litres
Prohibited	Manufacture, import, transport, distribution, sale, use
Reason	Risk to human and animal health; no antidote

Background

- Paraquat dichloride is a non-selective contact herbicide that scorches green plant tissue on contact. If swallowed there is no specific antidote, and it causes irreversible lung damage. Because it is widely used in suicide attempts, media report that more than 70 countries have banned or phased it out.
- Insecticides Act, 1968 (in force from 1 August 1971): Section 4 – Central Insecticides Board (chaired by the Director-General of Health Services); Section 5 – Registration Committee; Section 9 – registration; Section 27 – prohibition for public safety (Centre or State, pending inquiry, up to 60 days, extendable by 30); Section 28 – gazette notice of cancellation.
- History: in 1958 more than 100 people died in Keralam after eating wheat flour contaminated with parathion, showing the need for pesticide regulation in India. Reports say the Registration Committee also cited its off-label use as a pre-harvest crop desiccant.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department enforced the central ban through Gazette notification No. 501 (25.11.2026) and seized 35,415 litres through district squads. It asked farmers and dealers not to use the product.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Tamil Nadu's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department announced on 28 November 2026 that the manufacture, import, transport, distribution, sale and use of the herbicide paraquat dichloride are banned across the State.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Banned: Paraquat dichloride (herbicide); TN notification: Gazette No. 501, 25.11.2026; Central final order: S.O. 5234(E), 22.9.2026 (reported); Draft order: July 2026; 30 days for objections.

What is the background to this news?

Paraquat dichloride is a non-selective contact herbicide that scorches green plant tissue on contact. If swallowed there is no specific antidote, and it causes irreversible lung damage.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Paraquat, now banned, is best described as which kind of herbicide?

A) Selective, systemic

B) Non-selective, contact

C) Soil fumigant

D) Growth hormone

Answer: B – Explanation: Non-selective contact – it scorches any green tissue it touches, weed or crop. Glyphosate is also non-selective, but systemic.

2. Under the Insecticides Act, 1968, who is the ex officio Chairman of the Central Insecticides Board?

A) Agriculture Secretary

B) ICAR Director-General

C) Plant Protection Adviser

D) DG of Health Services

Answer: D – Explanation: The Director-General of Health Services – Section 4(3)(a). Insecticides are registered by a separate Registration Committee (Sections 5 and 9).

3. Paraquat poisoning, which has no specific antidote, causes irreversible fibrosis mainly in which organ?

A) Liver

B) Heart

C) Brain

D) Lungs

Answer: D – Explanation: The lungs – fibrosis develops in lung tissue and leads to breathing failure, which is why it is regarded as an extremely dangerous poison.

4. Under Section 27 of the Insecticides Act, for how long at most can a State first ban an insecticide pending inquiry?

A) 60 days

B) 30 days

C) 90 days

D) 180 days

Answer: A – Explanation: 60 days, extendable by up to 30 more. The Centre's 2026 paraquat order has no end date; registrations are cancelled.

5. Which pesticide in wheat flour killed over 100 people in Keralam in 1958, showing India's need for pesticide regulation?

A) DDT

B) Endosulfan

C) Parathion

D) Malathion

Answer: C – Explanation: Parathion – India's first major pesticide-poisoning episode. The Insecticides Act was passed in 1968 and enforced from 1 August 1971.