

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

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“Every Topper's Last Read” — if a card would not survive being the last thing a serious aspirant reads before the exam, it does not belong here.

← Part I covers: Headlines · Polity & Governance · GS1 · International Relations ·
Defence & Security · Science & Technology · Economy

§1 Environment & Ecology

GS3

Agro-Chemical Regulation – Insecticides Act, 1968 & the Precautionary Principle

30 September 2026 · Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare notification (via Insecticides Act, 1968)

Centre Notifies Nationwide Prohibition on Paraquat Dichloride

Why in News: The Central Government notified a nationwide prohibition on the manufacture, sale, distribution and use of Paraquat Dichloride under Section 27 of the Insecticides Act, 1968, with the order reported on 30 September 2026, following a draft notification process begun in July 2026 that invited industry and public feedback. The ban cancels existing registration certificates for the herbicide and cites the chemical's acute toxicity profile and the complete absence of a specific antidote as the determining public-health grounds.

Background: Paraquat Dichloride is a fast-acting, non-selective herbicide widely used in India for weed control in tea, cotton and other plantation and field crops, but it is also one of the most frequently implicated agents in both accidental and intentional pesticide-poisoning deaths in rural India, owing to its high acute toxicity (causing progressive, often irreversible lung fibrosis, kidney failure and liver injury) and the absence of any reliable clinical antidote once ingested. It has already been banned or severely restricted in over 70 countries, including the entire European Union (since 2007) and, more recently, several Asian agricultural economies, making India's move consistent with a broader global regulatory trend rather than an isolated domestic decision. The Insecticides Act, 1968 empowers the Central Government, under Section 27, to prohibit the import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution or use of any insecticide if it is satisfied that such action is necessary to prevent risk to human beings or animals.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Legal basis: Section 27, Insecticides Act, 1968.
- Draft/consultation process began: July 2026; final notification reported: 30 September 2026.
- Effect: prohibits manufacture, import, sale, distribution and use; cancels existing registration certificates.
- Grounds cited: acute multi-organ toxicity (lung, kidney, liver) and absence of a specific clinical antidote.
- Global context: Paraquat is already banned in over 70 countries, including the European Union since 2007.
- Government acknowledges farmers "may face short-term challenges in weed management," pointing to a need for safer alternatives and integrated weed-management practices.

- Precautionary principle in agro-chemical regulation: banning a widely used, economically cheap herbicide primarily on public-health grounds (rather than waiting for exhaustive epidemiological proof of every poisoning pathway) exemplifies the precautionary principle as applied domestically, distinct from its more commonly cited international-environmental-law context (ozone layer, biodiversity).
- Farmer-livelihood transition cost: any pesticide ban that lacks a simultaneous subsidy or extension-support package for alternative weed-management methods (manual weeding, safer herbicides, mechanical tools) risks becoming a textbook case of a policy that is sound on health grounds but under-supported on implementation grounds — a recurring Mains critique pattern.
- Institutional parallel: this mirrors the Insecticides Act's past use to ban other highly hazardous pesticides (e.g., monocrotophos restrictions, endosulfan litigation culminating in the Supreme Court's 2011 interim ban upheld by a 2017 final order) — a useful comparative set for a Mains answer on India's pesticide-regulation trajectory.
- Regulatory lag versus global practice: India's ban comes nearly two decades after the EU's 2007 action, illustrating the characteristic lag between international regulatory consensus and domestic agro-chemical policy, often attributed to the competing imperative of input-cost affordability for smallholder farmers.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Remember "**No Cure, So Pure Ban**" — Paraquat's defining regulatory fact is simply that there is no antidote, which is precisely why precaution, not proof of every harm pathway, drove the ban.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2018: "Explain various types of revolutions, that took place in Agriculture after Independence in India. How these revolutions have helped in poverty alleviation and food security?" is adjacent on agri-policy; more directly, pesticide-regulation and health-safety themes recur in GS3 Environment answers.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the regulation of insecticides in India:

1. The Insecticides Act, 1968 empowers the Central Government to prohibit any insecticide found to pose a risk to human or animal life.
2. Paraquat Dichloride has an approved clinical antidote recognised under Indian pharmacopoeial standards.
3. The European Union has banned Paraquat since 2007.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is false — Paraquat poisoning has no specific antidote, which is the central justification for the ban.

28–30 September 2026 · Source: Commission for Air Quality Management (PIB)

CAQM Tightens Delhi-NCR's Graded Response Action Plan Ahead of Winter

Why in News: At its 30th Full Commission Meeting on 28 September 2026, the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) approved a revised Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), reported 30 September 2026, that advances diesel-generator-set curbs from Stage II to Stage I (meaning they kick in at an earlier, less-severe pollution threshold), extends older-vehicle driving restrictions to Sonipat district in Haryana, and removes a prior exemption that had allowed essential-goods-carrying vehicles to use older, more polluting trucks. The revision brings the cumulative count of GRAP actions across its four AQI-linked stages to 48.

Background: GRAP is a stage-wise, AQI-triggered set of emergency air-quality measures for Delhi-NCR, first notified in 2017 and substantially reformed after the creation of the statutory CAQM in 2021 (replacing the earlier non-statutory Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority), with its four stages — "Poor," "Very Poor," "Severe" and "Severe+" — triggering progressively stricter curbs on construction, vehicles, industry and diesel generators. Each pre-winter revision typically tightens the triggers based on the previous season's implementation gaps; moving diesel-generator curbs to the earliest stage reflects data showing generators are a disproportionately large, easily-curbed pollution source relative to their limited use-case (chiefly power backup during outages), making them a comparatively low-cost lever for air-quality gains.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Meeting: 30th Full Commission Meeting of CAQM, 28 September 2026.
- Key change 1: diesel-generator-set curbs advanced from Stage II to Stage I (earlier trigger).
- Key change 2: older-vehicle restrictions extended to Sonipat district, Haryana.
- Key change 3: removal of the exemption previously allowing essential-goods vehicles to use older, polluting trucks.
- Cumulative GRAP actions across all four AQI-linked stages: 48.
- CAQM's statutory basis: Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021, replacing the EPCA.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Preventive versus reactive governance: shifting diesel-generator curbs to an earlier trigger stage reflects a shift from reacting only once pollution turns "Severe" to pre-empting a known, controllable source before AQI deteriorates — an example of adaptive, evidence-based regulatory tightening.

- Jurisdictional expansion as policy learning: adding Sonipat (Haryana) to the NCR's restricted-vehicle zone shows CAQM treating the "airshed" as a genuinely regional, cross-state problem rather than a Delhi-only one — central to any answer on why single-city measures alone cannot fix NCR air quality.
- Equity-efficiency trade-off: withdrawing the essential-goods-vehicle exemption tightens enforcement uniformity but raises last-mile logistics-cost concerns for small traders, a recurring implementation tension in emission-control policy.
- Institutional evolution: CAQM's statutory character (Act of Parliament, 2021) versus EPCA's earlier non-statutory status is itself a Mains-relevant example of strengthening environmental-governance institutions through dedicated legislation rather than executive orders alone.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Remember the GRAP ladder as **Poor** → **Very Poor** → **Severe** → **Severe+**, and this year's twist: **generators moved down the ladder** (now curbed from Stage I, not II) — action comes earlier, not later.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2022: pollution-control institutional architecture questions (EPCA/CAQM) are a recurring theme; GS3 2015 asked directly on India's air-pollution-control regulatory mechanisms.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):

1. It was constituted by an Act of Parliament in 2021.
2. It replaced the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA).
3. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) it implements has four AQI-linked stages.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d). All three statements are correct.

GS3

Air Pollution

CAQM

GRAP

§2 Places in News



Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

Seat of the J&K Legislative Assembly, which on 25 September 2026 passed a resolution demanding restoration of full statehood, invoking the Assembly's 2000 and 2024 resolutions.

Lies in the Kashmir Valley, between the Pir Panjal and the Greater Himalayan ranges, on the banks of the Jhelum river; the valley's single-entry/exit topography has historically shaped both its security posture and its distinct political economy.

New Delhi

Nausena Bhawan hosted the Indian Navy's 29 September–1 October 2026 Commanders' Conference, concluding with the Maritime Strategy 2026 and "Operation Urja Suraksha."

Situated on the west bank of the Yamuna, within the Indo-Gangetic plain; as national capital it is the administrative seat for all three Service Headquarters and the Ministry of Defence.

Imphal, Manipur

Administrative focal point for Manipur's AFSPA "disturbed area" status, with 13 police-station areas newly excluded from the designation in this round's six-month extension effective 1 October 2026.

Satyavedu, Andhra Pradesh

One of the locations (along with Kavali, Nellore and Naidupeta) where the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation's ~33,000-hectare eucalyptus plantation received India's first PRAMAAN forest-certification credential.

Lies in the Imphal Valley, a flat basin ringed by the Manipur Hills, historically the political and demographic core of the state, distinct from the surrounding hill districts' tribal-dominated administration.

Located in the coastal plains of southern Andhra Pradesh near the Andhra–Tamil Nadu border, within the state's eucalyptus/casuarina plantation belt feeding the pulp and paper industry.

Odisha (bamboo-cultivation belt)

An Odisha bamboo farmer became one of the first two PRAMAAN certificate recipients nationally, alongside the Andhra Pradesh plantation, under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme operated by IIFM Bhopal.

Odisha's bamboo cultivation is concentrated across its southern and western plateau districts, within forested tracts that overlap significantly with Scheduled Tribe-dominated regions under Fifth Schedule administration.

Strait of Hormuz

The critical chokepoint through which India-bound crude shipments transit; traffic has partly recovered (~16.3 million bpd in September 2026) even as the 2026 Iran war continues and war-risk insurance remains sharply elevated.

A roughly 33-km-wide strait separating Iran from Oman's Musandam exclave, linking the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the wider Arabian Sea — the single most important maritime oil chokepoint in the world.

Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia

A major Saudi Aramco export terminal; VLCC freight rates from Ras Tanura to India have risen 411% since the 2026 Iran war began (from \$0.85 to \$4.34 per barrel), directly inflating India's import bill.

Located on Saudi Arabia's eastern (Persian Gulf) coast in the Eastern Province, close to the kingdom's major onshore and offshore oilfields, making it one of the world's largest crude-oil loading ports.

§3 Ethics & Integrity Cases

Statehood, Promises and the Limits of Executive Assurance

Constitutional Morality vs. Political Expediency

The Supreme Court recorded the Union's assurance that J&K's statehood would be restored “at the earliest,” yet set no enforceable timeline, leaving a constitutional commitment to rest on political will alone. As a civil servant advising on implementation timelines for politically sensitive constitutional commitments, how do you balance fidelity to an institution's stated promise against the absence of any

binding compulsion to keep it — and what does “constitutional morality” demand when a commitment’s keeping is discretionary rather than mandatory?

Policing, Bribery and the Price of Justice

Distributive Justice and Procedural Fairness

SPIR 2026 found that bribe-paying cybercrime complainants recover stolen money at over three times the rate of non-payers, and that the poor pay bribes far more often despite being victimised less than the affluent. If you were a newly posted Superintendent of Police in a district showing this exact pattern, what institutional (not individual-blame) interventions would you prioritise, and how would you reconcile limited resources with the principle that access to basic police assistance cannot be allowed to have a price?

Balancing Competing Fundamental Rights

Proportionality Doctrine

The Supreme Court’s firecracker order neither bans nor permits outright, instead carving a time-bound, certified-product middle path between Article 21 (health/environment) and Article 25/29 (religious and cultural practice). Reflect on a workplace or civic situation where two legitimate claims genuinely conflicted, and explain how you decided what to restrict and by how much, rather than choosing one claim over the other entirely.

Security Law and the Burden of Extraordinary Powers

Necessity, Proportionality and Accountability in Emergency Powers

AFSPA grants extraordinary powers, including use of force up to causing death, in ‘disturbed areas,’ reviewed only every six months, with Section 6 requiring Central Government sanction before any prosecution of armed-forces personnel. As a district magistrate asked to certify continuing ‘disturbance’ in a border area under political and local-community pressure from both directions, how do you ensure your recommendation rests on an honest, evidence-based threat assessment rather than bureaucratic inertia (simply renewing because it was renewed last time) or external pressure?

Regulating Away a Livelihood Tool for Public Health

The Precautionary Principle

Banning Paraquat Dichloride protects farm workers and the public from an antidote-less poison, but the Government itself acknowledges farmers “may face short-term challenges in weed management.” As an agriculture department officer rolling out this ban at the field level, how do you balance acting decisively on a precautionary, public-health mandate against the duty of care owed to farmers who now face a genuine input-substitution gap with no immediate low-cost alternative?

Energy Security, Open Seas and the Limits of National Self-Help

Collective Security vs. Strategic Self-Reliance

India's Navy has named 'Operation Urja Suraksha' to protect its own energy-shipping lanes through a chokepoint it does not control, amid a war it is not party to. Discuss the ethical tension between a nation pursuing strategic self-reliance (protecting its own interests unilaterally) and the alternative of strengthening multilateral/collective-security mechanisms for shared global chokepoints — and which approach you would recommend India prioritise, and why.

§4 Prelims MCQs

MCQ 1 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS2

Consider the following statements regarding the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir:

1. It has a Legislative Assembly, unlike the Union Territory of Ladakh.
2. "Public Order" falls within the legislative competence of its elected Assembly.

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is false — Public Order and Police are withheld from the J&K Assembly and vest with the Lieutenant Governor/Union.

MCQ 2 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS2

Consider the following statements on the Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR) 2026:

1. It found that overall registered crime declined even as cybercrime victimisation rose.
2. It is released by the National Crime Records Bureau.

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is false — SPIR is a Lokniti-CSDS/Common Cause civil-society survey, not an NCRB publication.

MCQ 3 · GS2

The Supreme Court's recent firecracker-related order permits which of the following?

- (a) Unrestricted bursting of any firecracker (b) A complete ban on all firecrackers (c) Time-bound bursting of certified green crackers only (d) Bursting only on government-run community grounds

Answer: (c). The Court balanced Article 21 and Article 25/29 concerns via a certified, time-bound regime, rejecting both extremes.

MCQ 4 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements regarding the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958:

1. A 'disturbed area' can be declared by either a State Governor or the Central Government.
2. It has been fully withdrawn from Tripura and Meghalaya.

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c). Both statements are correct.

MCQ 5 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements on the Strait of Hormuz:

1. It connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
2. It falls entirely within Omani territorial waters.
3. A large share of the world's seaborne crude-oil exports transits through it.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c). Statement 2 is false — the Strait lies between Iran and Oman, with international transit-passage rights, not exclusive sovereignty of either state.

MCQ 6 · GS3

'Operation Urja Suraksha,' announced at the 2026 Naval Commanders' Conference, primarily concerns:

(a) Anti-submarine warfare exercises with France (b) Protection of India's energy-shipping routes amid the Gulf conflict (c) A nuclear-powered submarine induction programme (d) Coastal Security Scheme funding for fishing villages

Answer: (b). It is the Navy's named operational concept for safeguarding Indian-interest shipping through the conflict-affected Gulf region.

MCQ 7 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS2

Consider the following statements regarding UIDAI's September 2026 initiatives:

1. Face authentication was introduced for the electronic Public Distribution System (ePDS).
2. The UIDAI website's language support was expanded from 13 to a planned 23 languages.
3. The Aadhaar Act, 2016 was amended to introduce these changes.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — these are administrative/technical initiatives by UIDAI, not legislative amendments to the Aadhaar Act.

MCQ 8 · GS3

The Green Energy Corridor Phase-III scheme primarily funds which TWO components?

(a) Solar park land acquisition and rooftop subsidies (b) Intra-State Transmission Systems and Battery Energy Storage Systems (c) Green hydrogen electrolyzers and export terminals (d) Coal-plant retrofitting and carbon capture

Answer: (b). GEC-III's two funding pillars are intra-state transmission (InSTS) and 50 GWh of battery storage (BESS).

MCQ 9 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements on Minimum Support Price (MSP) in India:

1. It is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.
2. The Government's current policy fixes it at a minimum of 1.5 times the weighted-average Cost of Production.
3. It constitutes a legally enforceable floor price in all private agricultural markets.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — MSP is a government procurement assurance, not a universal legal floor on private trade.

MCQ 10 · GS3

The newly launched trial 'Index of Services Production' (ISP) covers how many services sub-sectors?

(a) 9 (b) 14 (c) 19 (d) 24

Answer: (c). MoSPI's trial ISP covers 19 services sub-sectors with 2024-25 as the base year.

MCQ 11 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements regarding Paraquat Dichloride:

1. It is a selective, narrow-spectrum herbicide used primarily on rice crops.
2. There is no specific clinical antidote for its poisoning.
3. It has been banned in the European Union since 2007.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is false — Paraquat is a fast-acting, non-selective herbicide used across multiple crops, not a rice-specific one.

MCQ 12 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements on the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):

1. It was established under a dedicated Act of Parliament in 2021.
2. It replaced the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority.
3. The Graded Response Action Plan it administers has three AQI-linked stages.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — GRAP has four stages: Poor, Very Poor, Severe and Severe+.

MCQ 13 · GS3

Under the PRAMAAN scheme, India's first forest-certification credentials were awarded in which two states?

(a) Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh (b) Andhra Pradesh and Odisha (c) Karnataka and Kerala (d) Assam and Tripura

Answer: (b). The Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation's eucalyptus plantation and an Odisha bamboo farmer received the inaugural PRAMAAN certificates.

MCQ 14 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS1/GS2

Consider the following statements regarding Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0:

1. It aims at achieving 'garbage-free' city status across urban India.
2. Urban sanitation is placed in the Union List of the Seventh Schedule.

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is false — urban sanitation is a municipal function under the Twelfth Schedule (Article 243W), not the Union List.

MCQ 15 · GS2

The Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005), relevant to AFSPA reform, recommended that AFSPA's provisions be absorbed into which legislation?

(a) The National Security Act, 1980 (b) The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (c) The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (d) The Disturbed Areas Act, 1976

Answer: (b). The Committee recommended repealing AFSPA with its operative provisions folded into the UAPA, 1967.

MCQ 16 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements regarding India's crude-oil import costs amid the 2026 Iran war:

1. India's crude import bill rose by about 60% year-on-year in April-June 2026.
2. VLCC freight rates from Ras Tanura to India rose over 400% since the war began.
3. Brent crude prices fell by over 25% since the war's outbreak.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — Brent crude rose (not fell) roughly 25% since the conflict began, reflecting a geopolitical risk premium.

MCQ 17 · GS2

Which committee's recommendations remain central to the Centre-versus-farmer-unions' debate over the MSP cost-of-production formula?

(a) The Y.K. Alagh Committee (b) The M.S. Swaminathan-led National Commission on Farmers (c) The Ashok Dalwai Committee (d) The Arvind Subramanian Committee

Answer: (b). Farmer organisations invoke the Swaminathan Commission's (2006) comprehensive-cost (C2) plus 50% formula, distinct from the Government's applied methodology.

MCQ 18 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Navy's 'SAGAR' doctrine:

1. It stands for 'Security and Growth for All in the Region.'
2. It was articulated in 2015.
3. It frames India as a net security provider only within its own territorial waters.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — SAGAR frames India's role across the wider Indian Ocean Region, not merely its territorial waters.

MCQ 19 · GS2

The abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the former State of Jammu & Kashmir took legal effect under which instrument?

(a) The Government of India Act, 1935 (b) The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 (c) The States Reorganisation Act, 1956 (d) The Delimitation Act, 2002

Answer: (b). Parliament's Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, effective 31 October 2019, created the two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

MCQ 20 · STATEMENT-BASED · GS3

Consider the following statements regarding the Graded Response Action Plan's latest (September 2026) revision:

1. Diesel-generator curbs were advanced from Stage II to Stage I.
2. Sonipat district was added to the zone of older-vehicle restrictions.
3. An exemption for essential-goods-carrying older trucks was expanded, not removed.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — the exemption for essential-goods vehicles using older trucks was removed, not expanded, in this revision.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Twenty statement-based questions across eight distinct GS sub-themes in one day is exactly the volume **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** trains you to process at exam speed, not just recognise. Learn more at theiasakademia.com.

§5 Mains Questions

GS1 · 150 WORDS

Urban sanitation governance

Critically examine the shift in India's urban sanitation missions from infrastructure-creation (toilets, waste collection) toward comparative city-level benchmarking, with reference to PRAGATI-50 under SBM-Urban 2.0.

GS1 · 150 WORDS

Federalism in Union Territories

"A Union Territory with a Legislature occupies an unresolved middle ground between a State and a centrally-administered territory." Discuss with reference to Jammu & Kashmir's current constitutional status.

GS2 · 250 WORDS

Asymmetric Union Territory status

Examine the constitutional and political arguments for and against restoring full statehood to Jammu & Kashmir, in light of the 2019 Reorganisation Act and the Supreme Court's 2023 judgment in *In Re: Article 370*.

GS2 · 250 WORDS

Police accountability and citizen trust

Using recent survey evidence on cybercrime victimisation and police bribery, discuss the structural reforms needed to improve both the responsiveness and the accountability of policing in India.

GS2 · 150 WORDS

Balancing fundamental rights

Discuss, with a recent example, how Indian courts apply the proportionality doctrine when two fundamental rights appear to conflict.

GS3 · 250 WORDS

Renewable energy integration

“Grid integration, not generation capacity, is now the binding constraint on India's renewable energy transition.” Critically examine this statement with reference to the Green Energy Corridor scheme.

GS3 · 150 WORDS

Agricultural price policy

Explain the methodology behind India's Minimum Support Price formula and discuss why procurement outcomes remain concentrated in a few crops despite price support for many.

GS3 · 250 WORDS

Maritime energy security

Discuss the strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz for India's energy security, and evaluate the adequacy of India's current naval and strategic-reserve responses to chokepoint disruption risk.

GS4 · CASE STUDY

Ethics of security-law renewal

You are a District Magistrate in a North-Eastern border district due for its six-monthly AFSPA ‘disturbed area’ review. Local civil-society groups argue the security situation has improved enough to lift the designation; the local police and army units argue otherwise, citing classified intelligence you cannot independently verify. Your recommendation carries significant weight with the State Government. (a) Identify the competing ethical considerations involved in this decision. (b) What process would you follow to arrive at a recommendation you could ethically defend regardless of the outcome?

§6 Value Addition

8,306 — citizens surveyed across 16 states in SPIR 2026, the empirical base behind the cybercrime and police-bribery findings.

₹1,86,405 crore — total outlay of the Green Energy Corridor Phase-III (PM-DHARA) scheme, enabling evacuation of up to 135 GW of renewable power.

135 GW — renewable-energy evacuation capacity targeted under GEC-III, against India's 2035 goal of 900 GW non-fossil installed capacity.

411% — rise in VLCC freight rates from Ras Tanura to India since the 2026 Iran war began, a sharper cost shock than the ~25% rise in Brent crude itself.

“We don't want half or quarter statehood, but full statehood” — J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, 2026, on the Assembly's statehood resolution.

13 — police-station areas in Manipur newly excluded from AFSPA's 'disturbed area' designation in the October 2026 renewal round.

70+ countries — nations that had already banned Paraquat Dichloride before India's 2026 nationwide prohibition, including the EU since 2007.

48 — cumulative actions now built into Delhi-NCR's Graded Response Action Plan across its four AQI-linked stages, after the September 2026 revision.

§7 AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

TOPIC	GS PAPER	ONE-LINE CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
J&K statehood-restoration resolution	GS2	Omar Abdullah moves it; BJP walks out over 2000 autonomy reference	★★★★★
SPIR 2026 — cybercrime & police bribery data	GS2/GS3	17.9% cybercrime surge; 27% complainants paid bribes	★★★★★
Supreme Court's firecracker/green-cracker order	GS2	Time-bound regime balances Art 21 vs Art 25/29	★★★★☆
Strait of Hormuz & 2026 Iran war's economic fallout	GS2/GS3	Oil flows recover; shipping/insurance costs stay high	★★★★★

MEA statement on Indian seafarers in the Gulf	GS2	12 vessels, 163+ seafarers tracked west of Hormuz	★★★★☆
AFSPA six-month extension (Manipur/Nagaland/AP)	GS3	13 Manipur police-station areas newly excluded	★★★★★
Naval Commanders' Conference & Maritime Strategy 2026	GS3	'Operation Urja Suraksha' for Gulf energy-route security	★★★★☆
UIDAI's five new Aadhaar initiatives	GS2/GS3	Face auth for ePDS; website to expand to 23 languages	★★★★☆
Green Energy Corridor Phase-III (PM-DHARA)	GS3	₹1.86 lakh crore for transmission + battery storage	★★★★★
CCEA's Rabi MSP hike (2027-28 season)	GS3	Safflower leads at +₹675/quintal; wheat smallest at +₹25	★★★★☆
MoSPI's trial Index of Services Production	GS3	19 sub-sectors; closes a services-data gap vs IIP	★★★★☆
Paraquat Dichloride nationwide ban	GS3	No antidote exists; banned in 70+ countries already	★★★★☆
CAQM's revised Graded Response Action Plan	GS3	Diesel-generator curbs advanced to Stage I; Sonipat added	★★★★☆
PRAMAAN forest & wood certification — first certificates	GS3	Andhra Pradesh eucalyptus plantation + Odisha bamboo farmer	★★★★☆
PRAGATI-50 urban sanitation benchmarking	GS1/GS2	50 cities, 24 states, under SBM-Urban 2.0	★★★★☆
Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy Committee & AFSPA reform	GS2	2005 recommendation to repeal AFSPA, fold into UAPA, unimplemented	★★★★☆
SAGAR doctrine & India's Indian Ocean strategy	GS3	2015 doctrine now operationalised via Urja Suraksha	★★★★☆
Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) methodology	GS3	1.5x Cost-of-Production formula vs Swaminathan Commission's C2	★★★★☆

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