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Centre Proposes Complete Ban on the Insecticide Carbosulfan

26 August 2026 ·

ENVIRONMENT

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Centre Proposes Complete Ban on the Insecticide Carbosulfan

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The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare issued a draft order on August 25, 2026 proposing a complete prohibition on the insecticide Carbosulfan. The draft is open to 30 days of public comment.

THIS IS A PROPOSAL, NOT A BAN

The distinction matters and is the most likely error in any answer on this item. **Carbosulfan has not been banned.** What exists is a **draft order** inviting objections and suggestions over a 30-day window, after which the Government may notify, modify or drop the prohibition.

STAGE	DATE
Expert committee constituted	January 14, 2026, as background to the present order
Committee report submitted	June 12, 2026, historical background preceding the draft
Draft order issued	August 2026, with a 30-day public comment window
Final notification	Not issued

The committee recommended complete prohibition, including an immediate ban on manufacture, import, transport, distribution, sale and use.

THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

INSTRUMENT	CONTENT
Insecticides Act, 1968	The governing statute for pesticide regulation in India
Insecticides Rules, 1971	Procedural rules
Section 27(1)	Interim prohibition of sale, distribution or use, for a period not exceeding sixty days pending investigation
Section 27(2)	Permanent prohibition after investigation, the route a complete ban must take
Section 4	Constitutes the Central Insecticides Board
Section 5	Constitutes the Registration Committee , which registers insecticides and recommended this ban
Pesticides Management Bill, 2020	Introduced in the Rajya Sabha; would replace the 1968 Act; not enacted

A distinction worth getting right: the **Central Insecticides Board** is constituted under **Section 4** and advises the Central Government, while the **Registration Committee** is constituted separately under **Section 5** and registers insecticides. It was the Registration Committee that recommended prohibition here. The two are often compressed into “CIB&RC”, which obscures which body did what. Their continued operation under a 1968 statute, with the replacement Bill pending for six years, is itself part of the story.

THE CHEMISTRY AND THE RISK

Carbosulfan is a **carbamate** insecticide. Two features make it a regulatory concern:

- It is **rapidly metabolised into carbofuran**, a highly toxic metabolite. Regulating the parent compound without accounting for the metabolite understates the hazard.
- Its mechanism of toxicity is **acetylcholinesterase inhibition**, which disrupts nerve signal transmission and causes acute systemic toxicity. **Atropine** and supportive care are the standard management for carbamate poisoning, and the expert committee recorded that there is **no specific antidote** that reverses carbosulfan toxicity.

Non-target risks flagged by the committee include harm to **birds, pollinators and aquatic organisms**.

Agronomic Footprint

PARAMETER	FIGURE
Principal crops	Paddy and cotton
Area covered	Roughly 32 lakh acres
Estimated domestic market	About ₹400 crore

PRECEDENTS IN INDIAN PESTICIDE REGULATION

CASE	DETAIL
Anupam Verma Committee (2013-15)	Reviewed 66 pesticides banned or restricted elsewhere but in use in India; recommended phase-outs
2020 draft order	Proposed banning 27 pesticides; subsequently narrowed
Endosulfan	Banned by Supreme Court order in 2011; listed under the Stockholm Convention on POPs
Monocrotophos	Long-standing subject of restriction proposals

The **Kasaragod endosulfan tragedy** in Kerala remains the standing Indian case study of delayed pesticide regulation.

International Frameworks

CONVENTION	PURPOSE
Rotterdam Convention (1998, in force 2004)	Prior Informed Consent procedure for hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade
Stockholm Convention (2001, in force 2004)	Persistent Organic Pollutants
Basel Convention (1989, in force 1992)	Transboundary movement of hazardous wastes
FAO/WHO Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management	Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) concept

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The tension is not health against agriculture, but whose health against whose cost. The exposure burden falls on **farm labour and rural water users**; the cost of substitution falls on **farmers with few registered alternatives**. A ban issued without a subsidised alternatives package does not resolve the conflict, it transfers hardship from one vulnerable group to another.

Regulatory lag is structural, not incidental. India continues to permit molecules long withdrawn in the European Union because the **Insecticides Act, 1968 has no automatic periodic re-registration or sunset review**. A molecule registered decades ago stays registered until someone actively moves to remove it. The failure to pass the Pesticides Management Bill for six years is the single largest gap here.

Resistance management is the under-discussed risk. Removing a molecule narrows the rotation of available **modes of action**, which can accelerate resistance in the remaining ones. Bans must therefore be paired with an **Integrated Pest Management** push rather than a straight chemical substitution, or the next molecule fails faster.

The export-domestic asymmetry is the hardest question. India is a major pesticide exporter, and a ban on domestic use does not automatically bar manufacture for export. Continuing to produce for other countries a molecule judged too dangerous for Indian farmers is difficult to defend, and is precisely the practice the Rotterdam Convention's Prior Informed Consent procedure was designed to discipline.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3 (Agriculture and Environment): Major crops and cropping patterns; environmental pollution and degradation.

GS Paper 2 (Health): Issues relating to health.

Prelims focus: The Insecticides Act, 1968; Section 4 constitutes the Central Insecticides Board and Section 5 the Registration Committee; Section 27(2) is the permanent-ban route; that this is a draft order with a 30-day comment window, not a ban; carbosulfan as a carbamate metabolising to carbofuran; cholinesterase inhibition and the absence of a specific antidote; the endosulfan Supreme Court ban of 2011 and its Stockholm Convention listing; the Rotterdam Convention's PIC procedure.

Mains angle: Argue that India's pesticide regulation suffers from **an absence of periodic review rather than an absence of power**. Section 27 already allows prohibition; what is missing is a **statutory** trigger requiring re-examination of old registrations. Use the pending Pesticides Management Bill as the concrete reform.

Way forward: Enact the Pesticides Management Bill with mandatory periodic re-registration and a compensation mechanism; publish a **registered-alternatives list with cost comparisons simultaneously** with any ban notification; scale Integrated Pest Management, biopesticides and **natural**

farming support; strengthen pesticide-poisoning surveillance through the health system; and enforce maximum residue limit testing at the mandi rather than only at the point of export.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

THE ACTION:

Draft order proposing complete prohibition on Carbosulfan, issued August 2026

Open to 30 days of public comment; NOT a final ban

Background: expert committee constituted January 14, 2026; reported June 12, 2026

CARBOSULFAN:

A carbamate insecticide; metabolises rapidly into carbofuran

Mechanism: acetylcholinesterase inhibition; atropine and supportive care are standard carbamate management, and the expert committee recorded that no specific antidote reverses carbosulfan toxicity

Used on paddy and cotton; roughly 32 lakh acres; domestic market about ₹400 crore

Non-target risks: birds, pollinators, aquatic organisms

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK:

Insecticides Act, 1968 and Insecticides Rules, 1971

Section 27(1): interim prohibition up to sixty days pending investigation. Section 27(2): permanent prohibition after investigation. Section 4: constitutes the Central Insecticides Board. Section 5: constitutes the Registration Committee

Pesticides Management Bill, 2020 introduced in the Rajya Sabha; not enacted

PRECEDENTS:

Anupam Verma Committee (2013-15) reviewed 66 pesticides

2020 draft order proposed banning 27 pesticides

Endosulfan banned by Supreme Court order in 2011; listed under the Stockholm Convention

Kasaragod, Kerala is the standing endosulfan case study

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS:

Rotterdam Convention: Prior Informed Consent for hazardous chemicals in trade

Stockholm Convention: Persistent Organic Pollutants

Basel Convention: transboundary movement of hazardous wastes

FAO/WHO concept of Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Sources: *Business Standard, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare*

Source: Centre Proposes Complete Ban on the Insecticide Carbosulfan — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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