Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss the constitutional and governance challenges arising from Ladakh’s status as a Union Territory without a legislature. How can the concerns of its people be addressed while safeguarding national interests?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Union Territory administration; democratic representation; statehood demand; Sixth Schedule protection; tribal rights; environmental vulnerability; cooperative federalism; institutional dialogue

Model Answer

Introduction

Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature on 31 October 2019. Demands for statehood, constitutional safeguards and greater democratic participation reflect concerns about political representation, cultural identity and local governance.

Key Governance Challenges

1. Democratic Representation

The absence of an elected legislative assembly limits locally elected representatives’ ability to shape policies across legislative subjects. Residents seek greater influence over decisions affecting their lives.

2. Tribal and Cultural Protection

Ladakh has a significant tribal population with distinct cultural traditions. Demands for Sixth Schedule safeguards reflect concerns about land ownership, customary practices and protection from disruptive development.

3. Environmental Sustainability

Ladakh's fragile Himalayan ecosystem faces pressure from tourism, infrastructure expansion, water scarcity and climate change. Local participation is important for sustainable development.

Way Forward

- **Structured dialogue:** Resume meaningful negotiations between the Union Government and Ladakhi representatives.
- **Constitutional safeguards:** Examine legally feasible arrangements for tribal protection, land rights and local autonomy.
- **Democratic accountability:** Strengthen elected local institutions and transparent consultation.
- **Balanced development:** Integrate ecological protection with employment and infrastructure needs.

Conclusion

A durable settlement requires constitutional dialogue, public participation and sensitivity to Ladakh's unique social and ecological conditions while maintaining national security.

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