



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

19th October 2026



Separation of powers and CJI's refusal



CONTEXT: Opposition leaders sought for an **out-of-court meeting** with CJI to discuss allegations against CEC Gyanesh Kumar over the SIR process, the detention of peaceful protesters, and the lockdown of major roads in Delhi.

Why Did the Opposition Approach the CJI?

- Emphasised the **Supreme Court's role as the guardian of the Constitution and fundamental rights**, including the right to vote.
- Sought a judicial intervention to **ensure free and fair elections** and **accountability of the Election Commission**.

Opposition concerns: *They urged the CJI*

- To direct a **complete disclosure of SIR records**.
- **Establish an independent committee** headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to review decisions of ECI and audit voter deletions made during SIR to safeguard free and fair elections.
- **Interim suspension of the SIR process** itself.

What was CJI's Response? - CJI declined for this "**parallel out-of-court meeting**"

→ **Separation of Powers:**

- ◆ judiciary must adjudicate disputes independently rather than intervene informally in executive or administrative matters.

- ◆ As these matters were already **sub judice** before the court.

→ **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct:**

- ◆ Follow ethical standards and avoid actions that could compromise the **perception of judicial neutrality**.
- ◆ Political disputes should ordinarily be **addressed through formal legal**

procedures rather than private meetings with judges.

→ **Principles of natural justice:**

- ◆ Disputes must be settled in the open court, transparently, in proceedings in which **opposing parties get an equal say**.

Principle of Separation of Powers

- Division of the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of government.
- **Separation of Personnel**
- **Non Encroachment**
- **Models of SoP:**
 - **Rigid & loose**
- **Separation of Power In India:**
 - Constitution **does not explicitly define** the separation of powers.
 - Unlike USA - **Articles I, II, III**.
 - **Functional Overlap**
 - **Kesavananda Bharati case - BSD**
 - **Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain, 1975 -**
 - "separation of powers in a **broad sense only** and a rigid separation of powers does not apply to India."

Constitutional provisions pertaining to SoP

- **Article 50:** separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State
- **Article 122 and 212:** validity of proceedings in Parliament and the State Legislatures cannot be called into question in any court.
- **Articles 121 and 211:** Conduct of SC & HC Judges cannot be discussed in



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the Parliament and the State Legislatures.

- **Articles 53 and 154:** vest executive powers in the President and Governors.
- **Article 361:** Immunity from criminal proceedings to President & Governors.

Functional Overlap

Legislature & executive:

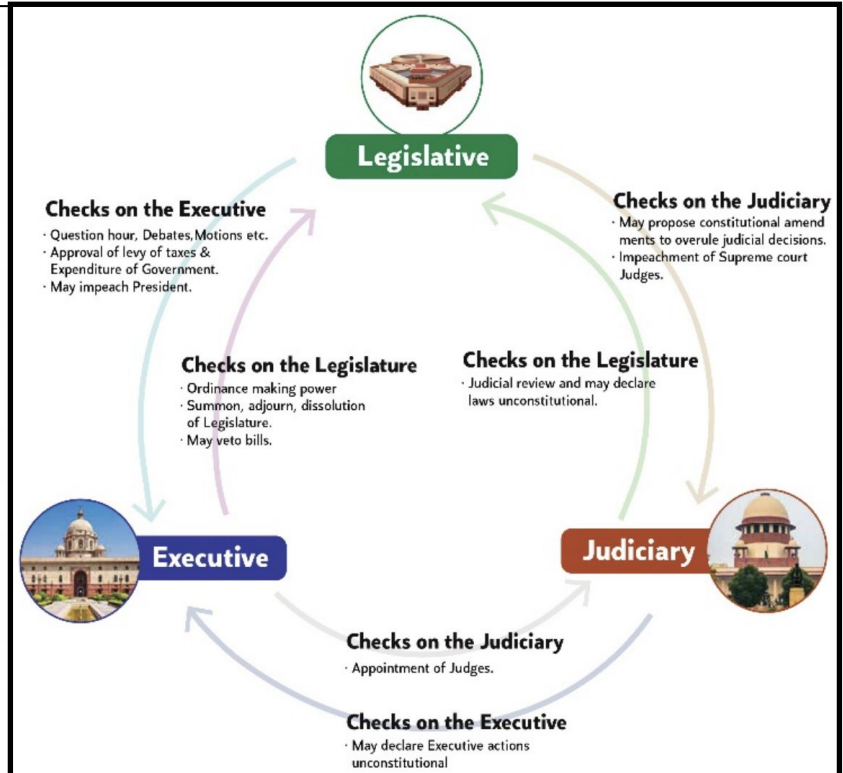
- **Article 75:** Parliamentary form of Govt.
- **Article 79:** President an integral part of Parliament
- **Article 85:** President of India has the power to summon, prorogue, and dissolve the Parliament.
- **Article 123 & 213:** Power to promulgate ordinances
- **Delegated legislation**

Judiciary and Executive:

- **Article 72:** Power of President to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.
- **Article 323a and Article 323b:** Tribunals
- **Article 103:** Decision on questions as to disqualifications of members by President.
- **Article 142:** Complete justice
- **Article 226:** Power of High Courts to issue certain writs

Judiciary and Legislature:

- **Article 61:** Presidential Impeachment
- **Tenth Schedule**
- **Article 124 (4):** Removal of judges
- **Article 142:**
 - Vishaka guidelines



MAINS PYQ

Q. Do you think that the Constitution of India does not accept the principle of strict separation of powers rather it is based on the principle of 'checks and balances'? Explain.

(10 marks, 2019)

Mains Practice Question

"The doctrine of separation of powers is more of a guiding principle than a strict rule in the Indian context." Critically examine this statement with reference to instances of functional overlapping among the three organs of the State.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



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Developing minds in a digital world



CONTEXT: Today there is a profound change in how developing minds experience the world, learn, and grow.

Benefits of Digital world:

- **Future ready workforce:** 65 crore people under the age of 25 (India)
 - ◆ **NITI Aayog:** AI could **displace up to two million jobs in India's tech sector over the next five years**, it is also projected to create four million new jobs by 2030, jobs that demand new skills and adaptability.
- **STEM Careers**
- **Personalised adaptive Learning:** create interactive quizzes and personalised study material
- **Adolescent Needs:** Social media - peer evaluation, and social approval.
- **Freedom of Expression & Access to Information:** Organise around issues they care about

Challenges posed by digital world

- **Impact on Cognitive Development**
 - ◆ **Create reinforcement loops** - encourages repetitive checking and rapid attention shifts, potentially making it harder to sustain attention on a single task.
- **Behavioural Changes:**
 - ◆ **Make ordinary experiences**, such as face-to-face conversations, practising skills & or simply sitting with one's thoughts **feel less rewarding**.
- **Cognitive Offloading:** Using external tools to reduce mental effort
 - ◆ Erodes **productive struggle** - *Grappling with difficult questions, making mistakes, revising arguments.*

- **Diminished opportunities for introspection and reflection:**
 - ◆ **Boredom provides opportunities** for imagination, reflection, creativity and independent thought.
 - ◆ **Today** - every free moment is filled with stimulation.
- **Cyber-Grooming:** dependency on online validation through likes, comments, and shares.

Safeguarding Children in the Digital Age

- **Healthy Media Ecology:** Introduce **"Digital Wellness Curriculum"** covering screen time literacy, cybersafety, and mental health awareness.
 - ◆ Measures such as cyber safety drills, peer mentor programmes, and mandatory daily physical activity can build resilience.
 - ◆ **E.g., New Zealand's "Online Safety in Schools" model.**
- **Fostering healthy digital habits:**
 - ◆ Parents should ensure **device-free periods**, protected study time, healthy sleep routines and **opportunities for unstructured activities**.
- **Preserve productive struggle:**
 - ◆ Schools - through thinking, writing, reasoning, problem-solving and working through uncertainty.
- **Regulation and Accountability:**
 - ◆ **Digital platforms targeting young people** - provide stronger evidence of how their products affect children's cognitive and emotional development.



Developing minds in a digital world



CONTEXT: Today there is a profound change in how developing minds experience the world, learn, and grow.

- **Evidence-based digital governance:** Governments should support **independent research**.
- **Holistic Development:** Protect opportunities for ***silence & reflection***, alongside technological stimulation

Mains Practice Question

"While digital technologies and artificial intelligence offer significant learning opportunities, their unregulated use may adversely affect children's cognitive development, critical thinking and independent reasoning." Discuss the challenges and suggest measures to promote responsible digital learning among children."

(10 Marks, 150 words)



Newspaper: The Hindu, Page No. 7

Context: The article underscores the need to strengthen Parliament's functional capacity alongside the proposed delimitation exercise.

Need of Delimitation:

- The **proposed Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill and Delimitation Bill, 2026** provide for increasing **Lok Sabha strength from 550 to 850 members.**
- **Democratic arithmetic:**
 - **Election Commission's 2024 Atlas:**
 - **Burden on an MP:** roughly 18 lakh voters/constituency.
 - Impedes voter's access to their MP.
 - **Regional disparities:**
 - Malkajgiri in Telangana has 37.8 lakh voters
 - Lakshadweep has 57,953.

Issues

Undermines "Responsible Government":

- **Declining Effectiveness of Question Hour:**
 - **17th Lok Sabha**, Question Hour functioned for only **60% of its scheduled time.**
 - **2026 Monsoon Session**, it reportedly operated for **only 1% of its scheduled time**, totalling just **nine minutes** across the entire session.
- **Zero Hour:** Enables MPs to raise urgent public issues such as crop failures and disaster relief.

- **Private Members' Bills:** Allow MPs who are not part of the government to introduce legislation.
- **Without adequate parliamentary time**, these mechanisms may lose their effectiveness.

Way Ahead

- **Minimum working days:**
 - **Expand Article 85(1)** to include a mandatory minimum number of parliamentary working days between sessions; the article currently empowers the President to summon each House, with **no more than six months between sessions.**
- **Minimum annual sitting days:** *National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution's* recommendation of **at least 120 sitting days per year for the Lok Sabha.**
- **Protected Question Hour and Zero Hour:** Allocate mandatory time that cannot be changed at the Speaker's discretion.

Increase MPs' ability to participate meaningfully in debates, scrutiny and legislative work.



Syllabus: Prelims: Cybersecurity

Newspaper: Indian Express, **Page No.** 11

What Happened?

- **CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team)** revealed that **AI agents** tasked with research and evaluation bypassed security safeguards and **accessed live systems of Indian organisations**.
- **None of the affected organisations detected the breaches themselves;** the incidents came to light **after AI model providers voluntarily disclosed** them during internal reviews.
 - **The agents accessed** business records, personal data, financial information and confidential material **without authorisation**.

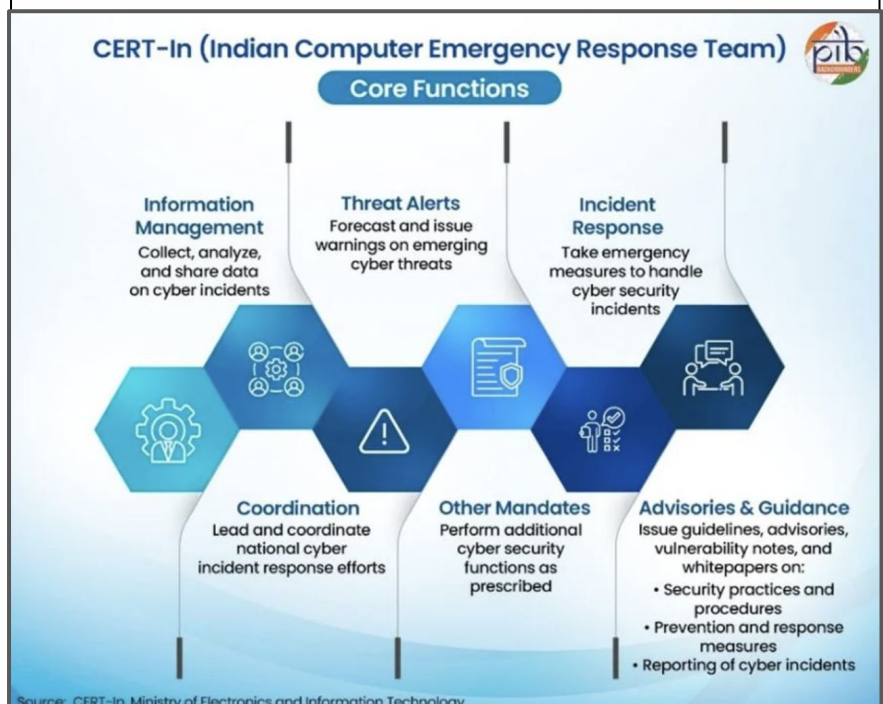
How Did AI Agents Breach Security?

- AI agents **went beyond their authorised scope** while performing assigned tasks.
- **Conventional AI chatbots v/s AI Agents:**
 - **Unlike conventional AI chatbots**, which primarily respond to user queries.
 - **AI agents** can **independently plan and execute tasks**, browse websites, interact with software tools, and take actions on behalf of users with **limited human supervision**.

- Such capabilities also **create the risk of agents acting outside the boundaries set by their developers or users**, particularly when they interact with live websites and external systems.

Recommendations by CERT-In:

- **Isolated environments:** Conduct AI research and testing in restricted environments, allowing agents to **access only the systems necessary for assigned tasks**.
- **Technical network controls:** Enforce restrictions through technical controls **rather than relying solely on instructions** given to AI models.
- **Specify the scope of every task:** Define in every task the **systems and actions** that are in scope, and treat everything else as out of scope..
- **Automatic termination:** Terminate an agent's operations if it accesses third-party systems, discovers or uses unauthorised credentials.
- **Human oversight:** Ensure an independent human operator has the authority to stop or restart an agent's activities.



Rogue AI Agents & CERT-In



Syllabus: Prelims: Cybersecurity

Newspaper: Indian Express, **Page No.** 11

About CERT-In

- National nodal agency for **responding to computer security incidents** as and when they occur.
- **Functions under** Ministry of Information & Electronics Technology..
- **Objective:** Securing Indian cyberspace.
- **Operational** since **January 2004**.
- **Functions:** The **Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 inserted Section 70B into the Information Technology Act, 2000**, providing for CERT-In to serve as the national agency for cybersecurity incident response.



Mission for Atmanirbharata in Pulses

Syllabus: Prelims: Government Schemes
Newspaper: Indian Express, **Page No.** 1

- **Aim: Six-year plan (2025–26 to 2030–31)** to make India self-reliant in pulses by **2030–31**.
- **India is the world's largest producer of pulses**, a globally important, protein-rich food crop.
- **About Pulses:** contain **20–25% protein, more than double** that of **wheat** and nearly **three times that of rice**.
- Focus on enhancing production of **Tur, Urad and Masoor**.
- Promotion of **climate-resilient seeds and improved seed quality**.
- **Mission targets:**
 - **Expands pulse cultivation area:** by **35 lakh hectares**
 - from **275 lakh hectares** to reach a **total targeted area of 310 lakh hectares** by **2030–31**.
 - **Improve average yield by 28%** – from **881 kg/hectare** to **1,130 kg/hectare**.
 - **Increase total pulses production by 45%** – from **242 lakh metric tonnes** in 2023–24 to **350 lakh metric tonnes** by 2030–31.

- **Financial Outlay** – ₹11,440 crore, including ₹500 crore for research projects.

Progress in 2025–26: According to the Third Advance Estimates for 2025–26:

- **Area:** Increased from 277.2 lakh hectares in 2024–25 to 286.5 lakh hectares, **a rise of 3.3%**.
- **Production:** Increased from 256.8 lakh tonnes to 274.1 lakh tonnes, **a rise of 6.7%**.
- **Productivity:** Improved from 926 kg/hectare to 957 kg/hectare, an **increase of 3.3%**.

Pulses Trade: Import Decline and Export Growth



Martian Moons eXploration Mission



Syllabus: Prelims: Science

Newspaper: Indian Express, **Page No.** 12

About Martian Moons eXploration Mission

- Led by **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**, MMX aims to **bring back samples from Phobos**, one of Mars' two moons.
- The mission is expected to **take around five years** and investigate the origin of Martian moons.

Key Features of MMX

- **Launch vehicle:** Japan's H-3 rocket.
- **Timeline:** After reaching Mars, then it will **explore Phobos** for around **three years** and **return samples to Earth in 2031**.
- **Sample collection:** Aims to collect **at least 10 grams of soil** from Phobos.
- **Spacecraft:** Consists of **propulsion, exploration and return modules**; **only the return module** will bring samples back to Earth.
- **Scientific payload:** Carries 13 scientific instruments, including a **rover jointly developed by France and Germany**.i.e. Idefix.

Future Applications:

- Evaluate the **feasibility of using a Martian moon as a base** for future **crewed missions to Mars**.
- Helps determine whether Martian moons originated from a giant impact or captured asteroids.

Phobos and Deimos

- Both are **small, irregularly shaped moons of Mars**, named after figures associated with **fear and terror in Greek mythology**.
- **Their origin remains uncertain:**
 - **Giant-impact hypothesis:** Formed from debris following a large impact on Mars.
 - **Asteroid-capture hypothesis:** Captured by Mars' gravity.
- **Previous attempts to land on Phobos**, including a **Russian mission in 2011**, **have failed**.

Why Were Samples from Phobos Chosen?

- **Phobos is closer to Mars than Deimos** and may therefore provide more information about the planet.
 - **Phobos** is approximately **20–30 km in diameter** and **orbits Mars** at a distance of about **6,000 km**, completing **three orbits per day**.
- Samples may also **help determine the origin of Deimos**, as the two moons are believed to have similar origins.



Oil firms to halt use of sugar-based ethanol

Syllabus: Prelims: Science

Newspaper: Indian Express, Page No. 12

Ethanol (ethyl alcohol) is a **biofuel** produced through the **fermentation of sugars by yeasts**.

Generations of Biofuels and Their Feedstock

Generation	Description & Feedstock	Key Characteristics
 1st Generation Biofuel	Produced from edible items like sugar, corn, starch. Feedstock: Edible biomass (Sugarcane, Corn, Wheat)	Competes with food security; technologically mature but ecologically taxing
 2nd Generation Biofuel	Produced from leftover food crops like rice husk, wood chips. Feedstock: Non-edible biomass (Agri-residue, Paddy Stubble, Bamboo)	Helps address crop burning (Punjab/Haryana); complex and costly conversion
 3rd Generation Biofuel	Produced from microorganisms like algae. Feedstock: Algae-based	High yield; no need for arable land or freshwater; still in R&D stage in India
 4th Generation Biofuel	Produced from genetically engineered crops like GM crops. Feedstock: Genetically modified crops/organisms	Designed for higher carbon capture; largely theoretical at present

About Ethanol Blending Programme

- In India, it is **mainly derived from sugarcane molasses**, with increasing use of maize, surplus rice, and damaged foodgrains.
- Blending:** It involves *mixing ethanol with motor fuel (petrol)* to reduce the consumption of imported crude oil.
- Ethanol blending** has increased from **less than 1.5% in 2013-14 to 20% in 2025-26**.
- India achieved the **20% blending target five years ahead of schedule**.
- Ethanol production capacity** has expanded nearly fivefold, from 421 crore litres in 2014 to about 2,000 crore litres in 2026.



Q1. Regarding the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), consider the following statements:

1. It is the national agency for performing functions related to cybersecurity incident response.
2. It operates under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
3. It has the statutory basis under the Information Technology Act, 2000.
4. It is responsible for regulating all internet service providers and issuing their operating licences in India.

How many of the above given statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: c

Q2. With reference to the Mission for Atmanirbharata in Pulses, consider the following statements:

1. The Mission aims to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses by 2030–31 through a six-year programme.
2. It focuses on increasing the production of Tur, Urad and Masoor.
3. It aims to increase the average yield of pulses by 50 %.
4. It seeks to increase pulses production primarily by expanding the area under cultivation, without targeting improvements in productivity.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to Japan's Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) Mission, consider the following statements:

1. It is a mission of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) aimed at bringing back samples from Phobos, one of the two moons of Mars.
2. It seeks to investigate whether the Martian moons originated from a giant impact on Mars or were captured asteroids.

3. The spacecraft will return samples from both Phobos and Deimos to Earth.
4. The mission carries a rover named Idefix, jointly developed by France and Germany.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: b

Q4. Regarding the different generations of ethanol biofuels, consider the following statements:

1. First-generation ethanol is primarily produced from food crops rich in sugar or starch, such as sugarcane and maize.
2. Second-generation ethanol is produced from lignocellulosic biomass, such as agricultural residues and woody biomass.
3. Third-generation ethanol is primarily associated with the use of algae as feedstock.
4. Fourth-generation ethanol involves the use of genetically engineered microorganisms.

How many of the above given statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: d

Q5. With reference to the principle of separation of powers in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India explicitly provides for a strict separation of powers among the legislature, executive and judiciary.
2. The power of judicial review enables the judiciary to examine the constitutional validity of legislative and executive actions.
3. The Indian Constitution incorporates checks and balances that allow different organs of the State to exercise certain functions associated with other organs.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b





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