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MCQs

THE HINDU

Separation of powers and CJI's refusal

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy,

Mains: General Studies - 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant declined a request from Opposition leaders** to discuss allegations against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.
- The refusal was **based on maintaining a neutral distance from political matters** and upholding constitutional lines.

Key Highlights:

- **Separation of powers**, part of the Constitution's **basic structure**, keeps the legislature, executive and judiciary independent.
- Since SIR-related issues were already before the court, private discussions with political leaders could undermine **judicial impartiality**.
- The **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct** require judges to maintain **independence, impartiality and propriety**.

Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct:

International standards for judicial ethics adopted in 2002 in Bangalore, India. They were endorsed by UN United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2006.

- **Judicial propriety** came under scrutiny after PM **Narendra Modi's 2024 visit** to then-CJI **D.Y. Chandrachud's** residence.

Judicial Propriety: The principle that judges must maintain proper conduct, both in official duties and private life, and avoid actions that may undermine public confidence in judicial independence and impartiality.

- The **supersession of three senior judges in 1973** to appoint Justice **A.N. Ray** as CJI and former CJI **Ranjan Gogoi's Rajya Sabha nomination** after retirement raised concerns about executive influence over judicial appointments.
- In January 2018, four senior Supreme Court judges held an unprecedented **press conference** raising concerns about **case allocation** under then-CJI **Dipak Misra**, highlighting concerns over judicial independence.

Implications:

- **Judicial impartiality** may be undermined by private meetings concerning pending cases.
- **Public confidence** may weaken if judges are perceived as politically biased.
- **Judicial independence** may be threatened by executive influence over judicial appointments.



- **Electoral integrity** may be affected by a lack of transparency in electoral-roll revisions.
- **Democratic governance** may suffer when disputes between constitutional institutions weaken public trust.

Way Forward:

- **Formal judicial proceedings** should be used to resolve disputes involving constitutional authorities.
- **Judicial independence** must be protected from political pressure and executive interference.
- **Transparency** should be ensured in judicial appointments and case-allocation procedures.
- **Judicial propriety** requires judges to avoid conduct or public statements that create perceptions of political bias.
- **Electoral transparency** requires clear SIR procedures, proper scrutiny of voter deletions and accessible legal remedies to protect voting rights.

Mains Question:

Examine the importance of judicial propriety and separation of powers in protecting judicial independence and public confidence in India's constitutional institutions. (250 words, 15 marks)

Developing minds in a digital world, a changing India

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Why in Focus?

- **Digital technology, social media and AI** are raising concerns about their impact on **young people's cognitive development**.
- India has approximately **65 crore people under 25**, making this an important issue for **education and public policy**.

Key Highlights:

- **Neuroplasticity** enables the brain to adapt to experiences, while the **prefrontal cortex** develops into early adulthood, shaping attention and self-control.

Neuroplasticity: The brain's ability to change and adapt through learning, experience and environmental influences.

Prefrontal Cortex: The front part of the brain responsible for attention, planning, decision-making and self-control, which continues developing into early adulthood.

- **Excessive screen time** is linked to changes in brain structure and connectivity.
- **Short videos and infinite scrolling** may encourage compulsive use and reduce **sustained attention**.
- **Overdependence on AI** may make young people rely on technology instead of thinking for themselves, while **free time without digital distractions** can help them develop creativity and reflect on their experiences.
- **Digital platforms** should be accountable for their impact on young users, supported by **independent research**.

Implications:

- **Attention and learning** may be affected by excessive digital exposure.
- **Independent thinking** may weaken due to overdependence on AI.
- **Creativity and reflection** may decline with reduced unstructured time.
- **Child safety** requires age-appropriate digital safeguards.

Way Forward:

- **Digital literacy** should promote responsible technology use.
- **Active learning** should encourage independent thinking and problem-solving in schools.
- **Platform accountability** should ensure age-appropriate safeguards.
- **Independent research** should assess technology's effects on cognitive development.
- **Offline activities**, such as reading and unstructured play, should be encouraged.



Mains Question:

“Excessive screen time and growing dependence on artificial intelligence may affect the cognitive development of young people.” Discuss the concerns and suggest suitable measures. (10 marks, 150 words)

A case for joining the global carbon coalition

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation,
environmental impact assessment.

Why in Focus?

- Nearly **500 Indian companies** across **seven industrial sectors** submitted their first compliance reports under the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)** on July 31.
- India must consider joining the **Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets (OCCCM)** to strengthen its carbon market and prepare for global trade measures.

Carbon Credit Trading Scheme: Notified on 28 June 2023 by India's Ministry of Power to reduce industrial emissions and support India's 2070 net-zero goal.

Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets: Launched in May 2026 by the EU, China and Brazil to promote cooperation on carbon pricing and carbon accounting.

Key Highlights:

- The **CCTS** supports India's **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** targets and its **2070 net-zero goal**.

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC): A country's climate action plan under the **Paris Agreement**, outlining its targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change.

- The first **carbon credits** are expected in October, with trading on **power exchanges** expected between November and January.
- Carbon pricing** reduces emission-cutting

costs, promotes innovation and generates revenue. Over **50 countries** have introduced carbon pricing.

- Linking carbon markets** can improve coordination and help India earn revenue from countries with stricter emission targets.
- The **EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** and similar measures could affect Indian exports, making international cooperation important.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism:

Established by the EU in May 2023; its definitive phase began on 1 January 2026 to address carbon leakage by imposing carbon costs on certain imports.

- Joining the **OCCCM** could help India shape global carbon market rules, prepare for **CBAM** and protect its trade interests.

Implications:

- Trade preparedness** can improve through cooperation on international carbon pricing and border carbon taxes.
- Investment and innovation** can increase through carbon market cooperation.
- Global influence** may weaken if India remains outside emerging international carbon market frameworks.
- Policy autonomy** must be protected while pursuing international climate cooperation.

Way Forward:

- International cooperation** should be considered to help India shape global carbon market rules.
- Carbon accounting** requires stronger **monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems**.
- Trade preparedness** requires assessing **CBAM's impact** on Indian exporters.
- Inclusive carbon pricing** should protect vulnerable groups and support India's development needs.
- Policy coordination** should align domestic climate measures with international carbon market developments.

Mains Question:



"India's participation in international carbon market coalitions could strengthen its climate action and trade preparedness." Discuss the opportunities and challenges for India. (10 marks, 150 words)

Two-face molecule could help make IBD treatments more effective

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Why in Focus?

- A study by the **National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi**, published in the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)**, revealed the **dual role of RelB in gut immunity**.

REL-associated protein beta (RelB): A protein that helps develop specialised immune cells in the gut.

Key Highlights:

- SILTs (Solitary Isolated Lymphoid Tissues)** are small immune structures in the intestinal wall that protect the gut from harmful microbes.
- RelB** helps develop **dendritic cells**, which produce **IL-23** to fight gut infections.

Dendritic cells: Immune cells that detect harmful microbes and activate immune responses.

IL-23 (Interleukin-23): An immune signalling molecule that triggers inflammation to fight infections.

- RelB activates **RBP-J**, which helps immature cells develop into specialised dendritic cells.

RBP-J (Recombination Signal Binding Protein for Immunoglobulin Kappa J Region): A DNA-binding transcription factor that regulates gene expression and helps control the development and differentiation of immune cells.

- RelB also reduces **regulatory T-cells (Tregs)**, which control immune responses and help prevent excessive inflammation.
- IL-23** helps fight infections, but its excessive

production can cause **chronic inflammation** and contribute to **Crohn's disease**.

Crohn's disease: A chronic inflammatory disease affecting the digestive tract.

Implications:

- IBD treatment** could benefit from targeting RelB to control gut inflammation.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD): A group of chronic conditions that cause inflammation in the digestive tract, including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

- Immune defence** may weaken if RelB is blocked, as it also helps protect the gut against infections.
- Human application** requires further research, as the findings are based on studies in mice.
- Inflammatory pathways** may become better understood, helping researchers identify how immune cells regulate gut inflammation.
- Therapeutic precision** may improve through treatments that control excessive inflammation without suppressing essential immune functions.

Way Forward:

- Further research** should validate RelB's role in human gut immunity.
- Targeted therapies** should control inflammation while preserving immune defence.
- Clinical trials** should assess treatment safety and effectiveness.
- Cross-tissue studies** should examine similar mechanisms in organs such as the lungs.

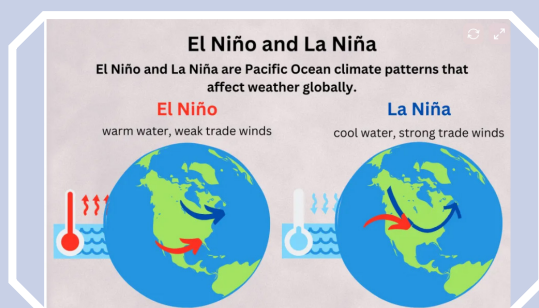
Mains Question:

Explain the role of RelB in gut immunity. Discuss its potential and challenges as a target for treating inflammatory bowel disease. (10 marks, 150 words)

KEYWORDS

El Niño

- **El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** is a natural climate phenomenon involving changes in sea-surface temperatures and atmospheric pressure over the tropical Pacific Ocean.
- **La Niña** is the cold phase of ENSO, characterised by unusually cool sea-surface temperatures in the same region.
- **El Niño** is the warm phase of the **El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**, marked by unusually warm sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.
- It generally occurs every **2–7 years**, with events typically lasting around **9–12 months**.
- During El Niño, **trade winds weaken**, allowing warm surface waters to move eastward towards the western coast of South America and reducing the upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water.
- It often weakens India's **southwest monsoon**, increasing the risk of deficient rainfall, droughts and higher temperatures, although the impact varies.
- El Niño affects global weather patterns, potentially causing **droughts in Australia and Indonesia** and increased rainfall in parts of South America.



Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** is conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to measure

employment, unemployment and labour force participation in India.

- The **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** was 59.3% in 2025, with male participation at 79.1% and female participation at 40.0%.
- The **unemployment rate** under usual status declined to 3.1% in 2025, while youth unemployment (15–29 years) stood at 9.9%.
- The share of workers in **regular wage or salaried employment** increased from 22.4% in 2024 to 23.6% in 2025, while agriculture's share of employment declined.
- From 2025, the PLFS shifted to a **January–December calendar-year survey**, increased its sample size and introduced a rotational panel sampling design.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** is a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- Established on **10 March 1969** under the CISF Act, 1968, it was initially created to protect sensitive public sector undertakings.
- It provides security to critical infrastructure, including **airports, seaports, nuclear installations, space establishments and power plants**.
- Headquartered in **New Delhi**, CISF is headed by a Director-General and has a dedicated **Fire Service Wing**; its motto is **"Protection and Security."**
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will overhaul its operational and administrative structure from **1 November 2026**, shifting from a largely region-based system to specialised, sector-based units.

SNIFFLES

- **SNIFFLES** stands for **Satellite measurement of Intended emission, unwanted emission, and radio**



radiation to develop, Follow up, and verifiy mitigation measures, regulatory compliance, and Lawful use of the radio Spectrum.

- It aims to monitor satellite radio emissions and minimise interference with radio astronomy.
- It is an **observational research programme conducted by astronomers using radio telescopes in Australia.**
- The study investigates electromagnetic emissions and unintended radiation from **non-geostationary satellite (NGSO) constellations**, including Starlink and OneWeb.
- The first results were published in **June 2026** in the **Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.**
- The programme aims to assess how satellite radiation interferes with **radio astronomy observations** and support measures to reduce interference.

Places in News

Kinmen Islands

- **Kinmen Islands** was recently in the news after Taiwan reported that four Chinese Coast Guard vessels entered its restricted waters.
- **Kinmen**, also known as **Quemoy**, is a group of islands **governed by Taiwan**, located off the southeastern coast of mainland China.
- It lies close to the Chinese mainland, near the city of **Xiamen**, making it strategically important.
- Kinmen is administered as a **county of Taiwan** and is separated from Taiwan's main island by the Taiwan Strait.
- The islands are strategically significant amid **cross-strait tensions between China and Taiwan**, particularly over sovereignty and maritime security.



Pattanam

- **Pattanam** has attracted archaeological interest for its evidence of ancient maritime trade and cultural exchanges between South India and the Mediterranean world.
- Pattanam is an archaeological site in **Ernakulam district, Kerala**, associated with the ancient port of **Muziris**.
- It is considered an important example of contact between ancient South Indian civilisation and the **Greco-Roman world**.
- Excavations have **unearthed pottery fragments linked to the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean and South China Sea**, indicating extensive maritime trade.
- Archaeological evidence suggests that Pattanam was an urban settlement from around the **5th century BCE to the 5th century CE**, with its peak between 100 BCE and 300 CE.