Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine how the separation of powers is practised in India compared to the rigid presidential model of the United States of America. In this context, compare the actual authority of the Indian Prime Minister with that of the President of the USA.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Separation of powers, parliamentary system, presidential system, checks and balances, Article 74, collective responsibility, executive-legislature relationship, US President, veto, appointments, Commander-in-Chief

Model Answer

Separation of powers in India is based on functional separation with institutional checks and balances, whereas the United States follows a comparatively rigid presidential separation between the executive and legislature.

In India, the parliamentary executive creates an overlap between the legislature and executive. The Prime Minister is normally the leader of the majority in the Lok Sabha and heads the Council of Ministers. Under Article 74, the President acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. Thus, executive authority is politically exercised through the Prime Minister and Council, while Parliament exercises legislative and oversight functions.

In contrast, the US Constitution vests executive power in the President under Article II. The President is separately elected through the electoral process and does not depend upon congressional confidence for continuation in office. The President also acts as Commander-in-Chief, appoints senior officials subject to Senate confirmation and possesses significant authority in foreign affairs and administration.

The difference becomes clearer in actual authority:

India	USA
Prime Minister leads the parliamentary executive	President is the head of the executive
Depends on majority support in Lok Sabha	Tenure is constitutionally fixed, subject to impeachment
Executive and legislature are interconnected	Executive and legislature are institutionally separate
Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to Lok Sabha	Cabinet members are not members of Congress by virtue of office
President is largely a constitutional head	President exercises substantial independent executive authority

However, neither system represents absolute separation. India uses judicial review and parliamentary accountability, while the US employs congressional oversight, Senate confirmations, veto mechanisms and judicial review.

Thus, India emphasises responsible government and fusion of powers, whereas the US places greater emphasis on institutional separation and checks and balances.

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