

## Quadrant II - Notes

**Paper Code: POD 105**

**Module Name: Prime Minister (UK)**

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### Prime Minister of UK

In England, the executive powers are exercised by the Cabinet. Prime Minister is the leader of the Cabinet and thus he is that pivot around whom the whole administration revolves. No action concerning administration can be performed against the wishes of the Prime Minister.

**APPOINTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER:-** In England, the Prime Minister is appointed by the King. However, the King appoints only that person, Prime Minister who enjoys confidence of the majority in the House of Commons.

**DISCRETION OF KING IN THE APPOINTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER:-** King can use his limited discretion in the appointment of the Prime Minister in the following situations:- (i) If no party gets absolute majority in the House of Commons. (ii) Prime Minister dies during his tenure, or if he resigns from his office

### Functions of the Prime Minister

1. **Formation of the Cabinet-**The primary function of the Prime Minister is to form a government, and to choose and preside over the Cabinet. He gives advice to his ministerial colleagues on matters before they come to the Cabinet, and he is the main channel of communication between the Cabinet and the Sovereign.

It is for him to decide on the size of the Cabinet. He has a free hand in shaping his government according to his own view of what is likely to work best and according to his personal preferences.

- **2. Distribution of portfolios-** The allocation of offices is also done by the Prime Minister, although a minister can decline a portfolio, if he commands convincing support in the party. In 1929, Mac Donald did not want to appoint Handerson as the foreign Minister, but ultimately he had to give it to him as he was not willing to accept any other office.
- **3.To Shuffle the ministry-** The Prime Minister has the power to change the departments (portfolios) of the ministers at any time. It is his privilege to shuffle and re-shuffle his ministry any time and as many times as he may like. He can request any of his colleague to resign if his presence in the ministry is prejudicial to the efficiency or stability of the government.
- **4.Chairman of the Cabinet:** The Prime Minister is the leader of the Cabinet. He presides over its meetings. He decides the agenda of its meetings. In fact all matters in the Cabinet are decided with the approval and consent of the Prime Minister. It is up to him to accept or reject proposals for discussions in the Cabinet. All ministers conform to his views and policies.
- **5. As Coordinator - The Prime Minister acts as the guide of the Cabinet and the chief coordinator. It is his responsibility to co-ordinate the activities of all the departments and to secure co-operation amongst all government departments. He resolves all differences, among the ministers. It is his endeavour to see that the government works as a unit and the different departments do not pull in opposite directions.**
- **6Leader of the House of Commons: As the leader of the majority in the House Of Commons, the Prime Minister is also the leader of the Parliament. In this**

**capacity, it is the PM who, in consultation with the Speaker of this House of Commons, decides the agenda of the House. He makes authoritative statements and explanations of the governments policy and speaks on most important bills. In fact, the House always looks to him as the foundation of policy.**

#### Position of the Prime Minister

A study of the powers and functions of the Prime Minister of UK brings out the fact that he holds the most powerful office in the Britain. PM is the pivot of British Administration. He exercises real and formidable powers in all spheres of governmental activity—executive, legislative and financial. The Prime Minister is the captain of the ship of state, the key stone of cabinet arch, the steering wheel of government, and the moon amongst lesser stars.

Lord Morley said, “ although in Cabinet all its members stand on an equal footing, speak with one voice, and, on the rare occasions when a division is taken, are counted on the fraternal principle of one man and one vote, yet the head of the cabinet is primus inter pares, and occupies a position which so long as it lasts, is one of exceptional and peculiar authority.”