Quote of the Day

"Access to safe and affordable health care is a basic human right and a necessary condition for development"

Kofi Annan

Health sector - SE Asia



Paper - II : Essay writing



Medical oxygen is a life-saving necessity, yet around 5 billion people lack access to it, especially in South Asia and East Asia-Pacific. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep gaps in oxygen infrastructure, funding, and skilled personnel, equipment, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Sustainable solutions include local production, solarpowered systems, skilled workforce training, and strong policy frameworks. Urgent, coordinated global action is needed to make oxygen universally available, not as a privilege, but as a basic human right.

Global Oxygen Crisis

- Oxygen is a basic and essential medicine with no alternative. It is vital for treating various medical conditions, especially those affecting breathing.
- Despite its importance, 5 billion people around the world lack access to safe, affordable, and quality medical oxygen.
- South Asia and East Asia & Pacific are the worst affected regions. In South Asia, 78% of the demand for medical oxygen is unmet; in East Asia & Pacific, it's 74%.
- The COVID-19 pandemic revealed huge gaps in the oxygen supply system, especially in poorer countries. Though emergency help came during the pandemic, long-term improvements are still lacking.

Main Challenges in Oxygen Access

- **Lack of Equipment:**
 - o Only 54% of hospitals in poorer countries have pulse oximeters (devices that measure oxygen levels).
 - o Only 58% have access to medical oxygen, which makes it hard to treat patients effectively.
- Financial Barriers:
 - It will take \$6.8 billion globally to close the oxygen gap.
 - South Asia alone needs \$2.6 billion, but many countries can't afford this due to other healthcare priorities.
- Shortage of Skilled Technicians:
 - · Even when oxygen machines are installed, there aren't enough trained engineers to maintain and repair them, especially in rural areas.
- Infrastructure & Power Issues:
 - Frequent power cuts hinder oxygen production in low-resource areas.
 - Many regions still depend on imported oxygen, which increases cost and reduces availability.

Reports and Global Support

A WHO report from 2022 emphasized that governments must invest in oxygen infrastructure and create long-term policies.











- WHO has passed a resolution (called Access to Medical Oxygen Resolution) which asks countries to report progress in 2026, 2028, and 2030.
- WHO also created an "Oxygen Scorecard" to help track countries' progress.
- A good example is WHO's partnership with Nepal, which trained engineers and helped Bhutan install modern oxygen plants.

Innovations and Solutions

- Local production of oxygen should be increased to reduce dependence on foreign
- New technologies are helping, such as:
 - Portable oxygen concentrators
 - **Solar-powered** oxygen generators (good for areas with power cuts)
 - Booster pumps to move oxygen to smaller hospitals
- Countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria have successfully used solar-powered oxygen systems in remote hospitals.
- Digital tools (like real-time monitoring and prediction software) can improve the supply chain and reduce delays.

Steps to Build a Strong Oxygen System

- Governments should take the lead and include oxygen access in their regular healthcare and emergency plans.
- There should be **clear rules for oxygen** safety, storage, transport, and quality.
- Private companies should invest in local oxygen production and create cheaper, scalable solutions for poorer countries.
- Global health agencies and donors must continue funding oxygen access, even after the COVID crisis.
- Universities and researchers should develop affordable and efficient oxygen technologies.
- The issue is not just about health; it's about human rights and fairness. Oxygen should be available to every person in every country, not just the rich or urban populations.

Practice Question:

"Beyond the Pandemic: Securing the Future of Oxygen Access"

Look East to Act East

Paper - I : General Ability and Intelligence

E to be gateway for trad

urating Rising Northeast Summit, PM says region is no longer a 'frontier,' but a 'frontr wth': the region offers a wide range of economic and industrial opportunities, he po

In News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India's Northeast is no longer a "frontier region" but a "frontrunner of growth".
- The Northeast Summit Rising inaugurated to promote investment in the region's eight states.
- PM Modi emphasized the Northeast as a gateway for trade with Southeast Asia in the coming decade.
- Modi called the Northeast a "powerhouse of energy" and described it as 'Ashta Lakshmis' (eight forms of prosperity).

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Look East to Act East: (How was it started?)

Origin of the Look East Policy (LEP)

- Launched in the early 1990s after the Cold War, following the collapse of the USSR— India's key strategic partner.
- Aimed to build ties with the United States and Southeast Asian nations.
- Designed to counter China's growing influence in the region.

Strengthening ASEAN Relations under LEP

- 1992: India became a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.
- 1996: Elevated to Dialogue Partner.
- 2002: Achieved Summit-level Partnership.
- 2012: Entered into a Strategic Partnership with ASEAN.

Evolution into Act East Policy (AEP)

- Introduced in 2014, expanding beyond economic focus to include political, strategic, and cultural dimensions.
- Seeks deeper engagement with East and Southeast Asia and a broader Indo-Pacific vision.

From ASEAN to Indo-Pacific

- AEP broadens India's strategic outlook from just ASEAN to the entire Indo-Pacific.
- ASEAN remains at the core of this extended neighbourhood.
- Example: Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative launched in 2019.

Regional and Multilateral Partnerships

- Stronger ties with regional organizations like:
 - ASEAN
 - BIMSTEC
 - Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)
 - Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- Notable development: Adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter.

Institutional Cooperation with Key Nations

- Strengthened links with US, Japan, Australia, and South Korea.
- Joined initiatives such as:
 - Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)
 - Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)
- Japan supports Northeast India's connectivity through infrastructure loans.

Defence and Strategic Outreach

- 2022: Philippines became the first buyer of BrahMos shore-based missiles.
- India-Vietnam Military Logistics Pact: Mutual access to military bases and joint production.

Connectivity and Infrastructure Projects

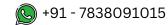
- Major initiatives include:
 - Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (Mizoram-Myanmar-Sittwe Port).
 - India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.
 - Mekong-India Economic Corridor.

Socio-Cultural and Developmental Initiatives

- Strengthening **people-to-people ties** (over 2 million diaspora).
- PM's visits to Brunei and Singapore reflect growing cultural diplomacy.

Outreach to Pacific Island Nations

- Formation of Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).
- Vaccine Maitri initiative extended to nations like Papua New Guinea.











Practice Question:

- Q. Which of the following correctly reflects the transition from India's "Look East Policy" to "Act East Policy"?
- A. The Look East Policy was launched in 2014 to engage with African nations, while the Act East Policy shifted focus to Latin America.
- B. The Look East Policy focused on East Asian countries, whereas the Act East Policy narrowed focus exclusively to ASEAN.
- C. The Look East Policy aimed at economic engagement with Southeast Asia; the Act East Policy expanded to strategic, political, and cultural engagement across the Indo-Pacific region.
- D. The Act East Policy replaced the Look East Policy by strengthening ties only with the European Union.

Students CORNER:

CAPF (Officers)



Paper - I : General Ability and Intelligence

Group A officers of CAPF should be recognised as 'organised services': SC





The Supreme Court ruled that Group A officers (senior officers) of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)-like CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB-should be treated as part of an Organised Group A Service (OGAS), like IAS or IPS.

Key Benefits for CAPF Officers:

1. Faster Promotions

- Earlier, promotions were very delayed-25-30 years for a rank that should come in 13-21 years.
- Now, career progression will speed up.

2. Equal Treatment with IPS

- CAPF officers will no longer be sidelined by IPS officers who were often posted in top CAPF ranks (like IG, DIG).
- These IPS posts will now gradually be reduced in CAPFs over 2 years.

3. Cadre Review in 6 Months

 The structure of posts will be revised to open more opportunities for CAPF officers at senior levels.

4. Better Retirement and Pension Benefits

 As OGAS members, officers will get improved pay scales, pensions, and service perks similar to other elite services.

5. More Dignity and Motivation

· Recognising their service as OGAS brings more respect, identity, and professional satisfaction.

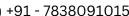
Practice Question:

- Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs):
- 1. The Supreme Court recently ruled that Group A officers of the CAPFs should be recognised as part of Organised Group A Services (OGAS) for all purposes.
- 2. The recruitment of officers in CAPFs at the level of Assistant Commandant is done through the Indian Police Service (IPS).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2















Integrated Theatre Commands & CDS



Paper - I : General Ability and Intelligence

Creation of theatre commands will kick-start next generation of reforms



- · General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), has outlined the restructuring plan in his new book:
- "Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the Transformation of India's Military" (released recently).

Core Idea of ITC:

- The restructuring aims to create Integrated Theatre Commands to streamline operational effectiveness.
- Two key components:
 - Force Application → under Theatre Commanders (operational role).
 - Force Generation → under Service Chiefs (responsible for "Raise, Train, and Sustain" or RTS functions).

Mandate of the CDS:

- To facilitate **integration and restructuring** of India's armed forces.
- **Ensure jointness** among the Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- Oversee the creation of joint operational structures and geography-centric theatre commands.

Practice Question:

- Q. Which of the following books, authored by the current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, outlines a vision for transforming India's military, including the creation of Integrated Theatre Commands?
- A) Mission Military: India's Defence Future
- B) War Doctrine and Strategy
- C) Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the Transformation of India's Military
- D) Strategic Forces of a New India

CHAGOS ISLANDS



Paper - I : General Ability and Intelligence

U.K.'s Chagos Islands deal with Mauritius risks entrenching exile of some islanders



In News:

- Agreement Details:
 - British PM Keir Starmer announced the handover of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.
 - In return, Britain retains control over the U.S.-U.K. military base on Diego Garcia.

Human Rights Concern:

- Human Rights Watch (HRW) criticized the U.K.-Mauritius deal.
- It may entrench the exile of Chagossians from Diego Garcia, the largest island.
- HRW termed the forcible displacement of Chagossians (1960s) as an "ongoing colonial crime against humanity".

Lease & Financial Terms:

The U.K. will pay Mauritius £101 million annually for 99 years to lease the Diego Garcia base.



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Column A: Islands	Column B: Location/Significance
1. Chagos Islands	A. Located near eastern coast of Africa, important for maritime trade route control
2. Andaman and Nicobar Islands	B. Situated in the central Indian Ocean, strategic military access between Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia
3. Lakshadweep Islands	C. Located in the Bay of Bengal, close to the eastern coast of India
4. Seychelles Islands	D. Located in the Arabian Sea, known for natural beauty and tourism
) 1-B, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A) 1-A, 2-C, 3-D, 4-B) 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-D) 1-C, 2-A, 3-B, 4-D	

Last D3 Solutions:

Q: 1 - C Q: 2 - A



