



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

A medical oxygen access gap SE Asia must bridge

In a life-saving essential, the health sector faces a complex challenge: ensuring access to medical oxygen. In South Asia and East Asia-Pacific, around 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable, and quality medical oxygen. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep gaps in oxygen infrastructure, equipment, funding, and skilled personnel, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Sustainable solutions include local production, solar-powered 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:**
 - Only **54% of hospitals** in poorer countries have **pulse oximeters** (devices that measure oxygen levels).
 - 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.

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, equipment, funding, and skilled personnel, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Sustainable solutions include local production, solar-powered 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.

Students CORNER:

- 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.

Students **CORNER:**

Innovations and Solutions

- **Local production** of oxygen should be **increased** to reduce dependence on foreign supply.
- **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 trade with Southeast Asia: Modi

inaugurating Rising Northeast Summit, PM says region is no longer a 'frontier' but a 'frontrunner of growth'; the region offers a wide range of economic and industrial opportunities, he pointed out.

By Bhattacharjee
DELHI

India's Northeast is not a "frontier region" any more, it is the "frontier of growth", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, pitching for investments in the region that constitute the "new dreams" for the region. He said, adding that the region would be a gateway for trade with Southeast Asia in the next decade.



Manifesting a dream: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the Rising Northeast Summit 2025 in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

to close land ports with Bangladesh. Officials have said that the decision will provide the Northeast a level playing field to develop the commercial potential of its own supply chains, and an impetus to manufacture competitively. The Prime Minister paid

tribute to the diversity of the region, reflected in its products and people. "India is termed as the most diverse nation in the world. But our Northeast is the most diverse part of our diverse nation. From trade to tradition, textile to tourism, Northeast's diver-

sity is a very big strength of the region," Mr. Modi said. He listed the bio-economy, bamboo, tea, precious minerals, sports tourism as some areas where the region is an emerging hub. "Northeast is the powerhouse of energy," said Mr. Modi, describing the region as Lakshmi's or the eight forms of Goddess Lakshmi. He said the Northeast would emerge as a strong bridge of trade with Southeast Asia, working on the infrastructure to that goal. Mr. Modi

In News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India's Northeast is no longer a **"frontier region" but a "frontrunner of growth"**.
- The Rising Northeast Summit was 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).**

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.

Students **CORNER:**

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Practice Question:

Q. Which of the following correctly reflects the transition from India's "Look East Policy" to "Act East Policy"?

- The Look East Policy was launched in 2014 to engage with African nations, while the Act East Policy shifted focus to Latin America.
- The Look East Policy focused on East Asian countries, whereas the Act East Policy narrowed focus exclusively to ASEAN.
- 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.
- 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



In News:

- 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:

- 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.
- 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.**
- Cadre Review in 6 Months**
 - The structure of posts will be revised to **open more opportunities for CAPF officers** at senior levels.
- Better Retirement and Pension Benefits**
 - As OGAS members, officers will get improved pay scales, pensions, and service perks similar to other elite services.
- 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):

- 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.
- 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?

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

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Integrated Theatre Commands & CDS

Paper - I : General Ability and Intelligence

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



In News:

- 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?

- Mission Military: India's Defence Future
- War Doctrine and Strategy
- Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the Transformation of India's Military
- 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**.

Students CORNER:



Students CORNER:

Match the Islands (Column A) with their Location/Significance (Column B):

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

- A) 1-B, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A
B) 1-A, 2-C, 3-D, 4-B
C) 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-D
D) 1-C, 2-A, 3-B, 4-D

Last D3 Solutions:

Q: 1 - C
Q: 2 - A

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