

Q.1.

The Middle East has been victim of geostrategic location, however its geoeconomic position has a potential to play constructive role regionally and globally. Discuss

1.

Preamble:-

Abdelwahab Al-Afendi, a prominent author at Al-Jazeera, says

"The Middle East is a gravity of earth having both harms and privileges in its geostrategic position, rich in natural resources and lacking human security."

It is confluence of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Historically, the Middle East remains a bone of contention between superpowers and revisionist powers. After the disintegration of Ottoman Empire and induction of Jews in Arab land via Balfour Declaration, the region has become a battle ground among major powers. The current war between Gaza and Israel and Yemen crisis signify it. Meanwhile, the region is also blessed with human capital and

natural resources, making it a golden hen.
The region export largest portion of oil and gas worldwide.

2. Geographical Location of Middle East:-



Middle east exist between Asia and Africa. Red Sea connect with mediterranean sea via Suez Canal. It also touches India Ocean from eastern side.

3 Middle East Region: Victim of Geostrategic

Location:-

i) Threat of Israel's Expansionism:

The growing assertiveness of Israel in this region depicts its expansionist tendencies. It has captured many areas of neighbouring Syria, Gaza, Lebanon, and West Bank. Benjamin Netanyahu says in UN address

"Israel has right to reclaim the lands of its ancestors from occupied Arabs"

ii) Yemen crisis and Houthi's attacks:

Yemen is a burning issue in Middle East since 2014. Houthi's attacks and losing power grip of government has pushed this region into as-a-whole uncertainty. The UNESCO says

"Millions of ignored-children are living in Yemen under the shadow of bombs and blasts"

iii) Shia-Suni divide among countries:

Shia-Suni conflict is a major ~~next~~ reason behind uncertainty and mutual conflict in the Middle East. Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia has always cold relations with Shia-dominated Iran. Both countries had suspended their diplomatic relations with each other before revival in 2023. China played a mediating role.

iv) Historic wars among countries

Religious and ideological driven wars have been a part of bleak history of this region. The Iraq-Iran war and Iraq-Kuwait wars were significant event that shaped discourses of Middle East.

v) Foreign military interventions in Middle East:-

The military interventions by US-led forces in the middle East have made it victim of geostrategic location.

The military intervention of USA in Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011 destabilized the whole region and put the people further towards poverty and insolvency.

vi) Revolutions and Overthrown Governments:

The small and medium movement further created instability in the region. Starting from Arab Spring in 2011 to current toppling of Assad Regime in Syria by revolutionary forces have made the region victim of its geostrategic location.

4. Regional and Global Impacts of Uncertainty in Middle East:

The Middle East is a significant player in world politics. The uncertainty in this region will destabilize the whole region - especially Muslim World. Moreover, the global oil and gas crisis may emerge if uncertainty prevails in the region. Following are perceived threats of uncertainty:

1. \Rightarrow Rise in Shia-Sunni conflicts
2. \Rightarrow Mushroom growth of terrorism
3. \Rightarrow May lead towards wider war ...
4. \Rightarrow May harm global supply chain

5) Geo-economic Significance of Middle East:

i) Oil rich region:

The Arab region is an oil rich region. All countries except few majorly depend upon oil export. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, and Iraq are few examples of oil rich countries. World Trade Organization says

“Saudi Aramco has largest share in world oil production, making it the world's largest oil exporting giant.”

ii) Largest Gas production:

Qatar is the largest gas producing country followed by Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran. Its exports mainly rely on gas production, ensuring sustainable

gas supply to the region and the world.

iii) Saudi Arabian — a custodian of Holy Mosques:

Saudi Arabia is a host of billions of Muslim pilgrims worldwide. Its geo-economic worth make a strong bond among all Muslims worldwide. Every year, millions of Muslim gather to perform Haji and Umrah.

iv) Iraq-Iran: Place of Holy Shrines.

Each year million of Muslim gather at the Holy Shrines of Hazrat Husain (AS) and Hazrat Ali (RA) to perform solidarity with each other and follow their path toward acquiring ultimate justice.

v) Middle East: Connecting multiple Continents.

Middle East region is at the hotspot of Europe, South Asia and

Africa, providing them greater connectivity.
Moreover, the Red Sea also connects Indian Ocean with Mediterranean through Suez Canal.

6) Regional and Global Significance of Geo-economics of Middle East:

The geo-economic significance of Middle East has far reaching impacts on region and the world.

- 1- Sustainable supply of oil and gas
- 2- Unite Muslim Ummah on religious tourism
- 3- Provide greater connectivity
- 4- Its geo-economic significance mark it a mini-Europe.

7) Conclusion:

The Middle East is a significant part of Asia which provide harm as well as privileges to

its own people and the people of region.
The ongoing war in Gaza and Yemen, and
prevailing humanitarian dilemma in Iraq
and Syria are ultimate result of its
geostrategic location. Moreover, the oil rich region
provide sustainable supply of natural
resources of to region and world collectively.
It is need of hour to maintain peace
in the region to ensure greater peace in
the world.