



# Suez Canal

## Why in News

A large cargo ship named 'Ever Given' got stuck near the southern end of the Suez Canal due to a mishap caused by bad weather.

- This is causing a huge jam of vessels at either end of the vital international trade artery.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- The Suez Canal is an **artificial sea-level waterway** running north to south across the Isthmus of Suez in **Egypt**, to **connect the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**.
- The canal **separates the African continent from Asia**.
- It provides the **shortest maritime route** between Europe and the lands lying around the Indian and western Pacific oceans.
- It is **one of the world's most heavily used shipping lanes**, carrying over **12% of world trade by volume**.
  - It provides a **crucial link for oil, natural gas and cargo** being shipped from East to West.
  - As per Suez Canal Authority (SCA) data, in 2020, nearly **19,000 ships**, or an average of **51.5 ships per day**, with a net **tonnage of 1.17 billion tonnes** passed through the canal.
- The canal is a **major source of income for Egypt's economy**, with the African country earning USD 5.61 billion in revenues from it last year.
  - In **2015**, Egypt announced plans to further expand the Suez Canal, aiming to reduce waiting times and double the number of ships that can use the canal daily by **2023**.

### ▪ History:

- The Suez Canal is actually the **first canal that directly links the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea**. It was **opened for navigation in November 1869**.
- The 150-year-old canal was **controlled by British and French interests in its initial years**, but was **nationalised in 1956 by Egypt**.
  - **Suez Crisis**, international crisis in the Middle East, precipitated in July 1956, when the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal. The canal had been owned by the Suez Canal Company, which was controlled by French and British interests.
- The Canal **was closed five times**; the last time was the most serious one since it lasted for 8 years. The Canal was then reopened for navigation in June 1975.



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