

# Suez Canal

[UPSC Notes]

## What is Suez Canal?

Suez Canal is a vital pathway to ship cargo, oil, and natural gas from east to west. It is heard that around 19,000 ships, or an average of 51.5 ships daily, with a net 1.17 billion tonnes departed through the canal as per Suez Canal Authority (SCA) data in 2020.

The Suez Canal is a significant source of revenue for Egypt's economy. Also, the previous year, African countries earned approximately USD 5.61 billion using this canal. In the year 2015, there were plans to extend the Suez canal by Egypt that aimed the following by 2023:

- Lower the waiting times for trading and transfer.
- Around a twofold number of ships can utilize the canal daily, which can result in increasing the overall revenue for the Government.

## Suez Canal - Brief History

The Suez Canal is the first canal directly connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. It got opened in November 1869 for navigation. The canal was built 150 years ago supervised by British and French interests initially, but in 1956 it was nationalized by Egypt.

An international emergency in the Middle East poured in July 1956, known as the Suez Crisis. During that scenario, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian president, took over the Suez Canal nationally.

- In the early years, the canal was under the control of the Suez Canal Company, which was handled by French and British interests.
- It is known that the Suez Canal shut 5 times, and the longest duration for which it was closed lasted 8 years long.
- In June 1975, the Suez canal got reopened for travelling and trading.

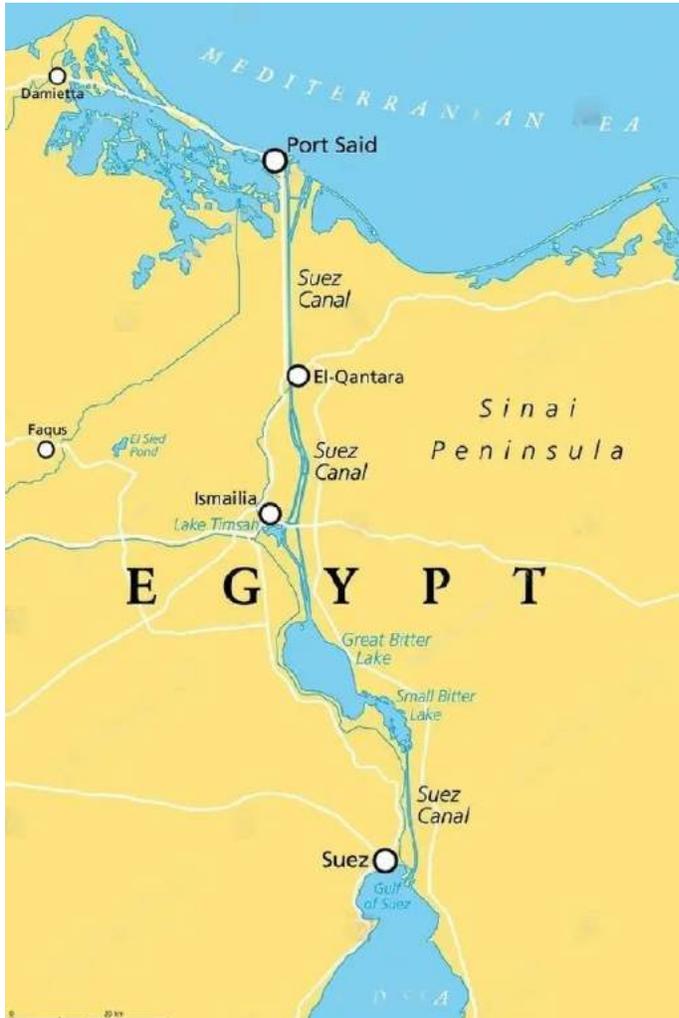
## Which two seas are connected by the Suez canal?

The Suez canal seas include the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, wherein both are connected with the help of the channel. Around 50 ships, which carry consumer products, be it cars to oil to animals, efficiently pass through the significant stretch of the Suez Canal each day.

The Suez Canal is located in Egypt, linking the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea through the Egyptian city of Suez on the Red Sea. The Suez Canal waterway runs north to south across the Isthmus of Suez in Egypt. The path of this canal enables direct shipping of goods between European and Asian countries.

## Suez Canal Map

Suez Canal Map extends from Port Said to Port Tewfik. The other places that can be seen on the map of the Suez Canal are El Ballah Bypass, Lake Timsah, Great Bitter Lake and the City of Suez.



## Suez Canal Blockage - Latest Update

A large shipment termed 'Ever Given' got trapped near the southern part of the Suez Canal due to poor weather conditions. This situation resulted in a huge jam of crafts at one end of the important multinational trade route.

The large container ship was 400-metre-long and flowed grounded on 23rd March while travelling north from the Red Sea towards the Mediterranean. This shipment twisted diagonally across the diameter of the canal. The canal is in Egypt and it links Port Said on the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean through the Suez city on the Red Sea.

What resulted in Suez Canal Crisis?

It took 10 years to build the Suez canal in the mid of 1800. One container ship, known as the “Ever Given” became a barrier in March 2021. The result of this was the breakdown of global trade. The 400-meter “Ever Given” ship got twisted diagonally across the width of the Suez canal.

The crisis affected around 100 million residents of Egypt. The major cause of the crisis was Nationalisation.

- The Israeli forces smashed with the French and British forces due to delays in transportation on 29th October 1956.
- The French and British army was successful in capturing Port Fuad and Said. Also, Israelis were effectively able to take control over the Sinai Peninsula too.
- A joint attack on the canal area resulted in the complete loss of power for Egyptian forces, but Nasser assembled his army and fought for it.
- The Soviet Union and the Egyptians' associates were left with some time to answer back because of the delay in the invasion.
- The Egyptian forces obtained bullets and required arms from the Soviet Union, which was enthusiastic to acquire impact in the Middle East.
- A popular Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, called to handle the crisis at a UN Security Council meeting. He intimated throwing nuclear missiles at the Western part of Europe if the French-British-Israeli armies did not step back early.
- The US punished the Soviets as they discussed the nuclear war and threatened France, the United Kingdom, and Israel by boycotting their finances. This resulted in the withdrawal of the Suez canal by British and French forces in 1956.

During the time of the Suez canal crisis, United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) or the armed force was shipped to the region to look upon the end of aggressiveness and the departure of the three inhabiting forces.