

CURRENT ISSUES WRITING PRACTICE

PRE-TEST MATERIAL FOR CIWP – V

Choke points of the World

Why in News?

Like a blood clot in an artery, the enormous container ship was stuck in the Suez Canal, cutting off the flow of goods at a crucial byway in the world's circulatory system of trade. On Monday, March 29, the vessel finally was "successfully refloated." The 1,300-foot-long vessel, the Ever Given, initially became lodged in the waterway. While jammed in the canal, the ship had delayed hundreds of other vessels, the AP reported, and cost billions of dollars daily while it impeded traffic.

Connectedness to the Syllabus:

Essay: UPSC may ask candidates to write an essay on the issue of international maritime cold warfare, choke points of the global trade, and the issues related to it.

General Studies I:

- History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.— their forms and effect on the society.
- Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.
- Effects of globalization on Indian society.
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
- Salient features of world's physical geography.
- Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).
- Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone Government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply. etc., geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

General Studies II:

- India and its neighbourhood- relations.
- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.
- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

General Studies III:

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
- Government Budgeting.
- Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, - different types of irrigation
- and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

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- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.
- Food processing and related industries in India- scope' and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
- Land reforms in India.
- Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
- Investment models.
- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.
- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology
- and issues relating to intellectual property rights.
- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.
- Disaster and disaster management.
- Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
- Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.
- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.
- Security challenges and their management in border areas - linkages of organized crime with terrorism.
- Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Article Links:

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/china-goes-to-school-in-understanding-suez-canal-choke-point-with-one-eye-on-strait-of-malacca-9475451.html>

<https://scroll.in/article/990971/three-takeaways-from-the-suez-canal-blockage>

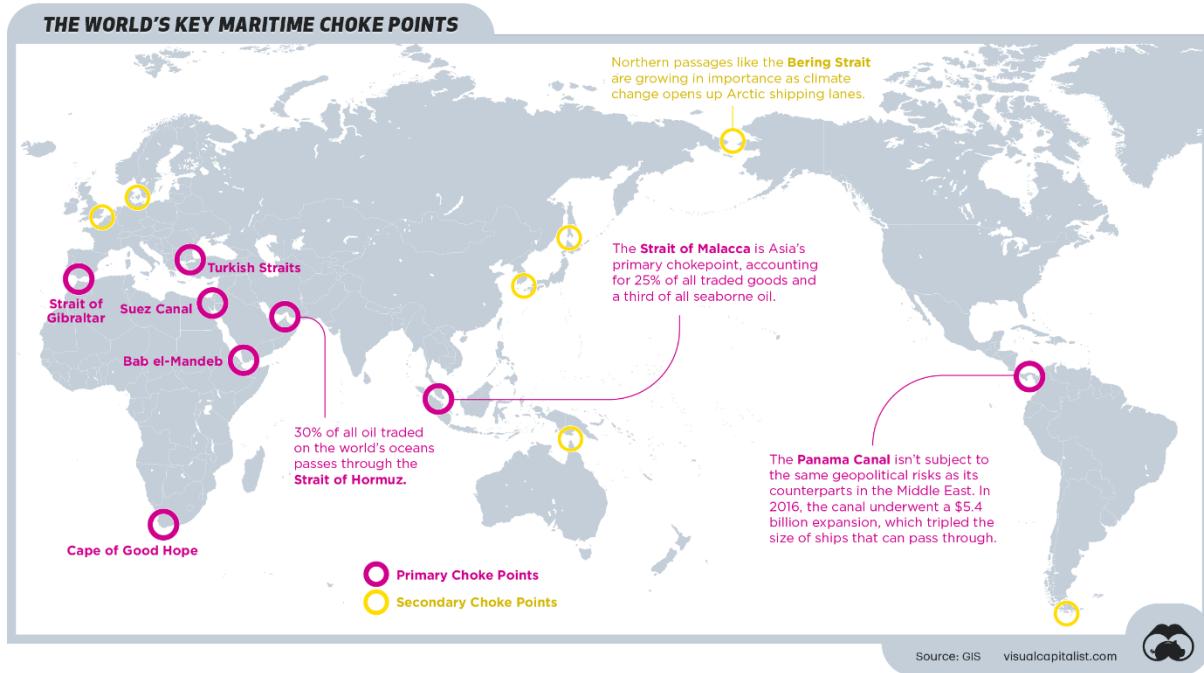
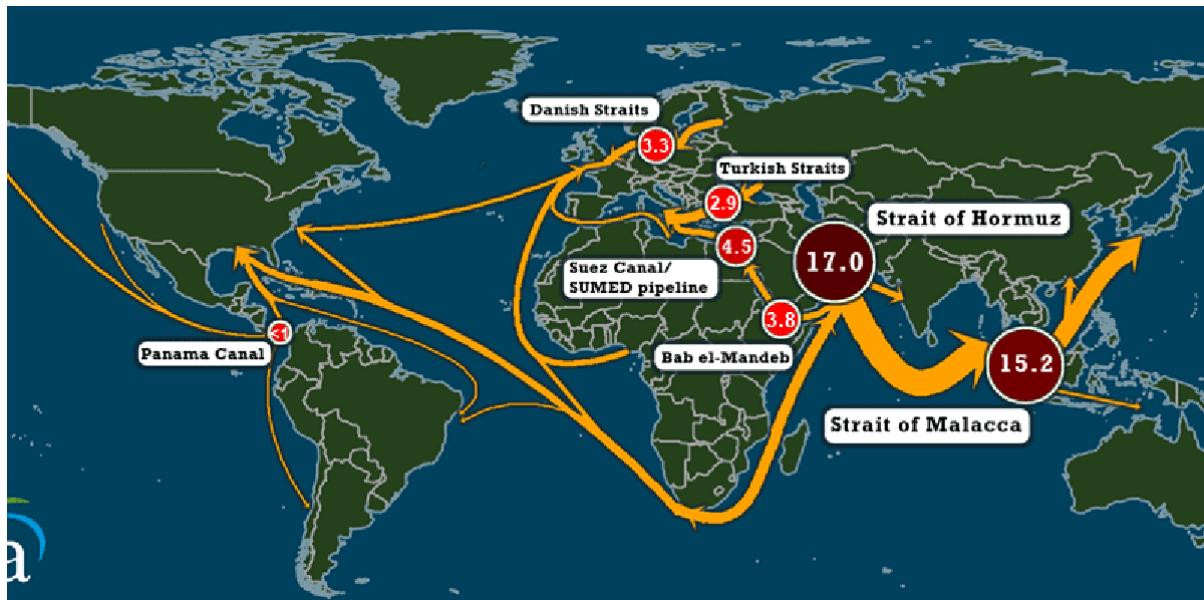
<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapping-the-worlds-key-maritime-choke-points/>

<https://www.marineinsight.com/marine-navigation/what-are-maritime-chokepoints/>

Maps and Images:

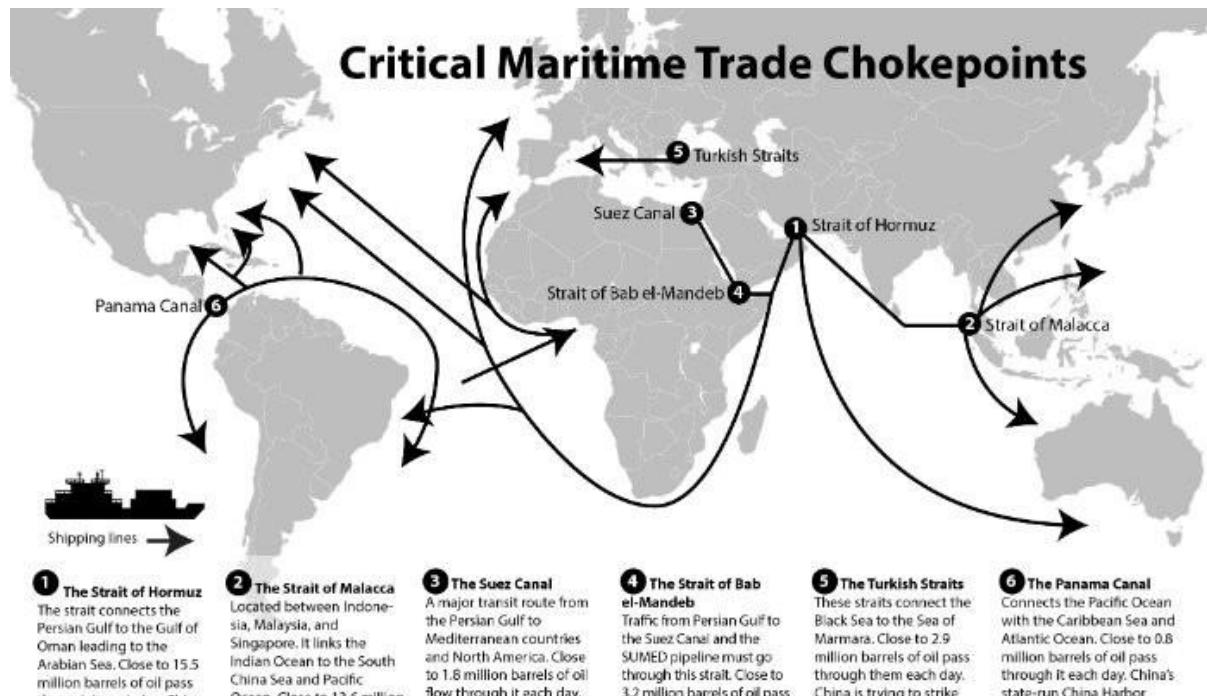
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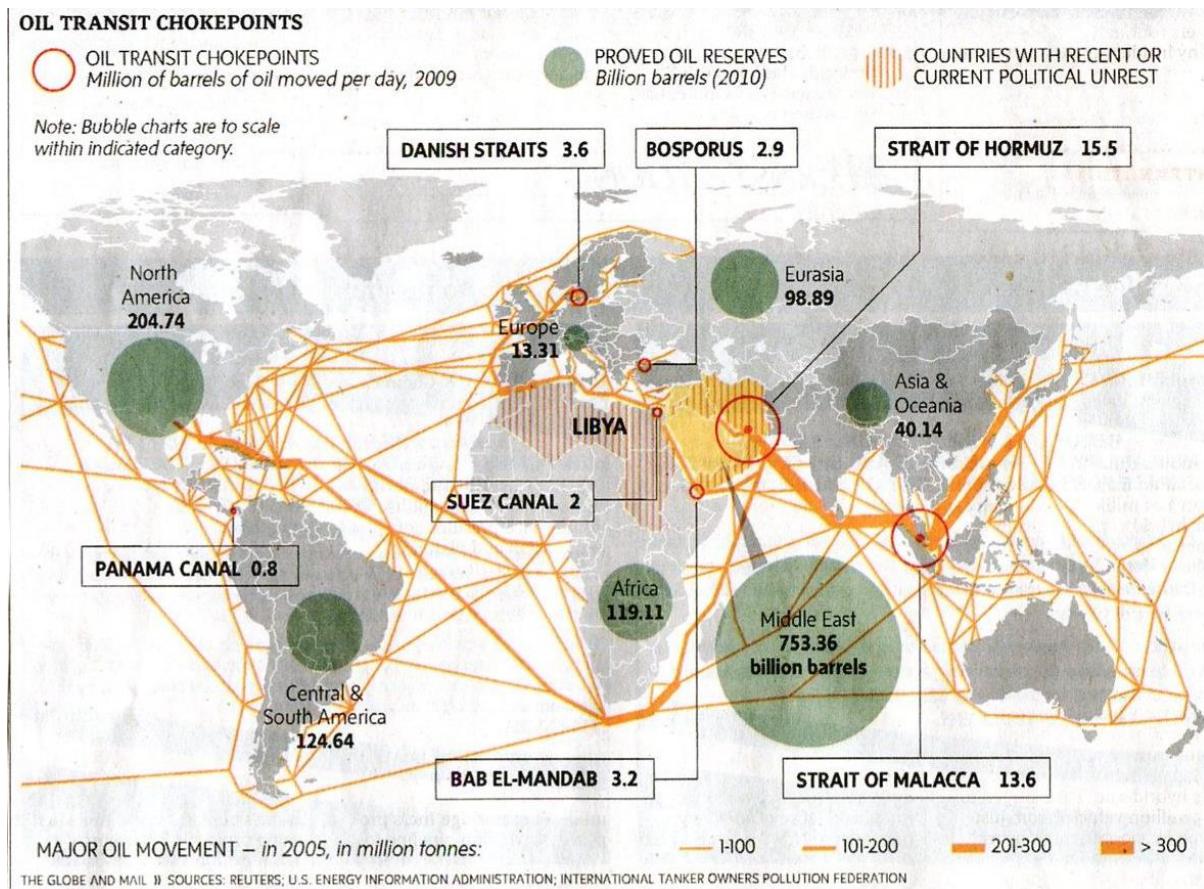
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Video Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0plyidoi4M>

Fiscal Federalism (XVth Finance Commission)

Why in News?

Since its constitution on November 27, 2017, the Fifteenth Finance Commission's Terms of Reference evoked concerns from some states owing to its mandate for the use of population data from census 2011 instead of 1971. There were also issues like creation of non-lapsable defence fund and use of certain parameters for performance incentives that induced debates in the span of its operation. Besides, it was the first Commission to submit its report in times of a global pandemic that had slowed down economic growth and made the assessment of revenues difficult.

Connectedness to the Syllabus:

Essay: UPSC may ask candidates to write an essay on the issue of the distribution of the proceeds from the taxes and the equitable distribution of the resources among the states of the Indian Union.

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General Studies I:

- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
- Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.
- Effects of globalization on Indian society.
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

General Studies II:

- Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.
- Government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply.
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.
- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger.
- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.
- Role of civil services in a democracy.

General Studies III:

- Land reforms in India.
- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
- Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Article Links:

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<https://fincomindia.nic.in/#:~:text=Set%20up%20under%20Article%20280,of%20these%20taxes%20among%20States.>

<https://medium.com/@nidhitambi/how-the-15th-finance-commission-terms-of-reference-itor-impact-fiscal-federalism-in-the-country-802e5b608fab>

<https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/explained-how-modi-led-nda-government-has-shown-propensity-for-bold-moves/1708095/>

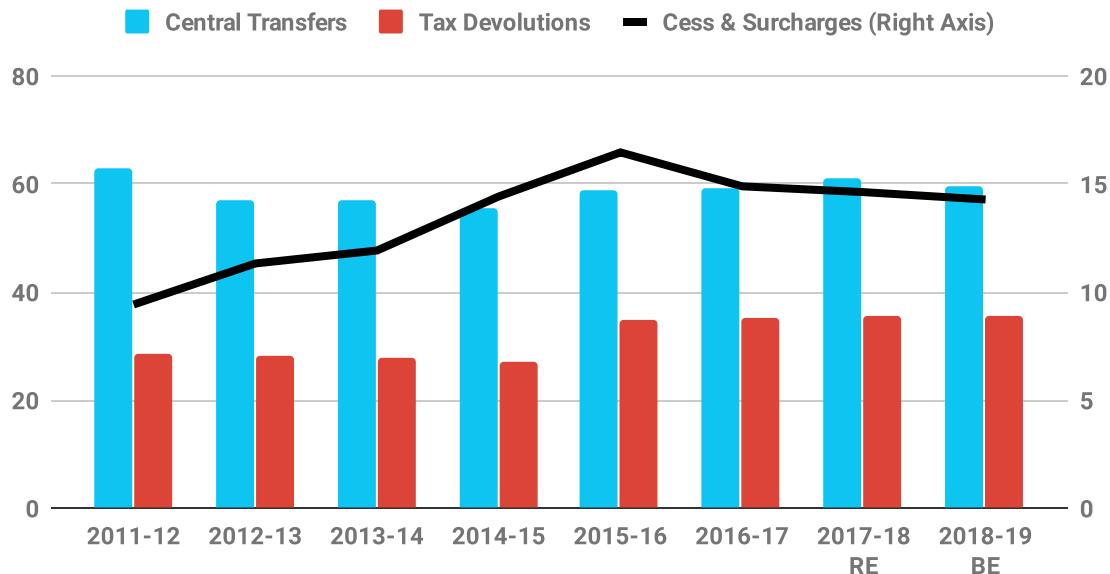
<https://thewire.in/government/fiscal-federalism-finance-commission-states-taxes>

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/opinion-the-best-way-to-reform-india-s-architecture-of-fiscal-federalism-1568888510590.html>

<https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/15th-finance-commission-getting-ready-for-the-new-normal/2196080/>

Maps and Images:

Figure 5: Central Transfers, Devolution and Cesses & Surcharges (% of GTR)



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Figure 1: General & Specific Purpose Transfers (% of Total Transfers from the centre to states)

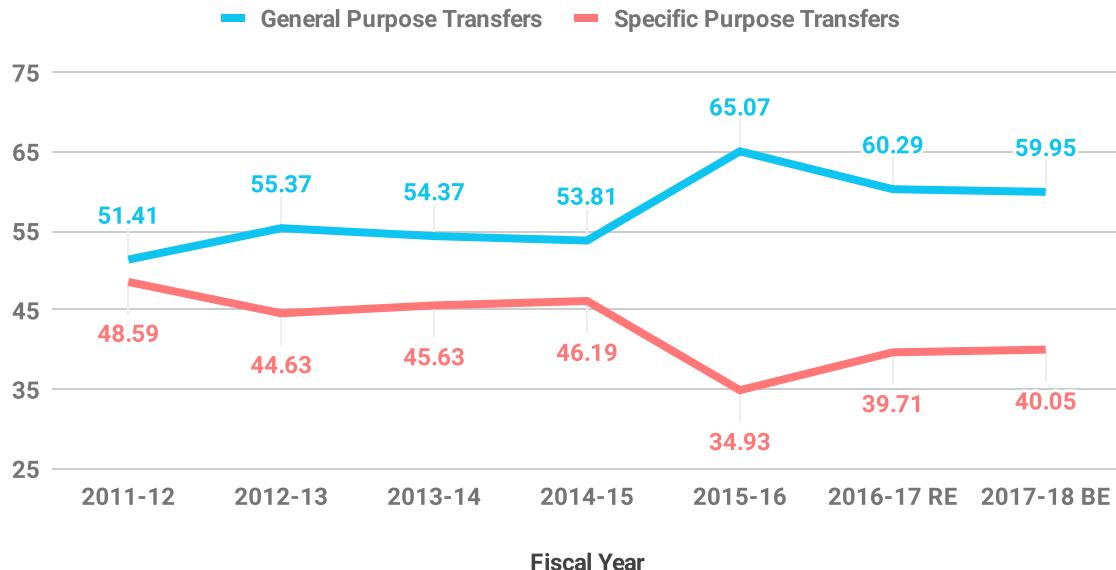
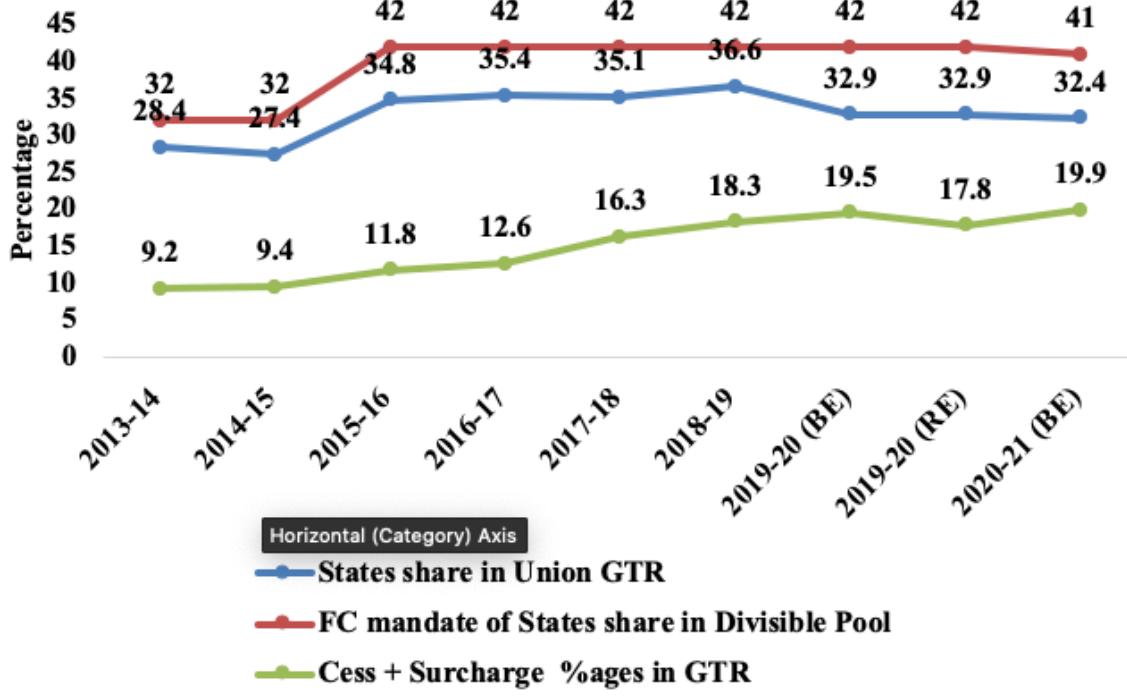


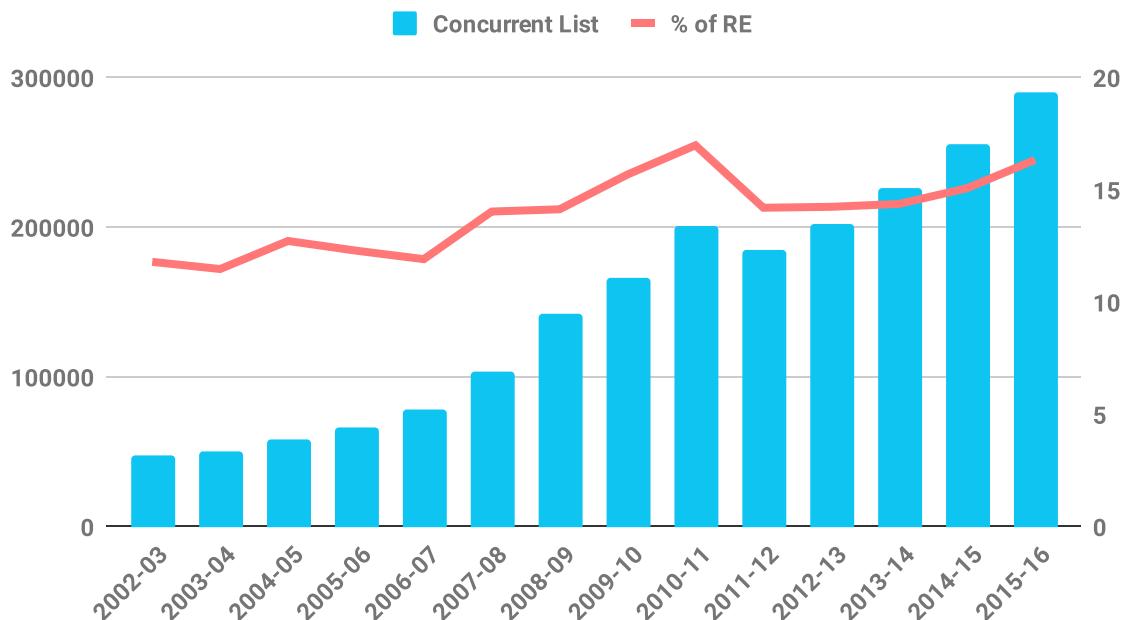
Figure 3: Trend of States share in Union GTR



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Figure 3: Share of Union government's Revenue Expenditure on Concurrent List subjects



Video Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKNKqYkDAGw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGEW9KtaKfY>

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment

Why in News?

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill (MTP) received the president's assent and was notified by the Central government on March 25, 2021. The Bill amends the MTP Act 1971, which regulates the conditions under which a pregnancy may be aborted. The amendments to the new Bill increase the time period within which an abortion can be legally conducted.

Connectedness to the Syllabus:

Essay: UPSC may ask candidates to write an essay on the issues of surrogacy, medical termination of pregnancy amendment act etc.

General Studies I:

- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
- Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

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- Effects of globalization on Indian society.
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

General Studies II:

- Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.
- Government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply.
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.
- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger.
- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.
- Role of civil services in a democracy.

General Studies III:

- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
- Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Article Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1705381>

<https://thewire.in/health/medical-termination-of-pregnancy-amendment-bill-women-abortions>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/medical-termination-of-pregnancy-bill-passed-7241943/>

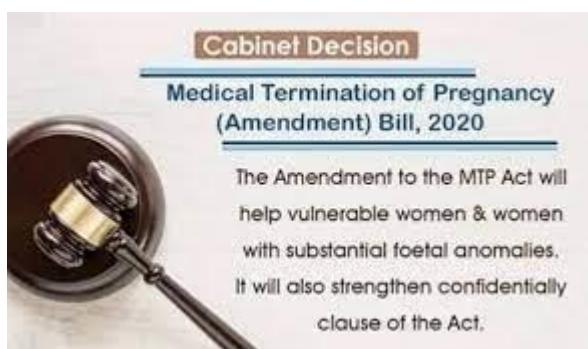
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<https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-medical-termination-of-pregnancy-amendment-bill-2020>

Maps and Images:



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The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Salient features of amendment

- Enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women
- Opinion of only one provider will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation & of two providers for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks.
- Upper gestation limit not to apply in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by Medical Board.
- Name & other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be revealed except to a person authorised in any law.
- Ground of failure of contraceptive extended to women & her partner.

OPERATION SAFE

7 million abortions are conducted a year in India

Only 50% of these operations are legal

8% of women opting for abortion die due to complications arising from unsafe procedures

22 million unsafe abortions are reported globally every year

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HOW RESTRICTIVE ARE ABORTION LAWS?

● Stage till abortion is legal ● Exception

US <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Any stage● None	UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 24 weeks● Depends on risks
AUSTRALIA <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Any stage● States have own laws	CANADA <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 24 weeks● Doctors advice
FRANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 14 weeks● Depends on risks	GERMANY <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 12 weeks● Up to 23 weeks if doctors advice
JAPAN <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Not allowed● Depends on risks	BRAZIL <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Not allowed● Depends on risks

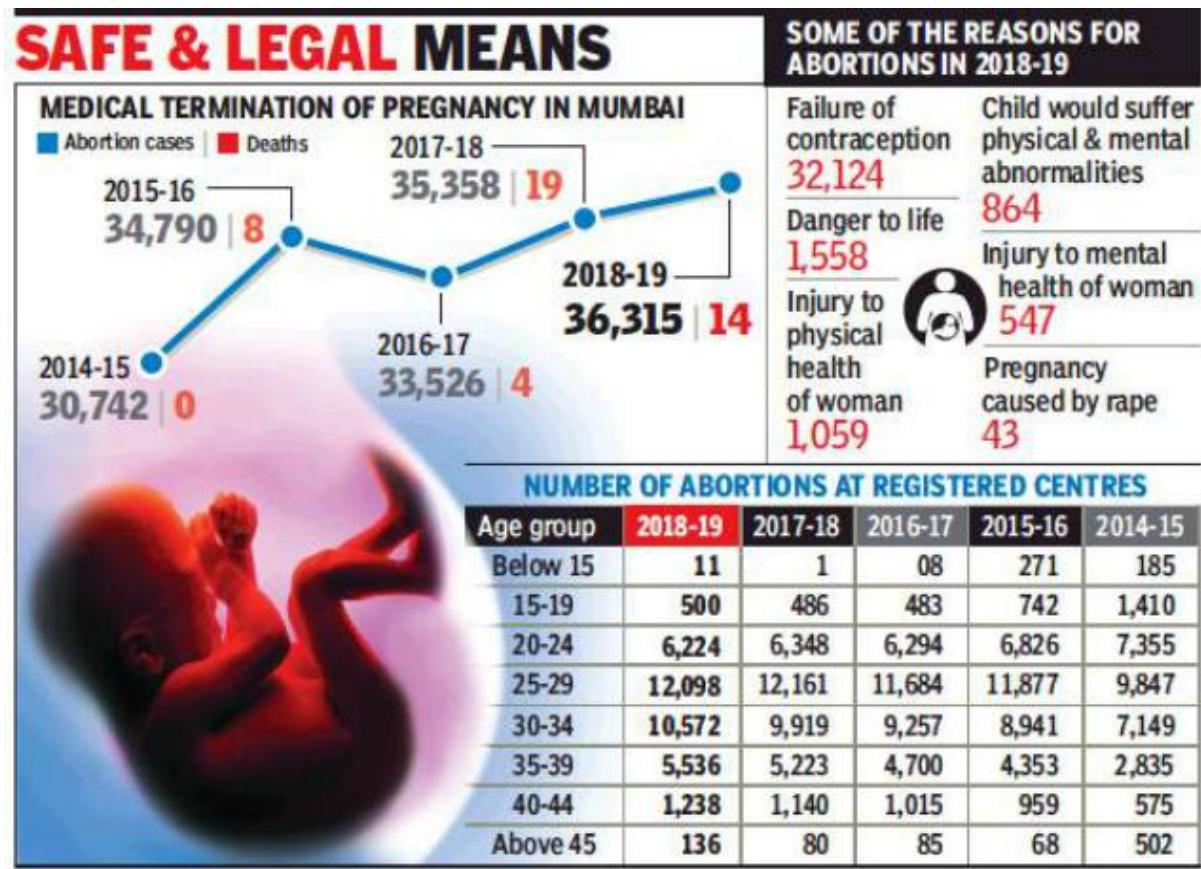
INDIA: Abortion is legal till **20 weeks**

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Video Links:

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