

# A New Lane For Panama Canal

The Panama Canal can now accommodate vessels that are longer, wider and heavier than before, thanks to a new expansion that was seven years in the making. On June 26, a Chinese container ship will become the first commercial vessel to pass from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific through the new lane



## The original canal

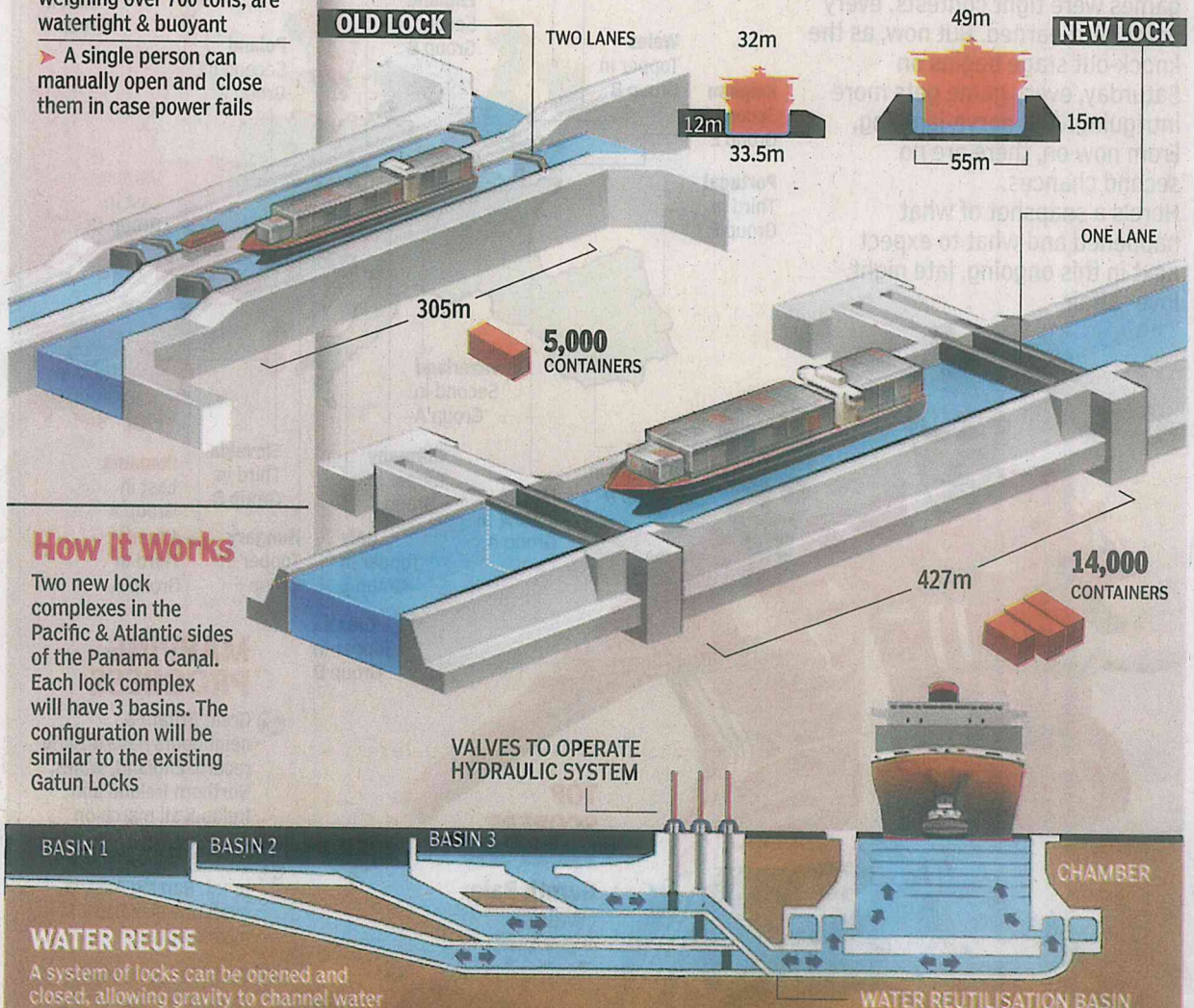
- > Opened in 1914, the US-made Panama Canal remains to be an engineering marvel and a vital artery nourishing the world economy
- > Ships glide through on a 50-mile water bridge
- > 6 lock gates, some weighing over 700 tons, are watertight & buoyant
- > A single person can manually open and close them in case power fails

## The Expansion Plan

Over the decades, the canal made Panama a major banking, trading & airline hub. China's economic ascent, meanwhile, ushered in a new era. Ships became bigger. The more cargo they carried, the lower the cost. By 2000, new giant ships could not pass through the canal, forcing the canal authority plan a bigger one

## The New Canal

Constructed by an international consortium led by Spain's Sacyr infrastructure company that won the project in July 2009. The \$5.5 bn expansion doubles the canal's cargo capacity. A new lane with two new locks large enough to accommodate ships carrying up to 14,000 containers, compared to the current 5,000



## How It Works

Two new lock complexes in the Pacific & Atlantic sides of the Panama Canal. Each lock complex will have 3 basins. The configuration will be similar to the existing Gatun Locks

## WATER REUSE

A system of locks can be opened and closed, allowing gravity to channel water from one basin to the next

## A RISKY BET?

A New York Times probe, based on dozens of interviews with contractors, canal workers, maritime experts and diplomats, as well as a review of public and internal records, has put the new canal in the dock

The new canal's safety, construction quality and economic viability in doubt

Failed to meet expectations on enough water need, durable

concrete and locks big enough to accommodate giant ships

Water began gushing through concrete last year

Locks are too small to let tugboats safely escort the larger ships

14 new Spanish tugboats are so unstable that they operate best going backward, something that can't be done while towing ships through the canal

## CANAL AUTHORITY SAYS...

...while any large, complex project is bound to encounter unexpected problems, the new locks are sound and safe

