

## General

### Suez expansion to be operational in first quarter, canal chairman says

The new stretch of the Suez Canal near Egypt's Little Bitter Lake will be operational in the first quarter of this year, the chairman of the canal authority Osama Rabie said on Tuesday.

In a statement, Rabie said the navy would reissue navigational maps after adding the 10-km (6.2 mile) extension to the canal.

Egypt said on Saturday it had successfully tested the new 10-km stretch near the canal's southern end, developed despite a drop in revenue due to Houthi attacks on vessels in the Red Sea.

The Suez Canal Authority confirmed two ships had passed through the new section during a trial run without incident.

Following the 2021 grounding of the container ship Ever Given that blocked the vital waterway for six days, Egypt accelerated plans to extend the second channel in the southern reaches of the canal and widen the existing channel.

According to the Suez Canal Authority, the latest expansion extends the total length of the canal's two-way section to 82 km from a previous 72 km. The canal is 193 km long in total.

Egypt's Suez Canal connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and is the fastest way to ship fuel, food and consumer goods from Asia and the Middle East to Europe.

Shippers use the route to ferry as much as one-third of all global container cargo, including toys, tennis shoes, furniture and frozen food.