

Vizhinjam Port Welcomes Its First Mothership: A New Era for India's Deepwater Transshipment Hub

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What's in today's article?

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- Why India needs a container transshipment port?
- What is Vizhinjam International Seaport Project?
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Why in News?

India's **first deepwater transshipment port, the Vizhinjam international seaport** near Thiruvananthapuram, received its first mothership (a mothership refers to a large cargo vessel that acts as a central hub for the transshipment of goods.).

The **MV San Fernando**, carrying 2,000 containers, was given a grand welcome at the port. The berthing of the ship was part of a trial run at the port before it is slated to open for commercial operations.

What is Deepwater transshipment port?

- **Deepwater port**

- A deepwater port is a manmade structure that are used as ports or terminals to transport, store, or handle oil or natural gas.
- These structures can be fixed or floating, and are located beyond state seaward boundaries.
- They can include: Pipelines, Pumping stations, Service platforms, Mooring buoys.

- **Transshipment port**

- A transshipment port is a port where goods are offloaded and loaded onto a different ship to continue their journey to their final destination.

Why India needs a container transshipment port?

- **Lacks infrastructure to deal with ultra-large container ships**

- India has **13 major ports**. However, the country lacks a landside mega-port and terminal infrastructure to deal with ultra-large container ships.
- Hence, nearly 75 per cent of India's transshipment cargo is handled at ports **outside India, mainly Colombo, Singapore, and Klang**.
- In fiscal 2021-22, the total transshipment cargo of India was about 4.6 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), out of which about 4.2 million TEUs were handled outside India.

- **Othe benefits**

- Developing such ports will accrue **significant benefits such as forex savings**, foreign direct investment, increased economic activity at other Indian Ports.
- It will also lead to the **development of related logistics infrastructure**, employment generation, improved operation/logistics efficiencies and increase in revenue share.
- Several other **allied businesses** viz. ship chandlery-ship supplies, ship repair, crew change facility, logistics value-added services, warehousing and bunkering also come up at the transshipment port.

- **Increased economic activities**

- A deepwater container transshipment port can attract a **large share of the container transshipment traffic**.
- Currently, this is being diverted to Colombo, Singapore and Dubai.
 - It can also ensure India's economic development and open up immense job opportunities.

What is Vizhinjam International Seaport Project?

- Located in Vizhinjam (near Thiruvananthapuram), Kerala, this transshipment deepwater multipurpose seaport project is being built by Adani Ports and SEZ Private Limited.
- It is being built on a design, **build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model**.
 - DBFOT model is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. In this model, a private partner is responsible for:
 - Designing the project
 - Building the project

- Financing the project
- Operating the project during the contracted period
- Transferring the project back to the public sector
 - The DBFOT model is usually used for large-scale infrastructure projects.
 - The private partner is granted a concession by the public sector to finance, design, construct, own, and operate the project for a period of 20 to 30 years.
 - After that period, the project is returned to the public entity that originally granted the concession.
- According to the agreement, out of the total investment, Adani Group is supposed to invest Rs 2,454 crore and another Rs 1,635 crore will be mobilised from the state and central governments as viability gap funding.
- The Kerala government has also gave 500 acres of land.
- The DBFOT deal is for 40 years, with provisions extending for 20 years.

What are the features of the Vizhinjam port?

- **India's first international deepwater transshipment port**
 - This is India's first international deepwater transshipment port with a natural depth of more than 18 meters, scalable up to 20 meters.
 - This depth is crucial to get large vessels and mother ships.
 - It is designed to cater to container transshipment, multi-purpose, and break-bulk cargo.
 - The cost of movement of containers to and from foreign destinations is likely to come down.
 - **Strategic location**
 - The port is located ten nautical miles from the international shipping route.
 - The port is expected to compete with Colombo, Singapore, and Dubai for winning trans-shipment traffic.
 - **Increased capacity and minimum maintenance**
 - Its capacity in the first phase is one million TEU, which can be increased to 6.2 million TEU.
 - Other features include minimal littoral drift along the coast and virtually no requirement for any maintenance dredging.
 - **Economic benefits**
 - The project is expected to generate 5,000 direct job opportunities, apart from giving a boost to an industrial corridor and cruise tourism.
 - **Vizhinjam port** offers large-scale automation for quick turnaround of vessels with state-of-the-art infrastructure to handle Megamax container ships.
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Q.1. What is a deepwater port?

A deepwater port is a manmade structure located beyond state seaward boundaries, designed to transport, store, or handle large quantities of goods, including oil or natural gas. It can be fixed or floating, featuring pipelines, pumping stations, and mooring buoys.

Q.2. What is design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model?

The Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) model is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) where a private entity designs, builds, finances, operates a project for a specified period, and then transfers it back to the public sector.

Source: 'Monumental moment': Vizhinjam port welcomes its first mothership | US Maritime Administration | Frontline | The Hindu

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