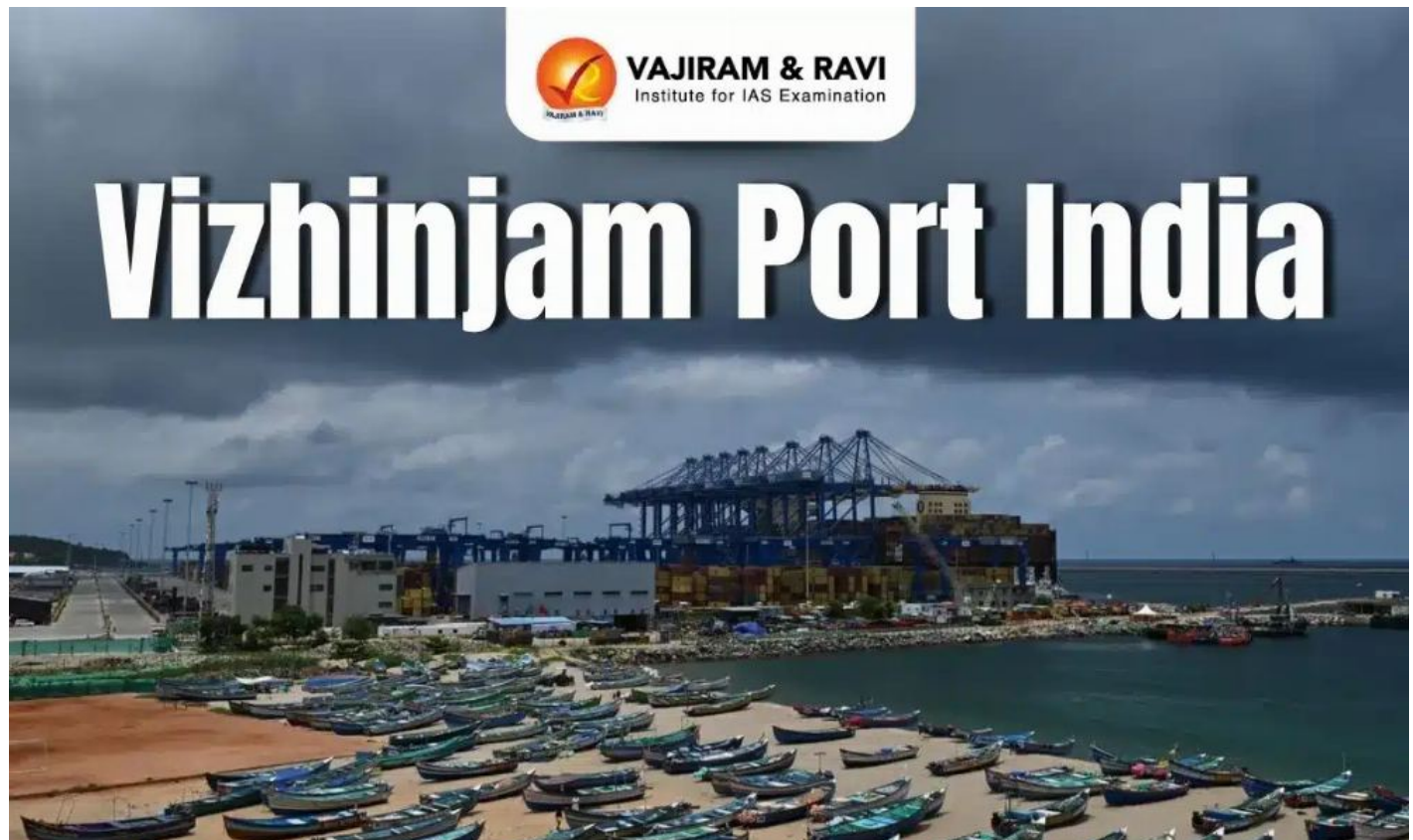


Vizhinjam Port: A Game-Changer for India's Maritime Trade and Economic Growth

May 5, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in Today's Article?

- Vizhinjam Port Latest News
- Introduction
- Historical and Strategic Significance
- First Phase Development and Features
- Early Milestones and Global Interest
- Fast-Tracking Future Phases
- Infrastructure and Operational Challenges
- Associated Industrial and Economic Initiatives
- Vision of a Port-Led Economic Hub
- Conclusion
- Vizhinjam Port India FAQs

Vizhinjam Port Latest News

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi commissioned the ₹8,800 crore Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.

Introduction

- The inauguration of **Vizhinjam International Seaport** marks a historic moment in India's maritime landscape.
- Located in **Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala**, Vizhinjam is **India's first deep-water**, semi-automated container transshipment port.
- It is strategically positioned **just 10 nautical miles from global shipping routes**, making it a crucial asset for international trade.
- With the first phase of development complete, the port is set to reshape India's standing in global maritime logistics and provide an economic thrust to the southern region.

Historical and Strategic Significance

- Vizhinjam's maritime relevance dates back to ancient times, known during the Chola period as Rajendra Chola Pattinam.
- Over the years, it lost prominence due to colonial preferences for ports like Madras and Cochin.
- However, renewed interest began in the 1940s when Travancore commissioned a study on its potential. After nearly eight decades, Vizhinjam is now reborn as a modern transshipment hub.
- Among all Indian ports, Vizhinjam is geographically closest to key international maritime lanes.
- This proximity provides India an opportunity to reduce dependency on foreign ports like Colombo, Singapore, and Klang, which currently handle nearly 75% of India's transhipped cargo.

First Phase Development and Features

- The port was **developed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model at a cost of ₹8,867 crore**.
- Contributions included ₹5,595 crore from the Kerala Government, ₹2,454 crore from Adani Ports (the concessionaire), and ₹817.8 crore Viability Gap Funding (VGF) from the Union Government.
- **Key features include:**
 - **Natural draft of 20 metres**, allowing docking of Ultra Large Container Vessels.
 - **Semi-automation**, with women crane operators trained at the Community Skill Park.
 - **India's first greenfield deep-sea port**, operational since July 2024 with full-scale commercial activity from December.
- Within months, the port exceeded its projected target of handling 1 lakh TEUs annually by processing 6 lakh TEUs and hosting 280 vessels. In March 2025 alone, it handled 1.08 lakh TEUs.

Early Milestones and Global Interest

- Global shipping giant Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) has included Vizhinjam in its Jade and Dragon shipping services. Notable events include:
 - Docking of *MSC Claude Girardet*, South Asia's largest container ship (24,116 TEUs).
 - Handling of 10,330 containers from *MSC Anna* in a single visit, a record for any Indian port.
 - *MSC Irina*, the world's largest container ship, is expected to dock in May 2025.

Fast-Tracking Future Phases

- The Kerala Government, in partnership with Adani Ports, aims to complete remaining construction phases by 2028, significantly earlier than the initial 2045 target. These phases involve:
 - Increasing capacity from 1 million TEUs to 4.87 million TEUs.
 - Extending container berth length from 1,200 to 2,000 metres.
 - Investment of ₹20,000 crore.
 - Environmental clearance for phases two and three was granted in March 2025.
- The port has been featured at global forums including WEF 2025 and the Invest Kerala Global Summit.

Infrastructure and Operational Challenges

- Despite strong progress, several infrastructural gaps remain:
 - **No Integrated Check Post (ICP)**, which is vital for import-export operations and crew change facilities. The application is pending with the Union Home Ministry.
 - **Delays during high ship traffic** (40 ships in February) due to inadequate support systems.
 - **Customs office was only recently opened**, and a permanent Port Health Office is still awaited.

Associated Industrial and Economic Initiatives

- To promote local economic integration, the Kerala Government is pushing forward:
 - A **Vizhinjam Development Zone**, envisaging an industrial corridor.
 - **State-specific business centres** near the port.
 - A proposal to station a dedicated **IAS officer** for the Vizhinjam Economic Growth Corridor.
 - **Allied businesses** including shipbuilding, logistics, warehousing, and clean bunkering (hydrogen, ammonia).
 - The energy agency ANERT is exploring **green hydrogen and wave energy projects**.

Vision of a Port-Led Economic Hub

- Echoing global models like China's Shenzhen SEZ, there is a proposal to designate Vizhinjam as a Special Investment Region (SIR). The Kerala Government is expected to introduce an SIR Bill, focused on:
 - Creating a **special economic zone (SEZ)**.
 - Ensuring **compensation and rehabilitation** for landowners.
 - Studying best global practices in port-led economies.
- Concerns remain about the financial burden of Union Government's VGF repayment, potentially ballooning from ₹817.8 crore to ₹10,000 crore.

- There are also calls to **halt nearby rival transshipment projects**, like the one proposed in Colachel, to ensure Vizhinjam's economic sustainability.

Conclusion

- Vizhinjam International Seaport stands at the crossroads of opportunity and challenge. As India's first deep-sea transshipment port with world-class capabilities, its success will depend on coordinated efforts among the State, Centre, businesses, and global shipping firms.
- If fully realised, Vizhinjam could serve as a transformative maritime hub for South Asia, propelling Kerala and India into a new era of trade leadership.

Vizhinjam Port India FAQs

Q1. What is the strategic importance of Vizhinjam Port?

Ans. It is India's closest port to international shipping routes and is ideal for container transshipment.

Q2. Who are the stakeholders in the Vizhinjam Port project?

Ans. The Kerala Government, Adani Ports, and the Union Government are key stakeholders.

Q3. What is the current capacity of Vizhinjam Port?

Ans. It currently handles 1 million TEUs and is set to expand to 4.87 million TEUs by 2028.

Q4. What global milestones has Vizhinjam Port achieved?

Ans. It hosted South Asia's largest container ship and is now part of MSC's global shipping network.

Q5. What are the major challenges faced by Vizhinjam Port?

Ans. Lack of an Integrated Check Post, delays in cargo operations, and financial concerns regarding VGF repayment.

Source: [TH](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/vizhinjam-port/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.