THURSDAY
December 12, 2024
INTERNATIONAL EDITION
18 Pages

THE HINDU
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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

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Vol. 2 • No. 295

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Phase I over, Vizhinjam port is commercially operational

The port, in collaboration with agencies such as IIT Madras, successfully completes all agreement-mandated procedures, formally declaring it as commercially operational

Updated - December 05, 2024 08:54 am IST - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THE HINDU BUREAU



A view of the Vizhinjam International Seaport. File photo | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

Officially declaring the Vizhinjam International Seaport as commercially operational, the provisional completion certificate for Phase 1 of the Vizhinjam Port has been handed over at a function held here on Wednesday. The Independent Engineering Division of IIT Chennai issued the certificate declaring the port fit for commercial commissioning following the successful completion of its trial run. The certificate was presented by R. Karuppaiah, Team Leader of the division, to the Minister for Ports, V.N. Vasavan, during a ceremony held in the Minister's chamber.

The Vizhinjam International Seaport, in collaboration with agencies like the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, successfully completed all agreement-mandated procedures, formally declaring the port as commercially operational. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Vasavan said, "This is a moment of pride and joy as Kerala's dream project has reached its operational phase. Completing Phase 1 on time, as per the agreement deadline of December 3, is a remarkable achievement," the Minister said.

The trial run conducted from July to November 2024 showcased Vizhinjam's capabilities to the world. During this period, 70 cargo ships, including some of the world's largest mother ships, docked at Vizhinjam, handling 1.47 lakh TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) of cargo. All the cranes required for commercial operations have been imported from China and installed at the port for the first phase itself.

The State government will soon commence the land acquisition for the rail connectivity to the port for which the Konkan Railway Corporation has already submitted a detailed project report. The 10.2-km railway project from Balaramapuram to Vizhinjam, of which 9.2 km will be an underground tunnel, will link the port with Indian railway network. The environmental and social impact assessment of the project has also been completed.

The Minister also said that the State held a meeting with the stakeholders on Wednesday for ring road connectivity and another round of meeting will be held to decide on further details of the project. The services of the National Transportation Planning and Research Centre (NATPAC) and the Road Safety Authority have also been sought for technical assistance, the Minister said. The concerns of the local public regarding land acquisition would be solved through meetings, he added.

The Minister announced that the commissioning ceremony for Phase 1 would be scheduled as soon as the Prime Minister confirms his availability. Preparations are under way, and the port is expected to be dedicated to the nation shortly.

The Minister expressed disappointment with the Central Government's stance on the viability gap funding, calling it discriminatory toward Kerala. However, he assured that this would not hinder the port's operations and that the issue has been escalated to the Prime Minister's attention. "We are only asserting our rightful claims," he added.

Published - December 04, 2024 09:07 pm IST