

PORT OF VISAKHAPATNAM

ABOUT

Welcome to Port of Visakhapatnam...!Visakhapatnam was an ancient Port city which had trade relations with the Middle East and Rome. Ships were anchored at open roads and were loaded with cargo transported from Visakhapatnam shore by means of small Masula boats. A reference to Vizagapatam merchant is available in the inscriptions of Sri Bheemeswara Swamy temple (1068 AD), East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. During 12th century AD, Vizagapatam was a fortified merchandize town managed by a guild. It has become a settlement of a branch of East India Company in 1682. Rs. 83 lakh worth of goods were moved through Vizagapatam / Bhimunipatnam in 1882-83. Principal commodities traded at anchorage Port included Muslin cloth – manufactured at Uppada (East Godavari District), Manganese ore – exports to UK and USA, Oilseeds, jaggery, jute and indigo. Vessels of British India Steam Navigation Company regularly visited the Port. With the advent of British Rule, in 1858, the need for a port in this part of the country was emphasized in the report of British Survey Party. Later in 1877 in the report. Vizag the Port of Central Provinces further emphasized the need for construction of a Port at Visakhapatnam. It was only after the first World War (1914-18) the proposal of Col. H. Cartwright Reid of British Admiralty for construction of a harbor at Visakhapatnam at the mouth of river Meghadrigedda was approved by the Government. The unique feature of the harbour has is the Island Break-water, constructed by scuttling two old ships JANUS and WELLEDON which form the skeleton around which a rubble mound is formed. The Port was opened to ocean traffic with the arrival of a passenger vessel S.S.JALADURGA of the Scindia Steam Navigation Co., on the 7th October, 1933.

After India's independence, the port witnessed growth under the various Five Year Plans. Over time, the port has grown from one with 3 berths handling 1.3 lakh tonnes per annum to one with 24 berths and annual traffic of 65 million tonnes. The port was notified as a major port in 1964 under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963. Under the Act, the Visakhapatnam Port Trust is in charge of running the port. Visakhapatnam Port has three harbours – the outer harbour, inner harbour and the fishing harbour. The outer harbour has 6 berths capable of handling vessels with a draft up to 17 meters while the smaller inner harbour has 18 berths that are Panamax compatible. Vizag Seaport owns two berths in the inner harbour; berth EQ-8 is fully mechanised and berth EQ-9 berth is not. The Dolphin's Nose Hill to the north of the entrance channel protects the harbour from cyclones that strike the east coast. The port is located on the area of a creek through which the coastal river Narava Gedda joins the sea. Iron ore, manganese ore, steel products, general cargo, coal and crude oil are the main commodities handled at this port. It also handles over 70% Nepal foreign trade as of 2019. The Inner Harbour was built by the Bengal Nagpur Railway between 1927 and 1933 to facilitate the export of manganese ore from the Central Provinces. The port, built at a cost of ₹378 lakhs was inaugurated by Lord Willingdon on 19 December 1933.

Visakhapatnam Port is undergoing a modernisation and expansion program aimed at increasing its capacity to 130 million tonnes by 2016–17, entailing an investment of ₹13,000 crores. The inauguration of the Gangavaram Port, located 15 km away from the Visakhapatnam Port, has led to a significant diversion of traffic away from the Visakhapatnam Port. This loss of cargo traffic is an important reason for the port's fall from its position as the largest port in India. The Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) which runs the Vizag Steel Plant had shifted base to the new port, taking with it a large chunk of the coal and iron ore traffic. The Visakhapatnam Port is now modernising its coal handling berth in the outer harbour to enable it to handle capesize vessels. This will also solve the problem of air pollution caused by the open handling of coal that had earlier led to citywide protests. As part of its modernisation program, the port is also upgrading its general cargo berth in the outer harbour to accommodate vessels of 2 lakh DWT, deepening its inner harbour entrance channel and strengthening five berths in the inner harbour to admit vessels with 12.5 meter draft. Other steps being undertaken include the development of a truck parking terminal and a multimodal logistics hub, the procurement of two 50 tonne tugs and the installation of mechanical handling facilities in the inner harbour for dry bulk cargo. There are also plans to relocate the fishing harbour at the port to allow for the expansion of berths and stacking areas and dredging of the Outer Harbour is also being undertaken to increase the draft of the main channel to 21 meters. The Visakhapatnam Port Trust plans to develop a satellite port at Bheemunipatnam to decongest traffic at Visakhapatnam. The project is expected to cost ₹2,000 crores and is to be undertaken through a Public- Private Partnership (PPP) venture.