

VISION 2031: DEVELOPMENT OF PORTS & COASTAL SHIPPING

October 2025



**Malabar International Port &
SEZ Ltd**

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1. Introduction – Overview

The Government of India's Maritime Vision 2030 outlines a roadmap for the development of India's maritime sector, encompassing various aspects such as infrastructure, logistics, trade facilitation, security, and environmental sustainability. While the central government plays a pivotal role in formulating and implementing national policies and initiatives, the involvement of state governments is equally crucial for realizing the objectives of the Maritime Vision 2030. Government of India's vision of 2030 has highlighted Blue Economy as one of the 10 core dimensions of economic growth. To address challenges & improve coordination, Blue Economy Coordination Committee (BECC) constituted under chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. BECC identified 6 functional clusters for leveraging blue economy. Within these clusters, Logistics, Infrastructure and Shipping (including Transshipments) cluster is being driven by Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. The vision document highlights the importance for the development of Ports and Coastal Shipping.

In this context, a **Vision Document** for development of Ports and Coastal Shipping is imperative to strategically plan and harness the economic potential of its extensive coastline, facilitating trade, tourism, and sustainable development. By outlining priorities for port infrastructure enhancement, coastal management, and blue economy initiatives, the document shall help to streamline initiatives and promote competitiveness, resilience, and inclusive growth in the maritime sector. Developing a Vision for Ports & Coastal Shipping for Kerala holds significant potential to enhance the acquisition of funding under various Government of India schemes tailored for port and maritime-related development, such as *Sagarmala* and *Gati Shakti*. The vision document will help in prioritizing projects critical to Kerala's maritime advancement, in harmony with broader objectives.

The Key Stakeholders involved in the Vision for Development of Ports & Coastal shipping are the **Kerala Maritime Board, Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd, Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd, and Kottayam Port & Container Terminal.**

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB), as the statutory body overseeing the development and regulation of maritime activities in the state, focusing particularly on notified non-major ports under its command, is responsible for a wide array of functions pertaining to ports, harbors, and maritime infrastructure development in Kerala. This includes planning, construction, maintenance, and operation of ports and related facilities, as well as the implementation of policies and regulations governing maritime activities. Given its pivotal role, it is imperative for the Kerala Maritime Board to spearhead the initiative of preparing a maritime vision for the State.

The maritime vision document will encompass diverse facets of maritime development, encompassing port infrastructure, coastal shipping, tourism, research and innovation, skill enhancement, and environmental sustainability, among others. It will delineate objectives,

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priorities, and strategies aimed at optimizing the State's maritime assets and infrastructure. Additionally, the overarching maritime vision document will include the Port Infrastructure Development Master Plan, which will detail the development plans for all ports and associated infrastructure in the state.

Any holistic plan of action for the sector shall enable a convergence of vision, mission & objectives of these organizations, so that together they achieve sustainable development of infrastructure, optimum utilisation of resources and generation of benefits to the state and sector. Ever since the formation of the State, Government of Kerala is framing a common policy and vision plan for the Maritime & Inland Waters of the state.

Proposed Vision 2031

The Vision for 2031 is to position Kerala as a smart, connected, and environmentally responsible port and inland water transport ecosystem. This entails modernizing port infrastructure, enhancing logistics efficiency, and integrating digital technologies, while simultaneously expanding clean coastal and backwater mobility and ensuring inclusive economic benefits for communities.

Overview of Key Objectives

The following objectives may be taken into consideration while formulating the vision document:

- ***Capacity & connectivity***: increasing port capacity and enhancing multimodal linkages.
- ***Logistics efficiency***: aims to reduce costs, improve turnaround time, and optimize access.
- ***Last mile connectivity***: hinterland integration with roads and waterways ensures smooth cargo movement and stronger last-mile connectivity.
- ***Green initiatives***: sustainability emphasizes green shipping, renewable energy adoption, and low-carbon operations.
- ***Port led industrialization***: enhanced industrialization through port-led industrial and manufacturing development.
- ***Investment promotion***: seeks to attract both public and private sector capital through PPPs, startups, and innovative financing models.
- ***Talent development***: build a skilled workforce through training, education, and capacity-building initiatives.
- ***Community development***: community and livelihood development supports coastal and inland populations with jobs and infrastructure.
- ***Governance***: ensures a governance mechanism of transparent, accountable, and efficient regulatory environment.
- ***Technology integration***: leverage technology integration digitization, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to modernize port operations.

2. Development of Ports

Kerala has 1 major port, 19 non-major ports out of which 1 is a PPP port (Vizhinjam International Seaport), 1 is a Riverine Port & Inland Container Terminal(Kottayam Port) and 4 are fully operational notified ports with ICP & ISPS status(Azhikkal, Beypore, Kollam & Vizhinjam-Kovalam). The vision for the development of the various ports mentioned is detailed below.

i. Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited

The broader vision of the Vizhinjam International Seaport is as follows;

- **Port development:** To be one of the largest seaports in India, handling a minimum of 5 Mn TEU yearly - both the transshipment and Gateway (Ex-Im) Containers.
 - Capacity augmentation work to nameplate capacity of 3.00 Mn TEU (achievable up to 4.5 Mn TEUs) commencing in October 2025, scheduled completion in December 2028 with a total investment of Rs 9,500 Cr.
 - Capacity Augmentation initially planned in 2045 to be advanced to complete by 2028, there by expecting to be a game changer for Indian Port Sector. Along with capacity augmentation, Port planned Break-Bulk Cargo handling, liquid cargo handling, Crew Change & Gateway Cargo handling.
 - Port development helps to reduce dependency of foreign port for transshipment, expecting foreign currency saving of around Rs 2,500 Cr by way of shifting transshipment from foreign port to Vizhinjam Seaport. In addition to that a saving of minimum of US\$ 150 per container for the exporters/importers through shipment from Vizhinjam Port along with a saving of 2-week shipment time
- **Port led development:** Develop Vizhinjam area as a hub for Port led logistics infrastructure & industries Acquiring the land to an extent of 1000 acres for Port-led logistics facilities and industrialization across 3 categories.
 - a) Essential Maritime Infrastructure / Services
 - b) Essential Logistics Infrastructure / Services for Export - Import (Gateway) Cargo
 - c) Port-led industries
- **Investor facilitation:** Investor centric policies such as attractive land lease mechanism providing longer period for projects for ensuring pay back of investment, ease of doing business etc. there by encouraging the potential investors to setup their businesses.
 - Multi-modal Logistics Park (MMLPs) / Inland Container Depots (ICDs)
 - Empty Container Yards (not bonded)
 - Container Repair & Pre-trip Inspection Facility
 - Container Freight Stations (CFS) & Warehousing
 - Specialized Cool Chain & Cold Chain Facilities
 - Free Trade Warehousing Zones (FTWZ)
 - Truck Terminals & Fueling Stations
 - Customs House Agencies
 - Clearing & Forwarding Services
- Thrust areas:

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- Focusing on Maritime and Logistics Services that compliments the Gateway (Ex-Im) traffic.
 - Providing environment friendly ecosystem for establishing businesses
 - Focusing on sustainable green energy development, including green bunkering/green hydrogen & green ammonia manufacturing.
 - Focusing on Social Development – New Fishing Harbor, modernization of existing Fishing Harbor& Seafood Park for local community, various social welfare schemes for local community
- Economic & Social benefits of VISL Vision 2031 as follows:
 - Expecting foreign currency saving of around Rs 2,500 Cr by way of shifting transshipment from foreign port to Vizhinjam Seaport.
 - Saving of minimum of US\$ 150 per container for the exporters/importers through shipment from Vizhinjam Port along with a saving of 2-week shipment time.
 - With this capacity augmentation of Port, GST revenue to the Government may reach yearly approx. Rs 500 Cr by 2031.
 - New Investment generate employment opportunity to the extent of 20,000 direct employment and 1,50,000 indirect employments.
 - Investment of around Rs 80,000 Crore will be invested by Investors in Kerala
 - Expecting Rs 20,000 Crore to Government exchequer as various tax and non-tax revenue from these Industries.
 - Expecting a CSR spending of minimum Rs. 500 Crores by these Industries

ii. Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd, at Azhikkal

The Government of Kerala (GoK) is in the process of developing a world class Greenfield International Port at Azhikkal in Kannur district. In this regard, the Government of Kerala's has established a special purpose vehicle "Malabar International Port and SEZ Limited" (MIPS Ltd.) formerly known as Azhikkal Port Limited to develop the port project to global standards, along with 4 Special Economic Zones / industrial parks which are critical, complementary component for strengthening the State's maritime, logistical and industrial infrastructure of the Malabar region.

The planning, investment and growth of an international/coastal shipping seaport with inter-modal connectivity, along with SEZs/ industrial parks is to funnel cargo to the port and channel entrepreneurial resources into potential industrial sectors with comparative advantages and high prospects for success primarily in the Malabar region. The Malabar International Port & SEZ project is strategically aligned with the State's and National maritime development vision, advancing Kerala's Nava Keralam initiative while complementing national programmes such as Sagarmala and Make in India. With the support of Viability Gap Funding Scheme, the project is positioned to serve as flagship model of integrated port- led industrial development, enhancing State's and National coastal shipping capacity while driving sustainable economic growth and employment generation. The key points in the vision for 2031 are:

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- To complete in four years (2026-2031) the basic investments like breakwater construction, dredging and roads by the MIPS Ltd. / Government of Kerala as well as the land acquisition for the port, connectivity and the SEZs/parks - singly and with other developmental agencies.
- Parallely, to select where necessary, private partner(s) of international standards for the commercial development of the port and related infrastructures under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode or otherwise.
- To achieve the financial closure of the Project.
- To commence in 2026-27 and complete the construction of the breakwaters, port, NH extension and supporting facilities by 2031.
- To commission by 2031 the Phase 1 port facilities of the international port with the breakwaters and the related facilities as well as Special Economic Zones / industrial parks particularly focused on port-dependent industries and businesses.

As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the forecasted port traffic in 2030-31 after commissioning is about 4 Mn MT (total of Exim and coastal traffic), which is expected to increase to about 15.2 Mn MT in 2042 with some new cargoes from port dependent SEZs/ FTWZ and Industrial Parks and LPG/ LNG cargo traffic. In tonnage, by 2042, Exim Traffic is to be 58% and 42% coastal. The container traffic in FY 33 would be 3.31 lakh TEUs which is to increase to 7.26 lakh TEUs by 2042.

The vision regarding the 4 fully operational non-major ports and the riverine port are as listed below:

i. Kovalam – Vizhinjam Port

Kovalam- Vizhinjam port lies very close to the international shipping channel and is the operational port in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram. The proximity to the international transshipment terminal offers better business opportunities. Vizhinjam Port caters to the regular shipping services to Maldives and serves the international cruise services calling at Vizhinjam. The scheme envisages conservation, maintenance & development of various maritime & terrestrial infrastructure and allied operational facilities required for port operations.

Given the close proximity to Vizhinjam International Seaport, proposals for Kovalam-Vizhinjam port to be a bunkering port, to cater the growing demand of the international seaport, are underway. The Cargo operations to Maldives is being resumed and coastal cargo operations is being envisaged.

Vision-2031

- a) The cargo movement to Maldives from Vizhinjam-Kovalam Port will be resumed
- b) The Vizhinjam-Kovalam Port also will be developed on PPP model to cater to the vessel related ancillary activities like bunkering, custom bonded warehouses, and supply to the ships

ii. Kollam Port

The various development works in Kollam Port is to be carried out in a phased manner. Two phases of development are considered.

Phase-1 development constitutes all basic infrastructure developments viz. construction of new multipurpose berth, channel and basin deepening to 10 m draft, roads, container stacking yards, trucking parking yards including passenger, cement and LPG terminals.

Phase-2 development constitutes construction of new berths, breakwater extension, expansion of container stacking yards, truck parking yards etc through sea reclamation. Capital dredging is proposed to increase the draught to 12 meters to attract bigger vessels.

Floating dry docks at appropriate locations for use in the Kollam port's region near the seaward breakwater can be explored. The existing 187m long Cargo berth and the 101m long Passenger berth in the Kollam Port is necessary in order to improve the usage of the port's available capacity. Another option is to build a wharf in front of the current freight wharf. It is possible to set up a fish processing facility in the neighbourhood of Kollam Port if the fish is imported via the port.

The establishment of a private container freight station in the immediate neighbourhood of the port also needs encouragement.

Vision 2031

- Private participation for the operation of the Port and further development
- The draft of the shipping channel will be increased to 10 m
- One additional berth will be constructed making the number of berths to three.
- Customs bonded Container Freight Station in the warehouses in the Port
- Medium sized Cruise shipping activities to Colombo and domestic cruise shipping activities connecting other non-major ports inside the State through private participation
- Coastal Cargo movement connecting the Kochi Port, Vizhinjam International Sea Port, and other non-major ports inside the State.

iii. Beypore Port

Construction of a new godown, dangerous cargo (including petroleum products) terminal and port complex are necessary infrastructure requirement for the port development. To provide a smooth passage of the ships to the port, the depth of the Beypore port needs to be increased to 10m in phased manner, and the length of the new wharf by 150m towards west, (an extension towards silk compound section).

In the case of cargo and passenger traffic bound for Lakshadweep, at Beypore port, it is now like a captive business/cargo, since the Government of India provides concessions for the cargo and passenger traffic between the mainland and the Islands. In fact, berth facilities have been developed and operated at Cochin and Mangalore ports by Lakshadweep Administration

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with funding from Government of India. In this regard, possible operational improvements may be considered to attract more business to Beypore.

The connectivity to Beypore port can be increased by improvising the road and rail connections. Road connectivity can be provided by constructing a four-lane road connecting Beypore port and the National Highway. Construction of railway from Beypore port to Farooq/Kozhikode would improve connectivity.

Vision-2031

- Private participation for the operation of the Port and its further development
- The draft of the shipping channel will be enhanced to 10 m
- Construction of an additional wharf
- Resuming the passenger shipping operation to Lakshadweep
- Starting domestic cruise shipping operation connecting the non-major ports inside the State
- Resuming the Coastal Cargo movement connecting the Kochi Port, Vizhinjam International Seaport and other non-major Ports in the state

iv. Azhikkal Port

Azhikkal is a riverfront port in Kerala's Kannur district, situated at the confluence of the Valapattanam River and the Mattol River with the Lakshadweep Sea near the mouth of the Valapattanam River. At the moment, Azhikkal is a modest fishing port. Kannur town, which is about 10 kilometres from the port site and can function as a port town by providing the necessary urban infrastructure, is an excellent choice. The town of Kozhikode is about 80 kilometres south of the port of Azhikkal.

Vision-2031

- Private Participation for the operation of the Port and its further development
- Develop cruise and bunkering operations at Azhikkal port.
- The prospect of establishing a ship building / repair facility and other related port-led industries
- Resuming the coastal cargo operations connecting the Kochi port, Vizhinjam International Sea Port, and other non-major ports in the State.

v. Kottayam Port

Kottayam Port, inaugurated in 2008 and fully operational by 2012, is a minor port recognized by the State Port Department. It is also the first minor port in India to operate in a way that enables cargo movement via inland waterways. Functioning as a full-fledged customs station, Kottayam Port has handled over 650 Lakh tonnes of cargo. Located on National Waterway 9, its strategic position and proximity to the districts of Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, and Idukki—along with access to road, rail, and inland waterway transport—make it ideal for developing a logistics hub or logistics park centered around the port.

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The goal is to establish facilities of international standards for manufacturing, assembling, labelling, packing, coordination, sorting, and distribution. This includes warehouses, distribution/packing centres, an international-standard exhibition/convention center, accommodation facilities, and office spaces. A detailed project report has been prepared to implement this plan in phases through public-private partnership, with completion targeted by 2031. The project is expected to generate numerous employment opportunities.

With the full-scale operation of Vizhinjam Port, discussions have been held with railway authorities to establish a container station near Ettumanoor Railway Station in collaboration with Kottayam Port, the only customs station in Central Kerala, under a public-private partnership model.

In collaboration with the National Waterways Authority, a floating jetty will be constructed near Kottayam Port. Using National Waterway 9, a tourism circuit will be developed connecting Malarickal, Munroe Vilakkumaram, and Pazhukkanilam Kayal.

Considering the increasing cargo traffic at Kottayam Port, steps will be taken to elevate it to international standards.

Vision-2031

- Establish a container station near Ettumanoor Railway Station on PPP model
- Construction of a floating jetty near the port in collaboration with the National Waterways Authority
- Tourism Circuit connecting the Malarikkal, Muroe Vilakumaram and Pazhukkanilam Kayal.

Development of Coastal Cargo

Coastal cargo shipping forms a crucial component of port operations in Kerala, serving as a sustainable and efficient mode of freight movement along the state's extensive coastline. With the Vizhinjam International Seaport poised to attract significant maritime traffic, there is a growing demand for enhanced cargo movement and, consequently, for the systematic development of Kerala's non-major ports.

Given that Kerala's road infrastructure is relatively narrow and already burdened with high vehicular density, the promotion of coastal shipping can substantially reduce congestion and carbon emissions associated with road transport. To realize this potential, coastal cargo operations should be actively supported through targeted government incentives and policy interventions. Measures such as mandating or encouraging the transport of Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) goods via sea routes, as well as extending similar provisions for the movement of hazardous materials, would not only ease pressure on the road network but also strengthen the state's coastal logistics ecosystem. The modal shift in inland cargo to water transport (both coastal shipping & IWT) is envisaged to be over 20% by 2031.

3. Enhancing Blue Economy through PPP model development.

The Government of India's Vision of New India - 2030 published in February 2019 also highlighted the Blue Economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth. The Blue Economy was mentioned as the sixth dimension of this Vision. The objective is to enhance substantially the 4.1 per cent of GDP share for the blue economy by 2030. The State of Kerala with its coastline of almost 600 kms, needs to refocus on the Blue Economy, and profit from the thrust being given to it by the Government of India.

Therefore, the development of a few important ports, logistics, infrastructure, and shipping; enhancing manufacturing (especially new and emerging industries, marine services like boat repairs/building/scraping), trade, coastal tourism, offshore energy projects (including wind) and Coastal Economic Zones as per the Sagarmala Programme to reduce logistics cost and time for the movement of EXIM and domestic cargo are recommended. Some of the key undertakings are development of non-major ports such as Azhikkal, Beypore, Kollam, and Kovalam – Vizhinjam, Maritime related undertakings at Kozhikode, Kollam, Malappuram, Kasaragod, Kannur, and Trivandrum. The implementation of PPP projects is being explored as way of introducing private sector investment, technology and innovation in providing better public services through improved operational efficiency.

Vision-2031

- Developing the assets under the Kerala Maritime Board on PPP model for revenue generation and creating job opportunities
- The focused areas include the operation and development existing ports (brownfield), development of new ports (green field), developing the port lands for Maritime Tourism, Maritime Industry, Logistics etc
- An overview of the projects being explored are Maritime Institutes, Maritime Enclaves, Multimodal Transit Yards, Beachside Developments, Walkways & Promenades, Hospitality Zones, Warehouses, Port Led Industries including medium sized vessel building units, Adventure & Watersports ventures, Lighthouse Tourism Ventures, Wayside Amenities centres, Leisure & Entertainment Hubs, and Marine Parks.

4. Maritime Education

The maritime sector development covers the shipping, ships (building, repair, re-cycling), development of port facilities (construction, dredging, maintenance, cargo handling equipment, storage facilities), port operation (cargo handling and vessel handling), manpower development etc. The agencies designated to conceive and implement the manpower development schemes may be mandated for development of multi-skill manpower for optimizing the manpower requirement and making the ventures cost effective. The manpower development may be planned and fulfilled in a specified period matching with the plan for other developments to fetch desired benefits.

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There is need for simple manning scales and adequate training facilities, with government/ other funding. The Kerala Maritime Institute may oversee maritime education and training and research. The establishment of the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) was a strategic move to harness development potential along the coastline. The Government is planning to develop the two maritime institutes located in Kodungalur in Thrissur District and Neendakara in Kollam District as hubs of Maritime education in India.

Vision-2031

- Develop the Neendakara maritime institute as an international maritime education and edutainment hub through private participation
- Develop the Kodungalloor institute as a maritime institute and inland vessel crew training centre under the KMB
- New inland vessel crew training centre in Alappuzha
- Promoting the inland vessel crew training institutes in private sector.

5. Promoting Maritime Tourism

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) is embarking on an ambitious initiative to establish a vibrant passenger ship/cruise/vessel service connecting the Middle East/GCC region with Kerala, aimed at providing a compelling alternative travel choice for Indian expats based out of Middle East / GCC and tourists through sea. Historically, sea route between Middle East and Kerala was always a prominent mode of trade and passenger transit. This initiative seeks to enhance connectivity and foster closer ties between these regions, catering to the burgeoning demand for efficient and enjoyable maritime travel experiences. By facilitating seamless transportation between the destinations, the KMB aims to unlock new avenues for economic growth, cultural exchange, tourism development and along with meeting the travel needs of NRKs.

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) is embarking on an ambitious initiative to establish a vibrant coastal cruise service utilizing the various ports and major tourist destinations, aimed at providing a compelling tourism experience through sea and other waterways. This initiative seeks to enhance connectivity and foster economic development, catering to the burgeoning demand for efficient and enjoyable maritime travel experiences. By facilitating seamless transportation through the coastline, the KMB aims to unlock new avenues for economic growth, cultural exchange, tourism development and along with meeting the growing emphasis on leisure trips.

The project aims to establish a Coastal Cruise service utilizing the ports in Kerala, including Kochi, and non-major ports for coastal cruise offering travelers a serene and picturesque coastal tourism experience. The service can be provided in any of the following categories, a combination of them, or any other service option related to coastal cruising:

- **Ocean Cruise** – Utilizing various ports and tourist destinations, including international ones.
- **Domestic Cruise** – Utilizing various ports in Kerala and nearby ports within the country.

- **River/Marine Cruise** – Utilizing various ports in Kerala and inland waterways such as rivers, canals, and islands.
- **Other Categories** – Cruise service options such as day cruises, sunset cruises, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), Weddings etc.
- **Cruise services** from Kovalam to Kanyakumari - The creation of sustainable port infrastructure and tourism facilities for a sea cruise project, have been conceived to exploit the untapped potential of the world-renowned tourist attractions of Kovalam and Kanyakumari.
- Develop **Alappuzha Port as a Marina Port** by constructing breakwaters for a sheltered basin for providing modern facilities like floating jetty, marina, and passenger terminals, linking major on-going heritage and other tourism projects like construction of a Sea Pier in Alappuzha Port.

6. Inland Vessel Related

In addition to its core mandate of port development, the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) has been entrusted with the crucial responsibility of regulating mechanized inland vessels across the state, as per the Inland Vessels Act, 2021. To streamline operations and strengthen safety standards, KMB has introduced the “**Kerala Nauka – The IV Connect**” portal, facilitating online registration and survey of all mechanized inland vessels. Kerala has also become the first state to implement crew licensing through the central portal. Furthermore, an electronic inspection system has been developed and is poised for immediate deployment. Guided by its vision, KMB is committed to ensuring safe, efficient, and technology-driven inland water transport across the state through robust digital infrastructure and stringent enforcement protocols.

Vision-2031

- Bring all the mechanised vessels plying in the inland water of Kerala under annual survey and registration.
- Entire procedure of survey and registration of vessels will be made through the online portal “Kerala Nowka- The IV Connect”.
- Inspection/enforcement to find out the violations of the provisions of IV Act and imposing fine and initiating prosecution will be made through e-portal.
- Zero tolerance towards violations and prevent boat accidents in the State by ensuring safe water journey in the inland waters.
- The details of the vessels will be made in fingertips for the passengers and the inspecting officers.
- The canal cruise vessels, including the house boats will be restricted to their area of operation.
- Action plan to phase out the old vessels and bring in new vessels with green energy.

7. Major Policy Changes:

- **Strategic Convergence of Relevant Departments under Maritime Sector:**
To streamline policy formulation and enhance operational efficiency, convergence of relevant departments and agencies may be explored. Key departments and agencies including the Kerala Maritime Board, Fisheries Department, Harbour Engineering Department, Hydrographic Survey Wing, Kerala State Coastal Development Corporation, State Water Transport Department, Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC) and other relevant entities can be brought under a single ministry, ideally administered under the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala. Such a convergence can ensure coordinated planning, efficient decision making and implementation, accelerating the development of the maritime sector.
- **Strengthening the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB):**
The Kerala Maritime Board should be institutionally strengthened to function as the primary authority for the Maritime Sector in the State. Model of other states like Gujarat can be followed for this purpose. The board can be strengthened by converging relevant departments under maritime sector as mentioned above. Integrating Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd (VISL) and Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd (MIPSL), Hydrographic Survey Wing, Department of Fisheries, Harbour Engineering Department and all other maritime related authorities into the purview of KMB should be one of the short-term strategic goal to ensure the vital assets align with the State's maritime interests.
- **Need to bring the entire coastal stretch under the Maritime Board for its development and conservation:**
Even though Kerala has 590 km stretch of coastal area with huge scope for development in Maritime Sector, including Port Development, Fisheries, Maritime Tourism, Maritime Industries, Logistics etc, the potential remain unexploited for various reasons. A holistic approach for the development of the coastal area for the betterment of the local people and overall development of the State and Nation is an urgent need. Maritime Board is the custodian of the Port Land which comes around to only 87 km out of this 590 km stretch. A lot of land parcels are available for the commercial exploitation. As of now, nobody can be termed as the custodian of the other part of the coastal stretch. It is recommended that the entire coastal stretch shall be brought under the purview of the Maritime Board after strengthening the board institutionally.
- **Prioritize PPP model Development of Non-Major Ports:**
The development of non-major ports in PPP model can be a solution for the enhanced development of the maritime ecosystem. The four non-major ports, Vizhinjam – Kovalam, Azhikkal, Kollam and Beypore, shall be prioritized on PPP development to transform the ports into drivers of economic development for the region and complement the growth of Vizhinjam and Cochin Port.

- **PPP development of Idle lying assets and restrict encroachments in port lands and other uninhabited coastal stretches:**

The land parcels owned by various departments along the coastal line that lay idle and underutilized shall be identified and developed through PPP models for commercial, industrial or logistics purposes. Alongside, a strong mechanism should be established and enforced to restrict and reclaim encroachments of port lands and the uninhabited coastal stretches.

- **Identify unviable non-major ports:**

Areas notified as port lands but are unviable for port development shall be identified and de-notified after keeping the ownership under KMB. This will help to prevent the encroachments in the land and facilitate the commercial development of the land.

- **Strengthening State Maritime and Water Transport Committee (SMWTC):**

The scope and authority of the State Maritime and Water Transport Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary should be enhanced transforming it into a high-level committee for catalyzing the coastal, maritime and inland waterway development.

- **Standardized Framework for PPP development:**

A state-wide, standardized framework should be developed for the PPP model projects. The framework can draw upon PPP guidelines published by Central Government and successful models implemented by other Indian states. Such a framework can enhance transparency and provide clear guidelines to ensure the successful implementation of PPP model developments.

8. Conclusion

Kerala's vision for 2031 is to build a modern, well-connected, and environmentally responsible maritime and inland water transport system that supports trade, industry, tourism, and local livelihoods. The State plans to upgrade and expand its non-major ports, including Vizhinjam-Kovalam, Azhikkal, Kollam, Beypore, Malabar International Port and Kottayam port to improve cargo handling, transshipment capacity, and coastal logistics.

In line with India's Blue Economy priorities, Kerala aims to promote port-based industrial growth, coastal tourism, and green energy ventures through partnerships with the private sector. The maritime training institutes at Kodungallur and Neendakara will be strengthened to develop a skilled workforce for inland vessel operations, port operations, shipbuilding, and marine services.

The State also plans to expand cruise and coastal tourism, developing international and domestic cruise services, marinas, and supporting facilities at selected destinations. At the same time, the West Coast Canal and National Waterways will be improved to handle both cargo and passenger transport, reducing road congestion and encouraging cleaner, water-based mobility. Environmental responsibility is at the heart of the plan, with a focus on green

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energy adoption, cleaner vessels, effective waste management, ensuring water quality. Infrastructure and connectivity around ports by road, rail, and waterways will be strengthened to ensure smooth cargo movement and support new industrial opportunities.

The projects envisaged will also consider its social and community impact, including creation of employment, and better livelihood options for coastal populations. Together, these efforts will help Kerala build a resilient, efficient, and inclusive maritime economy that balances growth with sustainability.

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1. Introduction – Overview

The Government of India's Maritime Vision 2030 outlines a roadmap for the development of India's maritime sector, encompassing various aspects such as infrastructure, logistics, trade facilitation, security, and environmental sustainability. While the central government plays a pivotal role in formulating and implementing national policies and initiatives, the involvement of state governments is equally crucial for realizing the objectives of the Maritime Vision 2030. Government of India's vision of 2030 has highlighted Blue Economy as one of the 10 core dimensions of economic growth. To address challenges & improve coordination, Blue Economy Coordination Committee (BECC) constituted under chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. BECC identified 6 functional clusters for leveraging blue economy. Within these clusters, Logistics, Infrastructure and Shipping (including Transshipments) cluster is being driven by Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. The vision document highlights the importance for the development of Ports and Coastal Shipping.

In this context, a **Vision Document** for development of Ports and Coastal Shipping is imperative to strategically plan and harness the economic potential of its extensive coastline, facilitating trade, tourism, and sustainable development. By outlining priorities for port infrastructure enhancement, coastal management, and blue economy initiatives, the document shall help to streamline initiatives and promote competitiveness, resilience, and inclusive growth in the maritime sector. Developing a Vision for Ports & Coastal Shipping for Kerala holds significant potential to enhance the acquisition of funding under various Government of India schemes tailored for port and maritime-related development, such as *Sagarmala* and *Gati Shakti*. The vision document will help in prioritizing projects critical to Kerala's maritime advancement, in harmony with broader objectives.

The Key Stakeholders involved in the Vision for Development of Ports & Coastal shipping are the **Kerala Maritime Board, Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd, Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd, and Kottayam Port & Container Terminal.**

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB), as the statutory body overseeing the development and regulation of maritime activities in the state, focusing particularly on notified non-major ports under its command, is responsible for a wide array of functions pertaining to ports, harbors, and maritime infrastructure development in Kerala. This includes planning, construction, maintenance, and operation of ports and related facilities, as well as the implementation of policies and regulations governing maritime activities. Given its pivotal role, it is imperative for the Kerala Maritime Board to spearhead the initiative of preparing a maritime vision for the State.

The maritime vision document will encompass diverse facets of maritime development, encompassing port infrastructure, coastal shipping, tourism, research and innovation, skill enhancement, and environmental sustainability, among others. It will delineate objectives,

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priorities, and strategies aimed at optimizing the State's maritime assets and infrastructure. Additionally, the overarching maritime vision document will include the Port Infrastructure Development Master Plan, which will detail the development plans for all ports and associated infrastructure in the state.

Any holistic plan of action for the sector shall enable a convergence of vision, mission & objectives of these organizations, so that together they achieve sustainable development of infrastructure, optimum utilisation of resources and generation of benefits to the state and sector. Ever since the formation of the State, Government of Kerala is framing a common policy and vision plan for the Maritime & Inland Waters of the state.

Proposed Vision 2031

The Vision for 2031 is to position Kerala as a smart, connected, and environmentally responsible port and inland water transport ecosystem. This entails modernizing port infrastructure, enhancing logistics efficiency, and integrating digital technologies, while simultaneously expanding clean coastal and backwater mobility and ensuring inclusive economic benefits for communities.

Overview of Key Objectives

The following objectives may be taken into consideration while formulating the vision document:

- **Capacity & connectivity:** increasing port capacity and enhancing multimodal linkages.
- **Logistics efficiency:** aims to reduce costs, improve turnaround time, and optimize access.
- **Last mile connectivity:** hinterland integration with roads and waterways ensures smooth cargo movement and stronger last-mile connectivity.
- **Green initiatives:** sustainability emphasizes green shipping, renewable energy adoption, and low-carbon operations.
- **Port led industrialization:** enhanced industrialization through port-led industrial and manufacturing development.
- **Investment promotion:** seeks to attract both public and private sector capital through PPPs, startups, and innovative financing models.
- **Talent development:** build a skilled workforce through training, education, and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Community development:** community and livelihood development supports coastal and inland populations with jobs and infrastructure.
- **Governance:** ensures a governance mechanism of transparent, accountable, and efficient regulatory environment.
- **Technology integration:** leverage technology integration digitization, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to modernize port operations.

2. Development of Ports

Kerala has 1 major port, 19 non-major ports out of which 1 is a PPP port (Vizhinjam International Seaport), 1 is a Riverine Port & Inland Container Terminal(Kottayam Port) and 4 are fully operational notified ports with ICP & ISPS status(Azhikkal, Beypore, Kollam & Vizhinjam-Kovalam). The vision for the development of the various ports mentioned is detailed below.

i. Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited

The broader vision of the Vizhinjam International Seaport is as follows;

- **Port development:** To be one of the largest seaports in India, handling a minimum of 5 Mn TEU yearly - both the transshipment and Gateway (Ex-Im) Containers.
 - Capacity augmentation work to nameplate capacity of 3.00 Mn TEU (achievable up to 4.5 Mn TEUs) commencing in October 2025, scheduled completion in December 2028 with a total investment of Rs 9,500 Cr.
 - Capacity Augmentation initially planned in 2045 to be advanced to complete by 2028, there by expecting to be a game changer for Indian Port Sector. Along with capacity augmentation, Port planned Break-Bulk Cargo handling, liquid cargo handling, Crew Change & Gateway Cargo handling.
 - Port development helps to reduce dependency of foreign port for transshipment, expecting foreign currency saving of around Rs 2,500 Cr by way of shifting transshipment from foreign port to Vizhinjam Seaport. In addition to that a saving of minimum of US\$ 150 per container for the exporters/importers through shipment from Vizhinjam Port along with a saving of 2-week shipment time
- **Port led development:** Develop Vizhinjam area as a hub for Port led logistics infrastructure & industries Acquiring the land to an extent of 1000 acres for Port-led logistics facilities and industrialization across 3 categories.
 - a) Essential Maritime Infrastructure / Services
 - b) Essential Logistics Infrastructure / Services for Export - Import (Gateway) Cargo
 - c) Port-led industries
- **Investor facilitation:** Investor centric policies such as attractive land lease mechanism providing longer period for projects for ensuring pay back of investment, ease of doing business etc. there by encouraging the potential investors to setup their businesses.
 - Multi-modal Logistics Park (MMLPs) / Inland Container Depots (ICDs)
 - Empty Container Yards (not bonded)
 - Container Repair & Pre-trip Inspection Facility
 - Container Freight Stations (CFS) & Warehousing
 - Specialized Cool Chain & Cold Chain Facilities
 - Free Trade Warehousing Zones (FTWZ)
 - Truck Terminals & Fueling Stations
 - Customs House Agencies
 - Clearing & Forwarding Services
- Thrust areas:

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- Focusing on Maritime and Logistics Services that compliments the Gateway (Ex-Im) traffic.
 - Providing environment friendly ecosystem for establishing businesses
 - Focusing on sustainable green energy development, including green bunkering/green hydrogen & green ammonia manufacturing.
 - Focusing on Social Development – New Fishing Harbor, modernization of existing Fishing Harbor& Seafood Park for local community, various social welfare schemes for local community
- Economic & Social benefits of VISL Vision 2031 as follows:
 - Expecting foreign currency saving of around Rs 2,500 Cr by way of shifting transshipment from foreign port to Vizhinjam Seaport.
 - Saving of minimum of US\$ 150 per container for the exporters/importers through shipment from Vizhinjam Port along with a saving of 2-week shipment time.
 - With this capacity augmentation of Port, GST revenue to the Government may reach yearly approx. Rs 500 Cr by 2031.
 - New Investment generate employment opportunity to the extent of 20,000 direct employment and 1,50,000 indirect employments.
 - Investment of around Rs 80,000 Crore will be invested by Investors in Kerala
 - Expecting Rs 20,000 Crore to Government exchequer as various tax and non-tax revenue from these Industries.
 - Expecting a CSR spending of minimum Rs. 500 Crores by these Industries

ii. Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd, at Azhikkal

The Government of Kerala (GoK) is in the process of developing a world class Greenfield International Port at Azhikkal in Kannur district. In this regard, the Government of Kerala's has established a special purpose vehicle "Malabar International Port and SEZ Limited" (MIPS Ltd.) formerly known as Azhikkal Port Limited to develop the port project to global standards, along with 4 Special Economic Zones / industrial parks which are critical, complementary component for strengthening the State's maritime, logistical and industrial infrastructure of the Malabar region.

The planning, investment and growth of an international/coastal shipping seaport with inter-modal connectivity, along with SEZs/ industrial parks is to funnel cargo to the port and channel entrepreneurial resources into potential industrial sectors with comparative advantages and high prospects for success primarily in the Malabar region. The Malabar International Port & SEZ project is strategically aligned with the State's and National maritime development vision, advancing Kerala's Nava Keralam initiative while complementing national programmes such as Sagarmala and Make in India. With the support of Viability Gap Funding Scheme, the project is positioned to serve as flagship model of integrated port- led industrial development, enhancing State's and National coastal shipping capacity while driving sustainable economic growth and employment generation. The key points in the vision for 2031 are:

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- To complete in four years (2026-2031) the basic investments like breakwater construction, dredging and roads by the MIPS Ltd. / Government of Kerala as well as the land acquisition for the port, connectivity and the SEZs/parks - singly and with other developmental agencies.
- Parallely, to select where necessary, private partner(s) of international standards for the commercial development of the port and related infrastructures under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode or otherwise.
- To achieve the financial closure of the Project.
- To commence in 2026-27 and complete the construction of the breakwaters, port, NH extension and supporting facilities by 2031.
- To commission by 2031 the Phase 1 port facilities of the international port with the breakwaters and the related facilities as well as Special Economic Zones / industrial parks particularly focused on port-dependent industries and businesses.

As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the forecasted port traffic in 2030-31 after commissioning is about 4 Mn MT (total of Exim and coastal traffic), which is expected to increase to about 15.2 Mn MT in 2042 with some new cargoes from port dependent SEZs/ FTWZ and Industrial Parks and LPG/ LNG cargo traffic. In tonnage, by 2042, Exim Traffic is to be 58% and 42% coastal. The container traffic in FY 33 would be 3.31 lakh TEUs which is to increase to 7.26 lakh TEUs by 2042.

The vision regarding the 4 fully operational non-major ports and the riverine port are as listed below:

i. Kovalam – Vizhinjam Port

Kovalam- Vizhinjam port lies very close to the international shipping channel and is the operational port in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram. The proximity to the international transshipment terminal offers better business opportunities. Vizhinjam Port caters to the regular shipping services to Maldives and serves the international cruise services calling at Vizhinjam. The scheme envisages conservation, maintenance & development of various maritime & terrestrial infrastructure and allied operational facilities required for port operations.

Given the close proximity to Vizhinjam International Seaport, proposals for Kovalam-Vizhinjam port to be a bunkering port, to cater the growing demand of the international seaport, are underway. The Cargo operations to Maldives is being resumed and coastal cargo operations is being envisaged.

Vision-2031

- a) The cargo movement to Maldives from Vizhinjam-Kovalam Port will be resumed
- b) The Vizhinjam-Kovalam Port also will be developed on PPP model to cater to the vessel related ancillary activities like bunkering, custom bonded warehouses, and supply to the ships

ii. Kollam Port

The various development works in Kollam Port is to be carried out in a phased manner. Two phases of development are considered.

Phase-1 development constitutes all basic infrastructure developments viz. construction of new multipurpose berth, channel and basin deepening to 10 m draft, roads, container stacking yards, trucking parking yards including passenger, cement and LPG terminals.

Phase-2 development constitutes construction of new berths, breakwater extension, expansion of container stacking yards, truck parking yards etc through sea reclamation. Capital dredging is proposed to increase the draught to 12 meters to attract bigger vessels.

Floating dry docks at appropriate locations for use in the Kollam port's region near the seaward breakwater can be explored. The existing 187m long Cargo berth and the 101m long Passenger berth in the Kollam Port is necessary in order to improve the usage of the port's available capacity. Another option is to build a wharf in front of the current freight wharf. It is possible to set up a fish processing facility in the neighbourhood of Kollam Port if the fish is imported via the port.

The establishment of a private container freight station in the immediate neighbourhood of the port also needs encouragement.

Vision 2031

- Private participation for the operation of the Port and further development
- The draft of the shipping channel will be increased to 10 m
- One additional berth will be constructed making the number of berths to three.
- Customs bonded Container Freight Station in the warehouses in the Port
- Medium sized Cruise shipping activities to Colombo and domestic cruise shipping activities connecting other non-major ports inside the State through private participation
- Coastal Cargo movement connecting the Kochi Port, Vizhinjam International Sea Port, and other non-major ports inside the State.

iii. Beypore Port

Construction of a new godown, dangerous cargo (including petroleum products) terminal and port complex are necessary infrastructure requirement for the port development. To provide a smooth passage of the ships to the port, the depth of the Beypore port needs to be increased to 10m in phased manner, and the length of the new wharf by 150m towards west, (an extension towards silk compound section).

In the case of cargo and passenger traffic bound for Lakshadweep, at Beypore port, it is now like a captive business/cargo, since the Government of India provides concessions for the cargo and passenger traffic between the mainland and the Islands. In fact, berth facilities have been developed and operated at Cochin and Mangalore ports by Lakshadweep Administration

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with funding from Government of India. In this regard, possible operational improvements may be considered to attract more business to Beypore.

The connectivity to Beypore port can be increased by improvising the road and rail connections. Road connectivity can be provided by constructing a four-lane road connecting Beypore port and the National Highway. Construction of railway from Beypore port to Farooq/Kozhikode would improve connectivity.

Vision-2031

- Private participation for the operation of the Port and its further development
- The draft of the shipping channel will be enhanced to 10 m
- Construction of an additional wharf
- Resuming the passenger shipping operation to Lakshadweep
- Starting domestic cruise shipping operation connecting the non-major ports inside the State
- Resuming the Coastal Cargo movement connecting the Kochi Port, Vizhinjam International Seaport and other non-major Ports in the state

iv. Azhikkal Port

Azhikkal is a riverfront port in Kerala's Kannur district, situated at the confluence of the Valapattanam River and the Mattol River with the Lakshadweep Sea near the mouth of the Valapattanam River. At the moment, Azhikkal is a modest fishing port. Kannur town, which is about 10 kilometres from the port site and can function as a port town by providing the necessary urban infrastructure, is an excellent choice. The town of Kozhikode is about 80 kilometres south of the port of Azhikkal.

Vision-2031

- Private Participation for the operation of the Port and its further development
- Develop cruise and bunkering operations at Azhikkal port.
- The prospect of establishing a ship building / repair facility and other related port-led industries
- Resuming the coastal cargo operations connecting the Kochi port, Vizhinjam International Sea Port, and other non-major ports in the State.

v. Kottayam Port

Kottayam Port, inaugurated in 2008 and fully operational by 2012, is a minor port recognized by the State Port Department. It is also the first minor port in India to operate in a way that enables cargo movement via inland waterways. Functioning as a full-fledged customs station, Kottayam Port has handled over 650 Lakh tonnes of cargo. Located on National Waterway 9, its strategic position and proximity to the districts of Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, and Idukki—along with access to road, rail, and inland waterway transport—make it ideal for developing a logistics hub or logistics park centered around the port.

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The goal is to establish facilities of international standards for manufacturing, assembling, labelling, packing, coordination, sorting, and distribution. This includes warehouses, distribution/packing centres, an international-standard exhibition/convention center, accommodation facilities, and office spaces. A detailed project report has been prepared to implement this plan in phases through public-private partnership, with completion targeted by 2031. The project is expected to generate numerous employment opportunities.

With the full-scale operation of Vizhinjam Port, discussions have been held with railway authorities to establish a container station near Ettumanoor Railway Station in collaboration with Kottayam Port, the only customs station in Central Kerala, under a public-private partnership model.

In collaboration with the National Waterways Authority, a floating jetty will be constructed near Kottayam Port. Using National Waterway 9, a tourism circuit will be developed connecting Malarickal, Munroe Vilakkumaram, and Pazhukkanilam Kayal.

Considering the increasing cargo traffic at Kottayam Port, steps will be taken to elevate it to international standards.

Vision-2031

- Establish a container station near Ettumanoor Railway Station on PPP model
- Construction of a floating jetty near the port in collaboration with the National Waterways Authority
- Tourism Circuit connecting the Malarikkal, Muroe Vilakumaram and Pazhukkanilam Kayal.

Development of Coastal Cargo

Coastal cargo shipping forms a crucial component of port operations in Kerala, serving as a sustainable and efficient mode of freight movement along the state's extensive coastline. With the Vizhinjam International Seaport poised to attract significant maritime traffic, there is a growing demand for enhanced cargo movement and, consequently, for the systematic development of Kerala's non-major ports.

Given that Kerala's road infrastructure is relatively narrow and already burdened with high vehicular density, the promotion of coastal shipping can substantially reduce congestion and carbon emissions associated with road transport. To realize this potential, coastal cargo operations should be actively supported through targeted government incentives and policy interventions. Measures such as mandating or encouraging the transport of Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) goods via sea routes, as well as extending similar provisions for the movement of hazardous materials, would not only ease pressure on the road network but also strengthen the state's coastal logistics ecosystem. The modal shift in inland cargo to water transport (both coastal shipping & IWT) is envisaged to be over 20% by 2031.

3. Enhancing Blue Economy through PPP model development.

The Government of India's Vision of New India - 2030 published in February 2019 also highlighted the Blue Economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth. The Blue Economy was mentioned as the sixth dimension of this Vision. The objective is to enhance substantially the 4.1 per cent of GDP share for the blue economy by 2030. The State of Kerala with its coastline of almost 600 kms, needs to refocus on the Blue Economy, and profit from the thrust being given to it by the Government of India.

Therefore, the development of a few important ports, logistics, infrastructure, and shipping; enhancing manufacturing (especially new and emerging industries, marine services like boat repairs/building/scraping), trade, coastal tourism, offshore energy projects (including wind) and Coastal Economic Zones as per the Sagarmala Programme to reduce logistics cost and time for the movement of EXIM and domestic cargo are recommended. Some of the key undertakings are development of non-major ports such as Azhikkal, Beypore, Kollam, and Kovalam – Vizhinjam, Maritime related undertakings at Kozhikode, Kollam, Malappuram, Kasaragod, Kannur, and Trivandrum. The implementation of PPP projects is being explored as way of introducing private sector investment, technology and innovation in providing better public services through improved operational efficiency.

Vision-2031

- Developing the assets under the Kerala Maritime Board on PPP model for revenue generation and creating job opportunities
- The focused areas include the operation and development existing ports (brownfield), development of new ports (green field), developing the port lands for Maritime Tourism, Maritime Industry, Logistics etc
- An overview of the projects being explored are Maritime Institutes, Maritime Enclaves, Multimodal Transit Yards, Beachside Developments, Walkways & Promenades, Hospitality Zones, Warehouses, Port Led Industries including medium sized vessel building units, Adventure & Watersports ventures, Lighthouse Tourism Ventures, Wayside Amenities centres, Leisure & Entertainment Hubs, and Marine Parks.

4. Maritime Education

The maritime sector development covers the shipping, ships (building, repair, re-cycling), development of port facilities (construction, dredging, maintenance, cargo handling equipment, storage facilities), port operation (cargo handling and vessel handling), manpower development etc. The agencies designated to conceive and implement the manpower development schemes may be mandated for development of multi-skill manpower for optimizing the manpower requirement and making the ventures cost effective. The manpower development may be planned and fulfilled in a specified period matching with the plan for other developments to fetch desired benefits.

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There is need for simple manning scales and adequate training facilities, with government/ other funding. The Kerala Maritime Institute may oversee maritime education and training and research. The establishment of the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) was a strategic move to harness development potential along the coastline. The Government is planning to develop the two maritime institutes located in Kodungalur in Thrissur District and Neendakara in Kollam District as hubs of Maritime education in India.

Vision-2031

- Develop the Neendakara maritime institute as an international maritime education and edutainment hub through private participation
- Develop the Kodungalloor institute as a maritime institute and inland vessel crew training centre under the KMB
- New inland vessel crew training centre in Alappuzha
- Promoting the inland vessel crew training institutes in private sector.

5. Promoting Maritime Tourism

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) is embarking on an ambitious initiative to establish a vibrant passenger ship/cruise/vessel service connecting the Middle East/GCC region with Kerala, aimed at providing a compelling alternative travel choice for Indian expats based out of Middle East / GCC and tourists through sea. Historically, sea route between Middle East and Kerala was always a prominent mode of trade and passenger transit. This initiative seeks to enhance connectivity and foster closer ties between these regions, catering to the burgeoning demand for efficient and enjoyable maritime travel experiences. By facilitating seamless transportation between the destinations, the KMB aims to unlock new avenues for economic growth, cultural exchange, tourism development and along with meeting the travel needs of NRKs.

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) is embarking on an ambitious initiative to establish a vibrant coastal cruise service utilizing the various ports and major tourist destinations, aimed at providing a compelling tourism experience through sea and other waterways. This initiative seeks to enhance connectivity and foster economic development, catering to the burgeoning demand for efficient and enjoyable maritime travel experiences. By facilitating seamless transportation through the coastline, the KMB aims to unlock new avenues for economic growth, cultural exchange, tourism development and along with meeting the growing emphasis on leisure trips.

The project aims to establish a Coastal Cruise service utilizing the ports in Kerala, including Kochi, and non-major ports for coastal cruise offering travelers a serene and picturesque coastal tourism experience. The service can be provided in any of the following categories, a combination of them, or any other service option related to coastal cruising:

- **Ocean Cruise** – Utilizing various ports and tourist destinations, including international ones.
- **Domestic Cruise** – Utilizing various ports in Kerala and nearby ports within the country.

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- **River/Marine Cruise** – Utilizing various ports in Kerala and inland waterways such as rivers, canals, and islands.
- **Other Categories** – Cruise service options such as day cruises, sunset cruises, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), Weddings etc.
- **Cruise services** from Kovalam to Kanyakumari - The creation of sustainable port infrastructure and tourism facilities for a sea cruise project, have been conceived to exploit the untapped potential of the world-renowned tourist attractions of Kovalam and Kanyakumari.
- Develop **Alappuzha Port as a Marina Port** by constructing breakwaters for a sheltered basin for providing modern facilities like floating jetty, marina, and passenger terminals, linking major on-going heritage and other tourism projects like construction of a Sea Pier in Alappuzha Port.

6. Inland Vessel Related

In addition to its core mandate of port development, the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) has been entrusted with the crucial responsibility of regulating mechanized inland vessels across the state, as per the Inland Vessels Act, 2021. To streamline operations and strengthen safety standards, KMB has introduced the “**Kerala Nauka – The IV Connect**” portal, facilitating online registration and survey of all mechanized inland vessels. Kerala has also become the first state to implement crew licensing through the central portal. Furthermore, an electronic inspection system has been developed and is poised for immediate deployment. Guided by its vision, KMB is committed to ensuring safe, efficient, and technology-driven inland water transport across the state through robust digital infrastructure and stringent enforcement protocols.

Vision-2031

- Bring all the mechanised vessels plying in the inland water of Kerala under annual survey and registration.
- Entire procedure of survey and registration of vessels will be made through the online portal “Kerala Nowka- The IV Connect”.
- Inspection/enforcement to find out the violations of the provisions of IV Act and imposing fine and initiating prosecution will be made through e-portal.
- Zero tolerance towards violations and prevent boat accidents in the State by ensuring safe water journey in the inland waters.
- The details of the vessels will be made in fingertips for the passengers and the inspecting officers.
- The canal cruise vessels, including the house boats will be restricted to their area of operation.
- Action plan to phase out the old vessels and bring in new vessels with green energy.

7. Major Policy Changes:

- **Strategic Convergence of Relevant Departments under Maritime Sector:**
To streamline policy formulation and enhance operational efficiency, convergence of relevant departments and agencies may be explored. Key departments and agencies including the Kerala Maritime Board, Fisheries Department, Harbour Engineering Department, Hydrographic Survey Wing, Kerala State Coastal Development Corporation, State Water Transport Department, Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC) and other relevant entities can be brought under a single ministry, ideally administered under the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala. Such a convergence can ensure coordinated planning, efficient decision making and implementation, accelerating the development of the maritime sector.
- **Strengthening the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB):**
The Kerala Maritime Board should be institutionally strengthened to function as the primary authority for the Maritime Sector in the State. Model of other states like Gujarat can be followed for this purpose. The board can be strengthened by converging relevant departments under maritime sector as mentioned above. Integrating Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd (VISL) and Malabar International Port and SEZ Ltd (MIPSL), Hydrographic Survey Wing, Department of Fisheries, Harbour Engineering Department and all other maritime related authorities into the purview of KMB should be one of the short-term strategic goal to ensure the vital assets align with the State's maritime interests.
- **Need to bring the entire coastal stretch under the Maritime Board for its development and conservation:**
Even though Kerala has 590 km stretch of coastal area with huge scope for development in Maritime Sector, including Port Development, Fisheries, Maritime Tourism, Maritime Industries, Logistics etc, the potential remain un exploited for various reasons. A holistic approach for the development of the coastal area for the betterment of the local people and overall development of the State and Nation is an urgent need. Maritime Board is the custodian of the Port Land which comes around to only 87 km out of this 590 km stretch. A lot of land parcels are available for the commercial exploitation. As of now, nobody can be termed as the custodian of the other part of the coastal stretch. Its recommended that the entire coastal stretch shall be brought under the purview of the Maritime Board after strengthening the board institutionally.
- **Prioritize PPP model Development of Non-Major Ports:**
The development of non-major ports in PPP model can be a solution for the enhanced development of the maritime ecosystem. The four non-major ports, Vizhinjam – Kovalam, Azhikkal, Kollam and Beypore, shall be prioritized on PPP development to transform the ports into drivers of economic development for the region and complement the growth of Vizhinjam and Cochin Port.

- **PPP development of Idle lying assets and restrict encroachments in port lands and other uninhabited coastal stretches:**
The land parcels owned by various departments along the coastal line that lay idle and underutilized shall be identified and developed through PPP models for commercial, industrial or logistics purposes. Alongside, a strong mechanism should be established and enforced to restrict and reclaim encroachments of port lands and the uninhabited coastal stretches.
- **Identify unviable non-major ports:**
Areas notified as port lands but are unviable for port development shall be identified and de-notified after keeping the ownership under KMB. This will help to prevent the encroachments in the land and facilitate the commercial development of the land.
- **Strengthening State Maritime and Water Transport Committee (SMWTC):**
The scope and authority of the State Maritime and Water Transport Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary should be enhanced transforming it into a high-level committee for catalyzing the coastal, maritime and inland waterway development.
- **Standardized Framework for PPP development:**
A state-wide, standardized framework should be developed for the PPP model projects. The framework can draw upon PPP guidelines published by Central Government and successful models implemented by other Indian states. Such a framework can enhance transparency and provide clear guidelines to ensure the successful implementation of PPP model developments.

8. Conclusion

Kerala's vision for 2031 is to build a modern, well-connected, and environmentally responsible maritime and inland water transport system that supports trade, industry, tourism, and local livelihoods. The State plans to upgrade and expand its non-major ports, including Vizhinjam-Kovalam, Azhikkal, Kollam, Beypore, Malabar International Port and Kottayam port to improve cargo handling, transshipment capacity, and coastal logistics.

In line with India's Blue Economy priorities, Kerala aims to promote port-based industrial growth, coastal tourism, and green energy ventures through partnerships with the private sector. The maritime training institutes at Kodungallur and Neendakara will be strengthened to develop a skilled workforce for inland vessel operations, port operations, shipbuilding, and marine services.

The State also plans to expand cruise and coastal tourism, developing international and domestic cruise services, marinas, and supporting facilities at selected destinations. At the same time, the West Coast Canal and National Waterways will be improved to handle both cargo and passenger transport, reducing road congestion and encouraging cleaner, water-based mobility. Environmental responsibility is at the heart of the plan, with a focus on green

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energy adoption, cleaner vessels, effective waste management, ensuring water quality. Infrastructure and connectivity around ports by road, rail, and waterways will be strengthened to ensure smooth cargo movement and support new industrial opportunities.

The projects envisaged will also consider its social and community impact, including creation of employment, and better livelihood options for coastal populations. Together, these efforts will help Kerala build a resilient, efficient, and inclusive maritime economy that balances growth with sustainability.