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Vizhinjam port to use radar-based technology & AI

V Ayyappan

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Thiruvananthapuram: Vizhinjam International Port will use modern sensor and radar-based technology and artificial intelligence (AI) to track, coordinate, and manage giant container ships as they come in to dock and leave after unloading.

The port is setting up a Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS) as part of a modern Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) to reduce the turnaround time of ships, increase capacity, and improve navigational safety. There will also be an AI-driven control room that will process the data. The system will be ready when the port is formally commissioned in two months. Once operational, VTMS will track ships approaching the port using radar and sensors, providing real-time location and movement updates to nearby vessels and optimising port traffic flow and berthing assignments. The control room receives real-time ship data through automated fusion of radar, Automated Identification System (AIS), CCTV, Radio Direction Finding (RDF), VHF communication, and weather stations, displayed on an electronic chart overlay for comprehensive traffic visibility. The weather system includes a tide gauge, wave and current monitor, crucial for mitigating swell risks given the port's susceptibility.

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"The VTS significantly improves navigational safety, reduces vessel turnaround times, increases port capacity, and strengthens crisis response," said a port official.

The system features an advanced decision support tool, enabling control room

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operators to anticipate and respond to potential hazards before escalation. This is crucial for ports that see busy traffic. During its trial period, Vizhinjam Port , operated by Adani Ports, handled 29 vessels, including large motherships, and handled over 60,000 containers within a month.

Being set up by IIT-M and Maritime Technology Pvt Ltd, this is the first indigenous vessel management system being installed in a port after the Union govt's push to develop the system instead of depending on high-cost foreign technology, he added.

Already, the port is using an AI-driven control room to handle the cranes eight semi-automatic ship-to-shore cranes and 23 automatic yard cranes. It takes only 10 minutes to unload a container under the automated system.

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