



The rise and fall of Vizhinjam

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ABSTRACT

Vizhinjam is a small port town situated about twelve kilometers south of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala. Before the rise of Thiruvananthapuram to historical limelight, Vizhinjam played a similar role in the past. Though it was a fishing harbor, what made Vizhinjam popular was spice trade, especially pepper trade. Before the eighteenth century Pepper was not produced anywhere in the world except in Kerala and it was termed as 'Black Gold'. The profit derived from spice trade made Vizhinjam prosperous, and it invited the territorial and economic greedy eyes of other kings. First it was the turn of Pandyas and later it was Cholas who engaged in the 'scramble for Vizhinjam'. The continuous wars and the consequent destruction ended the power and prestige of Vizhinjam and when it came to the twelfth century it lost its economic, political and strategic importance and was reduced to a mere fishing harbor and is continuing in the present day also. But in 2015, Adani Group started the construction of a new International Transshipment Terminal, which again gave a new lease of life to Vizhinjam, and it is expected that Vizhinjam will get back its former glory once the construction of it is completed.