

Machilipatnam as Ancient Port is Set to Revival

Machilipatnam, a historic Masulipatnam port, is undergoing a revival as a new Greenfield deep-sea port at Manginapudi in Andhra Pradesh, with construction ~50% complete and operations expected by late 2026. The project involves dredging, building a 2.5 km breakwater with tetrapods, and creating four berths with an 80,000-ton capacity, poised to boost trade, support industries like coal and pharma, create jobs, and enhance India's maritime connectivity.

Key Points on the Revival

- **Greenfield Deep-Sea Port:** A new deep-sea port is under construction at Manginapudi, which is considered the largest greenfield port project in recent times.
- **Historical Significance:** Machilipatnam (formerly Masulipatnam) was a major ancient and medieval port, known for exporting muslin, spices, and Kalamkari textiles, and was an early British trading post.
- **Progress & Timeline:** Construction is progressing rapidly, with approximately 50% of the work completed, and the port is expected to become operational by the end of 2026.
- **Funding:** The project is supported by a substantial term loan of over ₹3,940 crore from the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) to the Machilipatnam Port Development Corporation Limited (MPDCL). The total project cost is estimated at ₹5,156 crore.

Engineering & Infrastructure

- **Dredging:** 56 million cubic meters of sand will be dredged to ensure safe anchorage for vessels.
- **Breakwater:** A 2.5 km breakwater, made from over 2 million tons of rock and concrete tetrapods, is being built to protect the harbor from waves.
- **Berths:** The port will have four berths capable of handling ships up to 80,000 tons.

Potential economic impact

- **Industrialization:** The port's revival is expected to boost industrialization in the region. Plans are in place for a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Park on 300 acres nearby.
- **Refinery and industrial corridor:** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) is considering establishing a new refinery in Machilipatnam. The port is a key component of the ambitious Andhra Pradesh Industrial Corridor project.
- **Economic hub:** The revived port aims to become a major economic hub, facilitating the trade of cargo, minerals, and other goods, which would generate revenue for the state and create employment.

Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Terms

01

Machilipatnam Port

Machilipatnam (also known as Masulipatnam) was a historically significant port town on the Coromandel Coast that served as a major center for sea trade and textile production from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Its strategic coastal location attracted numerous European traders and contributed to its prosperity and decline.

Rise under the Golconda Sultanate and early trade (17th century)

- **Discovery and prosperity:** The port was initially discovered by the kings of Golconda, under whose rule it thrived. In the 17th century, it became a major hub for trading spices, especially with European markets.
- **European presence:** Western traders flocked to Machilipatnam, particularly the Dutch and English. The Dutch established a settlement and a fort here between 1605 and 1750, a fort that is now known as the Bandar Fort.
- **Textile Center:** The port gained fame for its exquisite Kalamkari textiles, which were painted with a pen (kalam) using vegetable dyes. This unique craft attracted Western traders and was a key part of the port's economy.

Shift in power and decline (18th and 19th centuries)

- **British control:** After the decline of the Golconda Sultanate, the British took control of Machilipatnam. As the British East India Company shifted its focus to other ports like Madras (Chennai), the trade at Machilipatnam began to decline.

- **Port's limitations:** The port's natural features, including the shallow coastal waters, were less favorable for larger ships compared to other ports, contributing to its loss of prominence.
- **Loss of strategic importance:** With the British solidifying their presence elsewhere, Machilipatnam lost its position as a major strategic and commercial hub on the Coromandel Coast.



Modern-day location

- **Location:** Southeastern coast of India, along the Bay of Bengal.
- **State:** Andhra Pradesh.
- **District:** Krishna district.
- **Coastal Area:** Known as the Coromandel Coast.
- **River Delta:** Located at one of the mouths of the Krishna River.

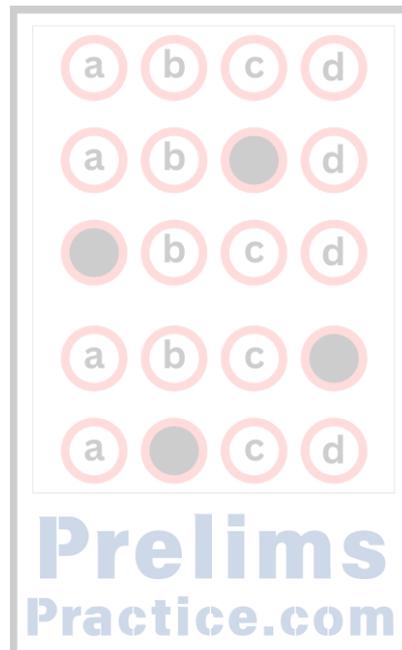
Geographical features and advantages

- **River Delta:** Situated in the delta of the Krishna River, one of the major rivers in South India. The river provided a navigable route from the port to the interior, connecting it with the kingdom of Golconda.
- **Coastal hub:** Its location on the coast of the Bay of Bengal made it a crucial point for maritime trade, connecting it with other ports in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.
- **Links to hinterland:** Its position provided a vital link between the coastal areas and the inland regions of the Deccan, allowing for the export of goods like textiles and diamonds.
- **Trade networks:** The port's geography facilitated extensive trading networks across the Indian and Eastern Oceans, reaching as far as Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, and the China seas.

Decline Factors

- **Cyclone belt:** The city is located in India's "Cyclone Belt," and frequent, powerful tropical cyclones often caused significant damage, with the Great Cyclone of 1864 being a decisive blow.

- **Shifting trade routes:** The port's decline was accelerated when European trading companies, primarily the British, shifted their main operations to other locations like Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai), and Calcutta (Kolkata).
- **Inability to accommodate modern ships:** By the 18th and 19th centuries, the port was too shallow for larger, modern ships, forcing vessels to anchor miles offshore.



Practice Questions:

1. Consider the following statements regarding the historic Machilipatnam port and its revival:

- I. Machilipatnam, also known as Masulipatnam, was an important port city as early as the Satavahana period, trading extensively with the Roman Empire and Southeast Asia
- II. The term "muslin" is believed to be derived from "Maisolia", one of the ancient names for Machilipatnam, which was a key export center for this textile
- III. The new Greenfield deep-sea port currently under construction at Manginapudi is being developed as the first major port in India under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model
- IV. The decline of the historic port was primarily caused by Mughal invasions and the British decision to shift their trade focus to Madras (Chennai)

How many of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

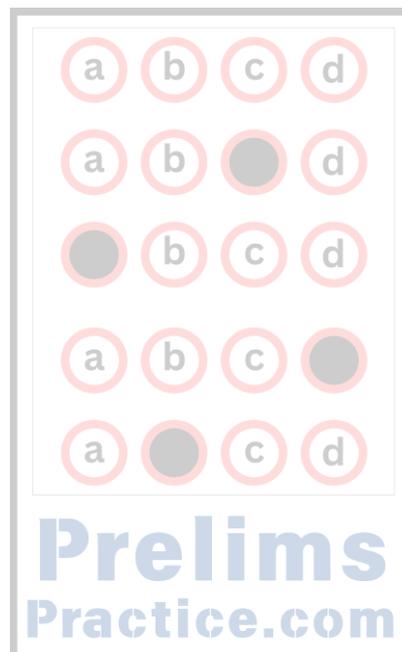
- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: a

Explanation: Statement I is correct: Machilipatnam (Maisolia/Masalia) flourished as a significant port city from the 1st century AD, during the Satavahana dynasty, facilitating maritime trade with Rome, China, Persia, and Southeast Asia. **Statement II is correct:** The port was well known for the export of fine muslin cloth, and the word "muslin" itself is likely derived from the city's ancient name, "Maisolia". **Statement III is incorrect:** The new port is being developed under the Landlord Model by the Machilipatnam Port Development Corporation Ltd (SPV), not the typical Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, though it does involve private companies for operations. **Statement IV is correct:** The port's decline was due to several factors, including major cyclones (e.g., in 1864 and 1867), Mughal neglect after the conquest of Golconda, and the final British decision to shift trade operations and investments to the port of Madras (Chennai).

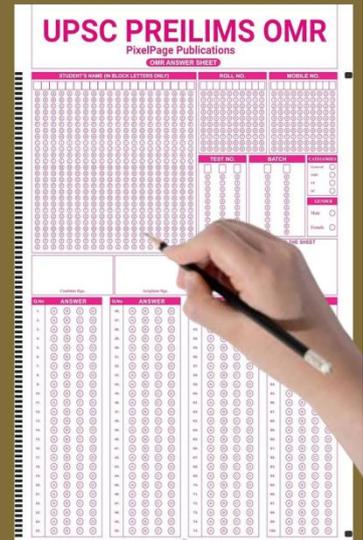
For More Practice Questions, visit:

www.prelimspractice.com





TARGET PRELIMS 2026



PRELIMS PRACTICE PROGRAM

Subject Wise Practice Module

2,000+ Practice Questions
₹ 99 Only
~~₹ 600~~

Art, Culture & Heritage | Ancient & Medieval History | Modern History | Physical Geography | Human Geography | Mapping | Indian Polity | Indian Governance | International Organisations | Environment & Ecology | Economy | Science & Technology

Current Affairs Practice Module

2,000+ Practice Questions
₹ 99 Only
~~₹ 600~~

Press Information Bureau | The Hindu | Indian Express | Press Trust of India | Business Line | Business Standard | Times of India

Contemporary Issues Practice Module

1,000+ Practice Questions
₹ 69 Only
~~₹ 350~~

Press Information Bureau- (PIB) | The Hindu | Indian Express | Press Trust of India | Rajya Sabha TV | Times of India | Lok Sabha TV

Essential Editorials Practice Module

1,000+ Practice Questions
₹ 69 Only
~~₹ 350~~

The Hindu | Indian Express | Times of India | Business Line | Business Standard | Times of India | The Sunday Guardian | MINT

LIVE

Classes



Current Affairs



Contemporary Issues



Essential Editorials

www.prelimspractice.com

Class Discussion Space

a	b	c	d
a	b	●	d
●	b	c	d
a	b	c	●
a	●	c	d

Prelims
Practice.com