

## KERALA

# UNESCO shows interest in Muziris project

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MALINAKARA (Ernakulam dt.): The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has shown interest in the Muziris heritage project of the State government, according to Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac. UNESCO had asked the Muziris authorities to explore the possibility of developing the heritage project as a 'Spice Route' on the lines of the well-known 'Silk Route,' Mr. Isaac told a workshop on setting up museums as part of the Muziris project here on Saturday.

"If UNESCO accepts the proposal and the Muziris project is developed as a 'Spice Route,' the entire Kerala coastal line will become part of it. That way it would become one of the biggest heritage-conservation cum tourism projects in the world," he said.

The Finance Minister said that 22 museums would be set up as part of the project. These museums would showcase the life and times of the ancient port town of Muziris – believed to have been located somewhere near Kodungalloor – over the past 2000 years. Some of these museums would be located in the houses of Kerala's modern leaders such as social reformer Sahodaran Ayyappan and freedom fighter Mohammed Abdul Rahman Sahib.

Tourism Minister Kодиyeri Balakrishnan noted that the Muziris project had whipped up fresh interest in heritage conservation across the State. There was a new awareness about Kerala's cultural and historical heritage and monuments. More places were now asking to be included in the Muziris project he said. Mr. Balakrishnan released a 'Muziris Newsletter' by presenting a copy to Revenue Minister K.P. Rajendran. Fisheries Minister S. Sarma spoke about the historical importance of the coastal areas of Kerala.

The Rs. 140-crore Muziris project is a conservation-cum-tourism project in Ernakulam and Thrissur.