
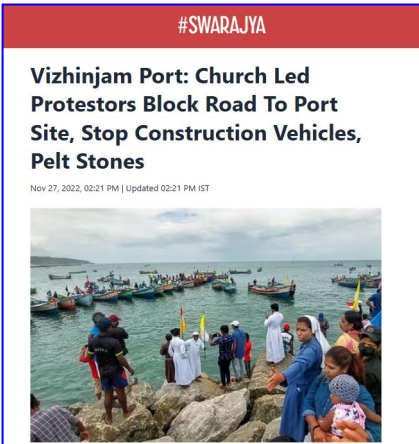





13 Incidents : Church Opposition to Infrastructure and Development Projects in India (2001-2025)

According to a report by the communemag published on **June 10, 2025**, **Christian Priest Fr. Jegath Gaspar opposed** the **Enayam International Container Terminal port project** (a proposed deepwater seaport by the Indian government) in Tamil Nadu, warning locals that it was a threat to the coastal Christian community. Fr. Jegath said the project should be rejected **“in the name of Jesus.”**



Similarly, the report has compiled **13 such incidents** from **2001 to 2025** in which **church and church-affiliated organisations** have **opposed infrastructure and development projects in India.**

S.No	Incidents	Visual & Source
1.	<p>India’s First Deepwater Seaport Could’ve Been In Tamil Nadu, Christian Priest Opposed It In The Name Of Jesus</p> <p>Date : June 10, 2025 Place : Enayam, Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu</p> <p>Project : Enayam International Container Terminal port project (a proposed deepwater seaport by the Indian government)</p> <p>Opposed By : Christian priest Fr. Jegath Gaspar Raj, backed by Church-linked groups and political allies</p> <p>Incident : Fr. Jegath Gaspar opposed the port project, warning locals that it was a threat to the coastal Christian community. Fr. Jegath said the project should be rejected “in the name of Jesus.” Fr. Jegath speeches framed the project as an assault on livelihood and religious identity, mobilizing large-scale resistance. Church-backed groups echoed similar narratives, stalling progress on India’s first major deepwater port plan.</p>	 <p>Thecommunemag</p> <p>Video</p>
2.	<p>Church-led protesters block construction vehicles above port site</p> <p>Date : November 26, 2022 Place : Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala Project : Vizhinjam International Seaport Project Opposed By : Church-led protesters, including Latin Catholic clergy and activists</p> <p>Incident : Church-led Protestors blocked roads leading to the Vizhinjam port, stopped construction vehicles, and clashed with police by pelting stones. Despite the port’s national importance, the Church raised environmental and livelihood concerns. The protests caused significant delays in the project’s progress.</p>	 <p>Swarajyamag</p> <p>The Hindu</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>eChurch daily criticizes SilverLine project</p> <p>Date : March 23, 2022 Place : Kochi, Kerala Project : SilverLine (K-Rail) Semi-High-Speed Rail Corridor Opposed By : Deepika, the daily run by the Catholic Church</p> <p>Incident : Deepika, the daily run by the Catholic Church, criticized the Kerala government's SilverLine project, accusing it of being anti-people and poorly planned. The Church weekly argued that the rail project would lead to widespread displacement and environmental damage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The article is written by Fr Michel Pulickal, secretary of Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC), commission for social harmony and vigilance. The article titled —“Does development only mean K-Rail?”— states that many are eyeing the thousands of crores involved in the project. 	 <p>Times of India</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>All Saints Church members protest against Bangalore Metro Rail</p> <p>Date : Dec 12, 2021 Place : Bengaluru, Karnataka Project : Bangalore Metro Rail (Namma Metro) Opposed By : Members of All Saints Church congregation (Church community)</p> <p>Incident : The Church congregation protest Bangalore Metro Rail infrastructure project by protesting the land acquisition from the All Saints Church campus. The congregation staged daily sit-in protests, opposing the use of 883 square meters of church land for metro construction, citing concerns over heritage loss, environmental degradation, and damage to a sacred religious site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Church members demanded the use of alternate government land. This protest delayed the metro project . 	 <p>The New Indian Express Times of India,</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>K-Rail against people, nature : Orthodox Church</p> <p>Date : August 11, 2021 Place : Kerala Project : SilverLine (K-Rail) Semi-High-Speed Rail Corridor</p> <p>Opposed By : Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, the metropolitan of Niranam diocese of Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church</p> <p>Incident : Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, the metropolitan of Niranam diocese of Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church publicly opposed the SilverLine project, stating it was “against people and nature.” Bishop criticized the eviction of thousands of families and warned of serious ecological and economic consequences. Through a public statement, Bishop urged the government to withdraw the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bishop said, “Uncontrolled exploitation of nature has made the climate unpredictable. Development activities ignoring nature will not be permanent.” ● 	 <p>Times of India</p>

	<p>Church opposed coal mine auction in Jharkhand</p> <p>Date : July 15, 2020 Place : Jharkhand Project : Auction of 41 coal mining blocks for commercial mining by the central government</p> <p>Opposed By : Church leaders and Father Vincent Ekka. Heads the department of tribal studies at the Jesuit-run Indian Social Institute in New Delhi.</p> <p>6. Incident : The Church leaders in Jharkhand protest the central government's move to auction coal blocks in tribal areas. Church leaders argued that mining would displace indigenous communities and destroy their livelihoods. The Church supported tribal resistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Father Ekka also said that, "I even doubt the central government's claim of job opportunities for locals. Mining goes on in several states for decades without concern about its impact. If it provides job for locals, why there is a mass migration from these states." 	 <p>Church joins to oppose coal mine auction in Jharkhand</p>  <p>UCA News , Times of India , The Hindu</p>
	<p>Role of Catholic churches in shutting down TN's Vedanta-owned Sterlite Copper factory</p> <p>Date : 2018 Place : Thoothukudi (Tuticorin), Tamil Nadu Project : Vedanta-owned Sterlite Copper Plant</p> <p>Opposed By : Catholic Church officials, including priests, nuns, and religious leaders such Christian leader Brother Mohan C Lazarus</p> <p>Incident : Church Officials opposed the Sterlite Copper Plant in Thoothukudi by mobilizing and leading public protests under the guise of environmental concerns. Catholic clergy and congregations participated actively, declaring Sundays as "Protest Day." Pastor Lazarus led a march from Our Lady of Snows Church to the Collector's office.</p> <p>7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Church-backed campaigns spread unverified claims about environmental damage, despite scientific assessments by NEERI and NGT confirming emissions were within legal limits. Mohan C Lazarus used social media to call Sterlite a toxic factory and announced a large-scale protest on 24 March 2018. 	<p>#SWARAJYA</p> <p>Thoothukudi Sterlite Copper Closure: Many Protesters Now Feel Mised; Want Reopening Of Plant</p> <p>Dec 28, 2021, 04:04 PM Updated 04:04 PM IST</p>  <p>Swarajyamag , Op India , Times of India</p>

8.	<p>Mumbai Christians protest BMC move to demolish Cross for road widening</p> <p>Date : May 22, 2016 Place : Mumbai, Maharashtra Project : BMC's proposed road-widening plan Opposed By : Catholic community and Christian NGOs (Save Our Land, Watchdog Foundation, church leaders)</p> <p>Incident : Catholic Church members, Church leaders, and Christian NGOs (Save Our Land, Watchdog Foundation) protested BMC's road-widening project that proposed to demolish a old heritage cross and a portion of the graveyard at Our Lady of Remedy Church. The protest, backed by over 15,000 Christians.</p>	 <p>THE HINDU</p> <p>Thousands protest BMC move to demolish Cross for road widening</p> <p>Counterview , The Hindu</p>
9.	<p>Church-backed activism played a significant role in the Kudankulam protests</p> <p>Date : 2011–2012 Place : Kudankulam, Idinthakarai, Tamil Nadu Project : Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (2x1000 MW Russia-backed project)</p> <p>Opposed By : Church officials and Church-funded NGOs (Tuticorin Diocese Association, parish priest of Idinthakarai, Bishop Yvon Ambrose)</p> <p>Incident : The church authorities protest the Koodankulam nuclear power plant project by organising and funding mass protests through parishes and church-backed NGOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Churches were turned into protest camps and pastors were found selecting protesters under instructions from bishops. A Republic TV sting in 2017 exposed links between church leaders and foreign funding used to fuel the movement. 	 <p>First Post , Op India, dianuke , Times of India</p>
10.	<p>Church against industrialisation</p> <p>Date : May 19, 2010 Place : Odisha Project : South Korea's POSCO steel and iron plant project Opposed By : Church officials – including Fr Ajay Kumar Singh, an activist in the archdiocese of Cuttack- Bhubaneswar, Mgr Lucas Kerketta, bishop of Sambalpur</p> <p>Incident : The Church opposed the POSCO project, stating it threatened forced eviction of thousands, destruction of farmland, forests, and water resources, and harm to tribal and Dalit communities. Church leaders publicly joined villagers, who guarded their land to block project access—asserted they were protecting their rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mgr Lucas Kerketta, bishop of Sambalpur, had said that, “the government should be more concerned about the needs of its own people rather industrialisation.” For him, “solutions to issues like relocation, resettlement and employment can found amicably”. 	 <p>Asianews</p>

11.	<p>Catholic churches stall Odisha's Niyamgiri bauxite mines</p> <p>Date : 2009 Place : Niyamgiri Hills , Odisha Project : Vedanta's Bauxite Mining Project</p> <p>Opposed By : Churches, Church-backed NGOs</p> <p>Incident : Church and Church-backed NGOs opposed Vedanta's bauxite mining in Niyamgiri by funding and supporting tribal protests, claiming it would displace 8,000 Dongria Kondh tribals and harm the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2012, Vedanta also announced the closure of the Lanjigarh refinery. The refinery was built at the base of the Niyamgiri mountains to process the 78 million tonnes of bauxite deposits found there. 	 <p>Oneindia , Op India</p>
12.	<p>Catholics Protest Against Road Expansion Project</p> <p>Date : December 18, 2004 Place : Mumbai, Maharashtra Project : BMC's road widening plan requiring partial demolition of cemetery</p> <p>Opposed By : Parishioners of Orlem Church, including Orlem parish priest Fr. Alex Carvalho</p> <p>Incident : Church or Church Officials objected an development project by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) that proposed demolishing part of the Orlem Church cemetery for road expansion. The Catholic community, led by church leaders, objected to the move, citing religious sanctity and emotional significance of the cemetery.</p>	 <p>Christiantoday</p>
13.	<p>Church members object to commercial complex</p> <p>Date : July 27, 2001 Place : Hyderabad, Telangana Project : Proposed Commercial Complex on Methodist Boys High School Premises</p> <p>Opposed By : Members of the Methodist Church</p> <p>Incident : Church protest proposed Commercial Complex of the Methodist Boys High School premises into a commercial complex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over 15,000 members of the church held a peace rally against the clergy-led initiative, accusing church authorities of misusing funds and attempting to commercialize religious and educational property. 	 <p>Times of India</p>