



**Friends of
the Earth
India**

Friends of the Earth India extends full solidarity to the fishers and farmers resisting the ecologically destructive Vizhinjam Sea Port

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Friends of the Earth India extends its solidarity to the fishers of Trivandrum, Kerala, who are demanding immediate end to the construction of the Adani Vizhinjam International Seaport. The project is an 'international transshipment deep water multipurpose seaport' that is being developed by Adani Ports as a public-private partnership with the Government of Kerala.

The construction of the Vizhinjam Adani Seaport has aggravated sea erosion which has resulted in damage to houses and roads, and loss of livelihood commons relied on by thousands of fishing communities in nearby villages. Originally abandoned after it was declared unviable, the project was given to Adani after the state agreed to fund part of the work including building of breakwaters, roads and railways along with viability gap funding and allocation of land for development of real estate.

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, tabled in the Kerala assembly in 2017, had said the conditions of the concession agreement were not favourable to the state government. "Out of a total project cost of Rs 7,525 crore, the Adani Group needs to invest only Rs 2,454 crore. The rest of the cost would be borne by the state and the central governments," it had said. Experts say that this project would put the government in a "debt trap", and could meet a fate similar to that of the Vallarpadam Terminal in Kochi, which has failed to make a profit more than a decade after it was opened.

The permissions for the Vizhinjam Adani Port were acquired based on fraudulent studies involving agencies that submitted reports concluding that the Trivandrum coast faced no erosion. This fraud stands exposed as study after study is revealing the extent of coastal erosion in the district.

On 5 June, 2022, the fishing communities started an indefinite agitation to protect their coasts, homes and livelihoods. By now, more than 500 houses had been lost to the advancing seas. Fishing has become difficult as the breakwaters have made the seas turbulent; a number of fishers have lost their lives near the breakwaters and others injured. The submerged reefs of this region make for productive fishing grounds, and a rich breeding ground for mussels. However, these fishing grounds have been degraded by siltation caused by the constant dredging inside the port.

Of late, the West Coast and the Arabian Sea too is gaining notoriety for its cyclonic storms that may be linked to climate change. The increased frequency and intensity of such cyclones make a bad situation worse by aggravating and amplifying the impact of erosion – namely, loss of property, degradation of water sources and salinity intrusion. The port's impact will be felt not just on the coast, but also on inland ecosystems of the Western Ghats -- It is estimated that 70 lakh tons of rock is needed for the building of the breakwaters which is being imported from Tamil Nadu amidst much opposition. The National Institute of Ocean Technology appointed by the Adani Vizhinjam Port Ltd, in its latest report has admitted there was erosion north of the port and accretion in the port area and its southern coastal villages from 2015 to 2021.

Friends of the Earth-India notes that corporates like Adani are guilty of similar exploitation of natural resources and indigenous communities in Australia, Mozambique and other parts of India.

FoE India adds its voice to the demands of the fisherfolk of Trivandrum:

- (i) Immediate halt of the work of Vizhinjam adani seaport,
- (ii) Rehabilitation of all fishers to their original lands whose land and houses were destroyed during to sea erosion,
- (iii) Restoration of the eroded coasts at the cost of the polluter/offender,
- (iv) An independent and impartial study should be conducted to understand the measures that need to be taken to protect our coasts and ensure the primacy of fishing community over sea and its resources over global corporates and their profits.

In Solidarity,

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