

KERALA

Greens bat for Edakkal Caves

E.M. Manoj

KALPETTA: JANUARY 07, 2017 00:00 IST

UPDATED: JANUARY 07, 2017 04:10 IST

They also seek UNESCO World Heritage status for the caves

Greens in the district prepare to resume a series of agitations after three decades demanding declaration of Edakkal Caves as a national monument to conserve the centuries-old petroglyphs on the walls of the caves.

They also want to expedite measures to secure the UNESCO World Heritage status for the monument.

“When the State Archaeology Department had declared the rock art site as a protected monument on July 4, 1985, the site was facing threat from nearly seven granite quarries in the area,” Thomas Ambalavayal, convenor, Edakkal Caves Protection Committee, told *The Hindu*. A series of agitations launched under the aegis of the organisation and Wayanad Prakruthi Samrakshana Samithi (WPSS) in 1986 put an end to the granite quarrying,” he said.

Neglect and ruin

“But the site is still facing neglect and ruin owing to the alleged negligence of the Archaeology Department. Though the site has been declared as a protected area, the tourism activities are managed by the Edakkal Tourism Destination Management Council under the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC),” WPSS president N. Badusha said.

“However, the DTPC has focused only on increasing the income from the site, instead of implementing conservation measures after a comprehensive study. Unrestricted entry of visitors without assessing the carrying capacity of the fragile rock site has raised concern,” Mr. Thomas said.

The State Archaeology Department had appointed an officer to monitor the day-to-day activities at the monument in 2009, but the post has remained vacant after the officer was transferred.

Though former Minister for Cultural Affairs K.C. Joseph had announced that all steps would be taken to secure the UNESCO World Heritage status for the monument and Rs.50 lakh was set aside for the purpose, the department had yet to initiate any positive measures for the purpose.

Environmentalists would gather on Saturday noon at Ambalavayal to commemorate the 30th anniversary of their agitation Mr. Badusha said. M.G.S. Narayanan, formal chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research, will inaugurate a history seminar to be held in connection with the gathering at 10 a.m. on Sunday.



UP TO **60%** OFF FARES

T&Cs apply.

Start 2017 with great savings

[VIEW FLIGHTS](#)

malaysia  AIRWAYS

