

KERALA

# Eco zone: residents organise mass protest

STAFF REPORTER

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**Demand to exclude inhabited areas in Amboori, Kallikkad from ESZ**



Several hundred residents of Amboori and Kallikkad grama panchayats participated in a mass protest organised in front of the Forest headquarters here on Tuesday against the draft notification to declare an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around the Neyyar wildlife sanctuary.

Former Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala, who inaugurated the demonstration, said the notification issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), if implemented, would drive out numerous families who settled in the region many decades ago. He demanded that human-inhabited and agricultural areas be excluded from the ESZ.

Presiding over the agitation, Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] district secretary Anavoor Nagappan said the State government would stand by the farming community under any circumstance. He added the government would adopt necessary steps to urge the Centre to confine the proposed zone to uninhabited areas.

BJP district president V.V. Rajesh urged the Forest department to submit a detailed report to the MoEFCC highlighting the need for excluding inhabited areas from the zone.

Amboori grama panchayat president Valsala Raju, Kallikkad grama panchayat president Pantha Sreekumar, district panchayat member Ansajitha Ressel and Amboori ESZ Action Council general convener Jacob Cheerumvelil addressed the protesters.

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