The sighting of new menhirs, perhaps the largest-ever recorded in Kerala, on the Pothamala hills in the Udumbanchola taluk on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border, has thrown light on the possible existence of a major prehistoric necropolis there.

The menhirs were identified by a team of historians led by Rajeev Puliyoor, assistant professor at the Government Teachers’ Training College, Elanthoor, near here, during a visit to Shanthanpara village on Tuesday.

Mr. Puliyoor told The Hindu that the Pothamala hills housed hundreds of cobbled stone structures, pointing to the existence of a structured graveyard of a prehistoric civilisation.

He said the largest menhir found was 20 feet tall and 6 feet wide, with a thickness of 5 feet.

Harikrishnan M., Jomon Jose and M.S. Jayan, assistant professors at the Nedumkandam B.Ed College, were the other team members.

Special pattern
The menhirs were planted in a specific geometrical pattern on a cluster of hills, Mr. Puliyoor said. He said the exquisite natural settings of the hills and dales at Pothamala made the yet-to-be explored megalithic site different from similar sites spotted in other parts of the State. Most of these structures were oriented in the east-west direction.

The megalithic stone sentinels at Pothamala might hold the key to the hitherto unexplored facets of a civilisation that dated back around 3,000 years, said Mr. Puliyoor. He urged the Archaeological Survey of India and the Archaeology Department to conduct a full-scale excavation and detailed study of this megalithic site without delay.

70 sites spotted earlier
Seventy megalithic sites have already been identified in different parts of Idukki by researchers and historians, including 40 megalithic sites in the Udumbanchola taluk itself.

But no serious attempts have been made to understand their distribution pattern.