

NEWS

National recognition to Paika revolt cheers Odisha

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • July 18, 2017 • Updated August 26, 2022 • 2 min read

Times of India: Finance minister Arun Jaitley, in his budget speech, announced to commemorate the Paika Rebellion, an armed uprising against the British East India company in Khurda area of Odisha in 1817 bringing cheers among people across the state.

“Two-hundred years ago in 1817, a valiant uprising of soldiers led by Buxi Jagabandhu (Bidyadhar Mohapatra) took place in Khurda of Odisha. We will commemorate the same appropriately,” Jaitley said.

The Paikas were the traditional land-owning militia of Odisha and served as warriors. They revolted against the British after the later took over their rent-free land, 14 years after Odisha came under British rule in 1803.

Pratish Acharya, a professor of history, said the Central government recognition to the Paika movement predating the officially recognised first war of independence, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, is a pride moment for Odisha. “It’s a well-deserving recognition. The 200 years must be celebrated nationwide,” he said.

The Buxi-led rebels first attacked the police station of Banpur, burnt government quarters and looted the treasury. After a British commander was killed during a fight at Gangapada, the government officials fled Khurda in fear. The revolt spread like wildfire to other parts of the state such as Gop, Kanika and Kujanga and lasted for around one and half year.

Political parties cutting across party lines lauded the Centre’s move.

“On behalf of the people of Odisha, I welcome the decision to commemorate the bi-centenary led by Buxi Jagabandhu,” chief minister Naveen Patnaik said.

Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who had written a letter to Jaitley seeking budgetary allocation for celebration of the 200 years of Paika revolt, said, “By giving recognition to the historic event, the Narendra Modi-led government has paid a befitting tributes to the heroes of Odisha who stood for the country.”

Leader of opposition and senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra also welcomed the gesture, though he termed the budget “an overall big let-down for the state.”

The state government in July last year decided to construct a Paika revolt memorial at Barunaai in Khurda and make budgetary allocation for the 200 years celebrations in the coming state budget.

Credit: Times of India

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