

Film project on Malabar revolt leader sparks controversy

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Written by | Thiruvananthapuram | Updated: June 24, 2020 8:15:42 am

Poster of the film

A film project on a prominent Muslim leader of the Malabar uprising of 1921 has triggered sharp reactions by the Sangh Parivar and demands to scrap production of the film in Kerala.

The Malabar rebellion, also known as Moplah rebellion, was an uprising of Muslims tenants against the British

authorities and their Hindu allies. It has been often perceived to be one of the first nationalist uprisings in southern India. The episode led to the large-scale killings of Hindus in the Malabar region and remains a debated topic among historians.

Actor-director Prithviraj Sukumaran on Monday announced a film on [Variyamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji](#), who was shot dead by British police in Malappuram. "Shooting of Variyamkunnan would begin next year, marking 100 years of the Malabar revolt, which has been deliberately pushed into oblivion", he said on social media.

However, the announcement sparked a hate campaign against the makers on social media.

Amid the controversy, [BJP](#) leader and filmmaker Ali Akbar also announced a film "to expose the true face of the uprising". Referring to Hindus killed during the uprising, he said, "They are the heroes, who were not ready to change religion, those who gave Ram's name to the enemy. Those who fought till the last minute..."

Sasikala, Kerala president of the Hindu Aikya Vedi, an umbrella outfit of pro-BJP organisations, said, "We (Hindus) would react and that would be a different reaction, which would not be on your expected lines. Like the Hindus of 1921, the Hindus of 2021 are not ready to get annihilated."

Director Ashiq Abu said, "The Malabar rebellion has a history which has been deliberately concealed. There could be more than one film on the same topic." Two more films on the topic were announced by different makers on Monday.

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