Marudhu Brothers' Memorial Day – 24 October (day of their hanging at Tiruppathur, 1801)

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News

The Marudhu brothers – Periya Marudhu (Vellai Marudhu) and Chinna Marudhu, rulers of the Sivaganga country – were hanged by the British at the Tiruppathur fort (Sivaganga district) on 24 Oct 1801; many of their relatives and followers were also hanged. The day is observed as the Marudhu Brothers' Memorial Day at the memorial pillar in Tiruppathur; their 'Guru Pooja' is held on 27 Oct at their memorial in Kalaiyarkoil.

Key facts

Born	Mukkulam (near Narikudi); Periya Marudhu 1748, Chinna Marudhu 1753
Hanged	24 Oct 1801 – Tiruppathur fort (Sivaganga district)
Proclamation	Tiruchirappalli / Jambudweepa Proclamation – 16 June 1801; pasted on the Nawab's palace in Tiruchi fort and walls at Srirangam
Revolt	South Indian Rebellion 1800–01 (Second Poligar War)
Guru Pooja	27 Oct – Kalaiyarkoil memorial
Postage stamp	24 Oct 2004 – 500 paise

Background

- History: the Marudhu brothers served Muthu Vaduganatha Thevar, ruler of Sivaganga. After he was killed by Company forces in the battle of Kalaiyarkoil in 1772, they stayed with Rani Velu Nachiyar for eight years under Gopala Nayak's protection at Virupachi. Sivaganga was regained with Hyder Ali's help; the brothers received high posts and later ruled Sivaganga.
- Jambudweepa Proclamation (16 June 1801): a call to people of all castes and creeds to take up arms against the English – one of South India's earliest calls for freedom from British rule. 'Jambudweepa' is an ancient name for the Indian subcontinent.
- South Indian Rebellion (1800–01): British records called the Marudhu brothers' revolt the 'South Indian Rebellion'. Allies: Gopala Nayak of Dindigul, Oomaithurai, Kattabomman's brother (sheltered by the Marudhus), Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, Krishnappa Nayak of Mysore and Dhoondaji Waugh. Company forces under Col. Agnew crushed the revolt; the brothers were captured at Cholapuram.

Tamil Nadu link: a memorial pillar stands at Tiruppathur, where the brothers were hanged; ministers and the district administration pay homage every 24 Oct. Their memorial is at Kalaiyarkoil. A 10-ft bronze statue of the brothers in Madurai was opened by CM Karunanidhi on 15 Dec 2007. The film 'Sivagangai Seemai' (1959) is based on their lives. Note: this Tiruppathur is in Sivaganga district; the 'Tirupathur district' formed in 2019 is different.

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