FM Nirmala Sitharaman releases ₹250 commemorative coin in Varanasi on Muthuswami Dikshitar's 250th birth anniversary

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News

On 3 Nov 2026 Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released a ₹250 commemorative coin at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, marking the 250th birth anniversary of Muthuswami Dikshitar, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music. The programme was organised by IIT (BHU)'s Centre of Excellence for Indian Knowledge Systems (CoE-IKS), with support from BSE under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. Minted in limited numbers in precious metal, the coin is a collector's item, not for daily circulation; it is sold on the Government mint website at ₹6,985.

Key facts

Event	3 Nov 2026 – Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi
Released by	FM Nirmala Sitharaman; BHU VC Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi and IIT-BHU Director Amit Patra present
Organised by	IIT (BHU) – Centre of Excellence for Indian Knowledge Systems; BSE – CSR support
Coin	₹250; precious metal; for collectors only; price ₹6,985
Dikshitar	Born 1775 (some sources 1776), Tiruvarur; died 1835, Ettayapuram; signature 'Guruguha'

Works	About 450–500 kritis, mostly in Sanskrit; Navagraha kritis, Kamalamba Navavarana kritis

Background

- Trinity of Carnatic music: Tyagaraja (1767–1847), Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775–1835) and Syama Sastri (1762–1827) – all three were born in Tiruvarur. Tyagaraja composed mostly in Telugu (signature 'Tyagaraja'); Syama Sastri was a devotee of Bangaru Kamakshi of Thanjavur (signature 'Syama Krishna'); Dikshitar composed mostly in Sanskrit (signature 'Guruguha').
- Life: his father was Ramaswami Dikshitar. The ascetic Chidambaranatha Yogi took him to Kashi (Varanasi), where he learnt music, philosophy and yoga and absorbed the influence of Dhrupad (Hindustani) – hence the coin's release in Varanasi. He was a veena player (vainika); his brother Baluswami pioneered the violin in Carnatic music.
- Works: the 'Kamalamba Navavarana kritis' honour Goddess Kamalamba, who has an independent shrine in the Thyagaraja temple at Tiruvarur, and follow Sri Chakra worship. The 'Navagraha kritis' praise the nine planets. Influenced by Western music heard at Fort St. George, Madras, he also composed about 40 'Nottuswara' songs.
- Disciples: the 'Tanjore Quartet' – Ponnaiah, Chinnaiah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu – were Dikshitar's disciples; they shaped the present Bharatanatyam concert repertoire (margam).
- Coinage: under the Coinage Act, 2011 the Union Government designs and mints coins; the Government Mints (Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Noida) work under SPMCIL. Commemorative coins are mostly collector's items.

Tamil Nadu link: all three of the Carnatic Trinity were born in Tiruvarur. Dikshitar died on Deepavali day, 1835, at Ettayapuram (now Thoothukudi district), where his samadhi stands – Ettayapuram is also the birthplace of poet Subramania Bharati. The annual 'Tyagaraja Aradhana' is held at Thiruvaiyaru (Thanjavur), where Tyagaraja's samadhi is. The 'Tamil Isai Moovar' (Tamil Trinity) – Muthu Thandavar, Arunachala Kavirayar and Marimutha Pillai – who laid the foundation of Tamil kritis, were from Sirkazhi.

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