THE ADHEENAMS
SPIRITUAL TORCHBEARERS
In 1947, as the movement for Indian independence from Britain culminated, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked the veteran freedom fighter C. Rajagopalachari, to determine the ceremony to take over power from the British. Rajaji turned to the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam, a centuries-old, non-Brahmin Dharmic Math of Tamil Nadu. The math was called upon to perform one of its most solemn rituals, one in continuity with one of the most ancient practices of Indian governance.
The Adheenams not only enjoyed the patronage of Kings, but also received their royal grants.

The Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam is a renowned Math in Mayiladuthurai District, Tamil Nadu.

Situated in the heart of Chola Nadu in the fertile Kaveri delta, it is one of 18 venerated maths spread across Tamil Nadu.
The Adheenams are fervent upholders of Shaivism, preservers of traditions, and nurturers of the Tamil language, conforming to the saying, ‘Saivamum Thamizhum Thazhaitini Onguga.’ Which means, ‘Let the glory of Lord Shiva and Tamil reach great heights without ever bending.’
The Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam, founded in the late 15th century by Srilasri Namachiivaya Murthigal, is a non-Brahmin Dharmic math that has been continuously serving its followers for over 500 years. The 23rd Guru Mahasannidhanam or Head of the Math is in service now.
In 1947, the then head of the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam, Sri La Sri Ambalavana Desika Swami was ailing. However, he undertook the important task and agreed to arrange the transfer of power, much like what the Chola kings of a thousand years earlier would have done. He ordered and commissioned the making of the Sengol to Vummidi, a famous jeweller in Madras, and even specified the design.
After the Sengol was produced by the mastercraftsmen of the then Madras Presidency, Sri La Sri Ambalavana Desika Swami deputed his second-in-command, Sri La Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran, the Math Odhuvar (singer) Shri Manickam, and the Nadaswaram vidwan, Shri T N Rajarathinam Pillai to go from Mayiladuthurai in Tamil Nadu to India's capital, New Delhi, with the Sengol and perform the ceremony to mark the transfer of power.

This delegation from the Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, flew to New Delhi in a special aircraft.
THE CEREMONY
TO MARK A NEW ERA

Sri La Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran handed the Sengol to Lord Mountbatten, who handed it back. The seer then sprinkled holy water on it.

On August 14th, just before the midnight hour, Sri La Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran handed the Sengol, the sceptre inspired by the tradition of the imperial Cholas, to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, soon to be the first prime minister of independent India. In a solemn ceremony, Nehru accepted this timeless symbol of authority, to the singing of the Math Odhuvar and the lilting notes of the Nadaswaram maestro.
It is not an exaggeration to note that the Adheenams not only contributed to the takeover of power from the British through the glorious heritage of our nation, but also marked the birth of a free India as it began its march towards the future with great confidence and even greater aspiration.