

**EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—FEBRUARY 27, 2021**

**TAMIL NADU**

- On February 26, the Election Commission of India - announced single-phase assembly polls in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on April 6.
- ✓ The EC had also announced the election schedule of three other states – Kerala, West Bengal and Assam - where elections will be held from March 27 to April 29
- ✓ Counting of votes and declaration of results will happen on May 2 on all the states

**8 PHASES FOR BENGAL A NATIONAL RECORD**  
18.7 crore people, or around 20% of India's total electorate, will vote for 824 assembly seats in 4 states and 1 Union territory between March 27 and April 29

 <b>WEST BENGAL</b> 294 seats 8 phases* <small>*Up from 7 in 2016</small>	 <b>TAMIL NADU</b> 234 seats 1 phase	 <b>KERALA</b> 140 seats 1 phase	 <b>ASSAM</b> 126 seats 3 phases
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**PUDUCHERRY** | 30 seats | 1 phase

**Bengal votes on March 27, Apr 1, 6, 10, 17, 22, 26, 29 | Assam: March 27, Apr 1 & 6 | TN, Kerala, Puducherry: April 6**

**MAY 2, SUNDAY** Counting & results

**WEST BENGAL** | CM Mamata Banerjee faces probably the toughest battle of her career against 'political outlier' BJP, with PM Modi & Amit Shah in the thick of campaigning

**TAMIL NADU** | Best chance

**WHAT'S AT STAKE?** for Cong, as DMK's junior partner, to halt its poor electoral run. BJP will hope to make gains in the company of AIADMK

**KERALA** | Cong remains Left's main challenger though BJP has a larger presence now.

Results will have a bearing on Rahul Gandhi's leadership

**ASSAM** | After its unexpected victory in 2016, BJP will hope to consolidate its hold, though it now faces a strong demographic challenge from Cong-AUDF alliance

**EC'S COVID SHIELD** | Door-to-door campaigning restricted to 5 people, including candidate. Roadshows to have max 5 vehicles

All election officials to be vaccinated beforehand. Voting to be allowed for 1 extra hr keeping in mind Covid guidelines

- ✓ There will be a three-phase polling in Assam, while Bengal will see an unprecedented eightphase voting.
- ✓ In Tamil Nadu, poll notification will be issued on March 12 and the last date for nominations will be March 19.
- ✓ Scrutiny of nominations will take place the next day and candidates can withdraw their names up to March 22.

- ✓ Chief election commissioner Sunil Arora announced the election dates at a press conference
- ✓ Earlier, the 2016 assembly polls were held in six phases in West Bengal, while the 2019 Lok Sabha polls were held in seven phases
- **On February 26, the State Government – passed a bill to provide internal reservation of 10.5% to vanniyakula kshatriya community within the 20% quota for the Most Backward Classes**
- ✓ The bill was passed unanimously by the assembly just 30 minutes before the Election Commission announced the Tamil Nadu assembly poll date
- ✓ The demand to provide reservation to the vanniyakula kshatriya community was one of the long pending agenda of the PMK, an ally of the AIADMK in the government
- ✓ The move would strengthen poll prospects of the alliance in vanniya dominated constituencies in the state.
- ✓ Vanniyakula kshatriyas, a dominant community in the northern belt, includes vanniya, vanniya, vanniya gounder, gounder, padayachi, palli and agnikula kshatriya.
- ✓ The bill also provides an internal quota of 7% to Denotified Communities and the Most Backward Classes communities having similarity with Denotified Communities.
- ✓ Other Most Backward Classes not included in the above category are provided with 2.5% quota.

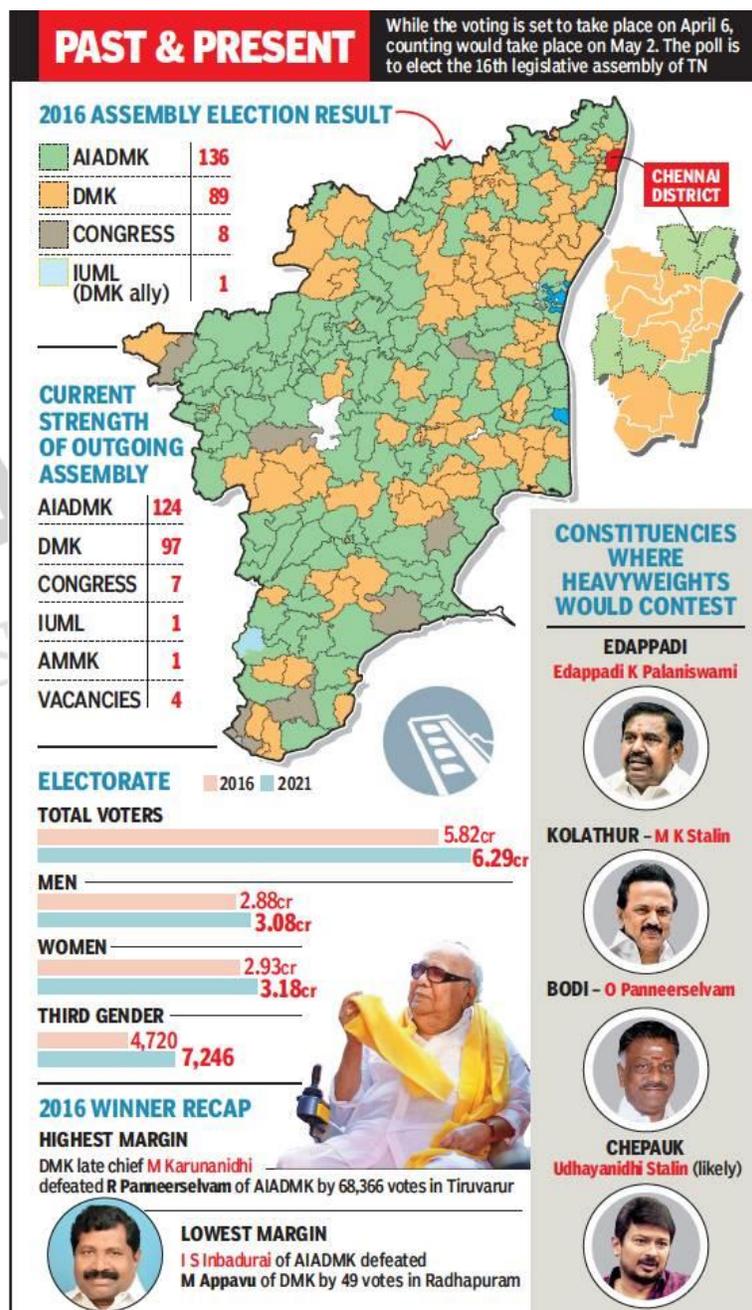
### **QUOTA GIFT**

- TNBC panel recommends separate internal quota for three categories of MBCs that enjoy 20% reservation
- Vanniyarkula kshatriya, including vanniya, vanniya, vanniya gounder, gounder or kinder, padayachi, palli and agnikula kshatriyas get 10.5% sub-quota
- Denotified communities and MBC communities having similarity with denotified communities numbering 68 and 25 respectively get 7% quota

- ✓ Introducing the bill, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said that the passing of bill is only an interim arrangement
- ✓ Earlier, the government has set up a commission led by retired judge Justice A Kulasekaran to collect quantifiable data of castes, communities and tribes of Tamil Nadu

- ✓ The data shall be collected pertaining to various social, education, economic and political parameters of the population
  - ✓ The commission was given six months' time to submit its report.
  - ✓ The grouping of MBCs and internal reservation is based on the recommendation of the TN Backward Classes commission.
  - ✓ According to the CM, the chairman of the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes commission (retired judge justice R Thanikachalam) examined the demand made by various categories and made recommendations to the government
  - ✓ As per his recommendations, internal reservation shall be given to three categories -- MBC (vanniyakula kshatriya) - 10.5%, MBC and DC (Denotified Communities) - 7% and MBC - 2.5% within the MBC and DCs
  - ✓ The move aims to promote equitable development and to provide appropriate representation in education and employment.
  - ✓ As per the bill, the Denotified Communities and Most Backward Classes group consists of 68 and 25 communities respectively.
  - ✓ The remaining Most Backward Classes group has 22 communities.
  - ✓ Earlier, the PMK staged protests under the aegis of vanniya sangam in the 1980s, which led to the police firing that claimed 21 lives
  - ✓ This has resulted in Karunanidhi-led DMK regime forming MBC and extending 20% quota, carving a group of 108 castes, including vanniya.
  - ✓ Further, on February 26, the State notified people belonging to the minority communities and natives of Tamil Nadu with languages, Telugu, Urdu, Kannada, Malayalam, Sourashtra and Marathi as "linguistic minorities" and Christians, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists as "religious minorities."
- **On February 26, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – announced the waiver of jewel loans up to six sovereigns availed by farmers in cooperative banks**
- ✓ The CM said in the state assembly that all loans availed by self-help groups (SHGs) through cooperative banks would also be waived
  - ✓ The move would benefit one lakh SHGs with 15 lakh members
  - ✓ The promise came just hours before the election commission announced the poll schedule for Tamil Nadu.
  - ✓ Making a statement under Rule 110, the CM said that the decision had been taken keeping in mind the extraordinary situation arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fallout of cyclones faced by the farming community and their pleas for relief.
- **The Election Commission of India (ECI) - has appointed two expenditure observers - retired IRS officers Madhu Mahajan and Balakrishnan.**
- ✓ This was announced by the chief election commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora
  - ✓ The latter had played a vital role in seizure of several crore of rupees during the 2016 assembly election in Tamil Nadu.

- ✓ Elections have been cancelled in Tamil Nadu – twice in R K Nagar and once in Vellore – in the past
  - ✓ There is no other state where polls had to be rescinded twice.
  - ✓ Alok Vardhan, a 1986 batch IAS officer, has been appointed as general observer and Dharmendra Kumar, a retired IPS officer, has been appointed as police observer.
- **Chief election commissioner Sunil Arora – announced that the model code of conduct has come into force in the state on February 26**
- ✓ Tamil Nadu would go to polls on April 6 to elect 234 MLAs to the 16th legislative assembly.



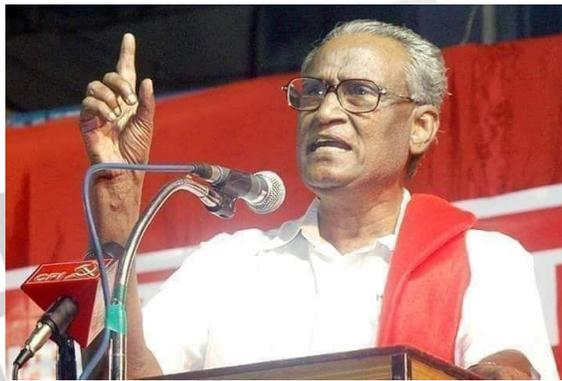
- ✓ Bypoll to Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency would also be held on the same date.
  - ✓ The term of the 15th assembly ends on May 24.
  - ✓ ECI has capped expenditure at ₹30.8 lakh for every candidate in Tamil Nadu and ₹22 lakh for ones in Puducherry.
  - ✓ Candidates with criminal track record will have to publicise the same in both electronic and print media thrice during the campaign
  - ✓ The number of polling booths have been increased by 34.7% - with a total 88,936 booths - to ensure that there is one booth available for every 1,000 voters
  - ✓ Electorate above the age of 80 years has the option of exercising postal ballots.
  - ✓ Taking the pandemic into consideration, polling duration has been increased by one hour.
  - ✓ All poll-related officials would be treated as frontline workers to provide Covid-19 vaccination to them.
- **On February 26, Greater Chennai Corporation – passed a deficit budget showing a total deficit of ₹554 crore in its balance sheet for the 2021-22 financial year**
- ✓ According to official budget documents, the deficit on the revenue account alone is ₹546 crore.
  - ✓ As per the budget documents, the Tamil Nadu government's decision to roll back property tax hike cost the GCC at least ₹150 crore in the 2020-21 financial year
  - ✓ It also lost another ₹50 crore on the professional tax front.
  - ✓ As per the budget sources, GCC spent ₹847.5 crore on storm water drains in 2020-21, while it will spend ₹1,077 crore next year.
    - ✓ Much of it will be spent on drains in Kosasthalaiyaru and Kovalam river basins.
  - ✓ Expenditure on bus route roads is also set to be increased from ₹172 to ₹180 crore.
  - ✓ The GCC has spent ₹643.76 crore on maintaining roads in 2020-21, while it will spend ₹470.67 crore in the upcoming financial year.
  - ✓ Maintenance and construction of new bridges in the city are also set to get a boost as the expenditure has been increased from ₹114crore in 2020-21 to ₹260crore next year.
  - ✓ Noting that it spent ₹131 crore on LED bulbs, electric poles and other spare parts in 2020-21, the corporation has said next year the expenditure would be ₹150 crore for the electrical wing to bring in new electric poles, a new system to monitor lights and other spare parts.
  - ✓ Next year's expenditure on solid waste management has been increased by more than 300% from 2020-21.
  - ✓ It was ₹40.6 crore last year, but will be ₹134.10 crore next year.
  - ✓ This is for procurement of necessary equipment at zonal level as well as to implement schemes under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).

## NATIONAL

- **On February 26, the home ministry - extended the validity of existing guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution against Covid-19 to March 31.**
- ✓ The states and Union Territories have also been advised to speed up vaccination of the target population so as to break the chain of transmission.
- ✓ All activities have been permitted in the States/UTs, subject to SOPs issued by respective administrative ministries/ departments as well SOPs to be issued by states/UTs.

## OBITUARY

- **Senior Communist Party of India (CPI) leader D Pandian – passed away in Chennai on February 26**



- ✓ The 88 year old veteran leader was admitted to Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital (RGGH) in a critical condition on February 24
- ✓ A multifaceted personality, the former Lok Sabha MP and CPI state secretary was a skilled orator, writer and trade union leader, who was active in state and national politics.
- ✓ The 88-year-old CPI veteran was known for his oratory in Tamil and English, which was aided by his deep knowledge of the literature of both languages.
- ✓ Though a professor of English, he mastered economics, philosophy and history to explain complex subjects in simple terms
- ✓ Being a prolific writer, his columns in Janasakthi, organ of the CPI which he edited, were popular with all sections of the society.
- ✓ He had written more than 30 books on various topics, besides hundreds of articles in many magazines.
- ✓ Pandian was born in a small village, Vellaimalaipatti near Usilampatti, on September 25, 1932 as one of eight children.
- ✓ He became a member of the CPI in 1953.

- ✓ When the party decided to form a literary front at the initiative of P Jeevanantham, Tamilnadu Kalai Ilakkiya Perumandram (Tamilnadu Art and Literature Federation) in 1961, Pandian was elected its first general secretary.

**A LIFE DEVOTED TO PUBLIC WORK**

**Sept 25, 1932** | Born in a small village, Vellaimalaipatti in Usilampatti in Madurai District

**1953** | Joined CPI

**1961** | Appointed as general secretary of Tamil Nadu Kalai Ilakkiya Perumandram

**1989-91 : 1991-96** | Elected as Member of Parliament from the North Chennai Lok Sabha constituency as a member of UCPI

**May 21, 1991** | Injured in a bomb blast when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated

**2000** | Rejoined CPI

**2005-2015** | Held the post of state secretary of CPI

**Feb 18, 2021** | Held his last public meeting in Madurai

- ✓ He enrolled himself in the Madras Law College as a student and became a lawyer.
- ✓ Later, he was elected Chennai district secretary of the CPI.
- ✓ When disciplinary action was initiated against him, he joined the United Communist Party of India (UCPI) led by Mohit Sen.
- ✓ Subsequently, Pandian won the North Chennai Lok Sabha constituency for two terms, 1989-1991 and 1991-1996.
- ✓ He rejoined the CPI in 2000 and remained as state secretary of the party for three terms from 2005 to 2015
- ✓ He was also editor of Janasakthi, the party's daily newspaper.
- ✓ He served as a member of the CPI national council till the end.

