

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-APRIL 21, 2023

TAMIL NADU

- On April 19, Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin - introduced a motion in the Assembly seeking to include Dalit Christians into the purview of the Scheduled Castes (SC) quota.



- ✓ The resolution urges the centre to extend all benefits accorded to Scheduled Castes, including reservation, to also those Dalits who had converted to Christianity
- ✓ The CM reasoned that doing so will allow them to benefit from social justice in all aspects
- ✓ Moving the resolution, Chief Minister M K Stalin said even after conversion, these SC members are being subjected to untouchability and other casteist atrocities
- ✓ Tamil Nadu government had already issued orders giving all concessions except reservation to Dalit Christians on a par with SCs.
- ✓ Dalit Christians continue to get all educational assistance, including incentive for pursuing full-time doctorate and higher studies in foreign countries, similar to that of SCs, the CM said.
- ✓ All other parties, including the main opposition, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), supported the resolution, while the BJP staged a walk-out.
- ✓ The resolution comes at a time when the Union Government is opposed to granting quota privileges to Dalits who have converted to Christianity or Islam.

- ✓ In December 2022, the Centre informed the Supreme Court that it was unwilling to implement the recommendations of the Justice Ranganath Misra Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which suggested that Dalits who converted to Christianity and Islam be granted quota.
- ✓ The Centre has also formed a commission led by former Chief Justice of India Justice K G Balakrishnan in October 2022 to investigate whether Dalit Christians and Muslims should be granted reservations
- ✓ At present, Dalits who converted as Buddhists or Sikhs are eligible for SC reservation advantages, but those who converted to Christianity or Islam are not eligible for reservation benefits.
- ✓ Former CM M Karunanidhi had put forth the demand for treating Dalit Christians on a par with SCs in 1996, 2006, 2010 and 2011 by writing letters to PMs, and in the governor's address on January 6, 2011, it was said that the issue would be taken up with the union government.
- ✓ The DMK had also promised to strive to fulfil this in its election manifesto
- ✓ According to the Constitution (Scheduled Caste) Order 1950, "No person who professes a religion different from the Hindu, the Sikh or the Buddhist religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste."
- ✓ In 1956, this order was amended to include those who profess Sikhism and Buddhism as SCs.

➤ **On April 20, Minister for information and publicity M P Saminathan - informed the state assembly that QR codes would be installed on the memorials or statues of leaders in Tamil Nadu**

- ✓ Through the new initiative, people visiting the memorials or statues can scan the QR codes with their smartphones and get complete details of the history of the leaders.
- ✓ The work of installing QR codes on memorials and statues will commence within a week starting with the Tiruvalluvar statue on Kamaraj road in Chennai.
- ✓ Along with QR codes, the work of uploading the 360-degree view of the memorials and statues would also be undertaken.
- ✓ There are 81 memorials in the state and the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) will start the process of photographing the 360-degree view of the memorials.
- ✓ In Chennai, QR codes will be installed in 15 statues and memorials and their complete details will be available on the website.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Chief minister M K Stalin announced that a statue of former Prime Minister V P Singh would be installed in Chennai.
- ✓ CM Stalin made the announcement under rule 110 of the assembly.

STATES

➤ **On April 20, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh - signed an agreement to resolve the decades-old border dispute between the two states**

- ✓ The inter-state boundary agreement was signed by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu in the presence of union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi



- ✓ Union minister for law and justice Kiren Rijiju, who represents Arunachal Pradesh in Lok Sabha, was also present during the event
- ✓ The agreement between the two States will end the dispute relating to 123 villages located along the border in areas that the two states share.
- ✓ A suit has been pending in the Supreme Court since 1989 on the issue.
- ✓ Arunachal Pradesh has been maintaining that several forested tracts in the plains traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities and these were "unilaterally" transferred to Assam earlier.
- ✓ Out of the 123 villages claimed by Arunachal Pradesh before the Local Commission in 2007, 71 have been resolved
 - ✓ This includes 27 villages resolved through the Namsai Declaration on July 15, 2022 and 34 villages through the present MoU.
 - ✓ From these 71 villages, one will be included in Assam from Arunachal Pradesh, 10 villages will continue in Assam and 60 villages will be included in Arunachal Pradesh from Assam.
 - ✓ Of the remaining 52 villages, the village boundary of 49 villages is to be finalised by the regional committees in the next six months, while 3 villages situated inside the IAF bombing range will require rehabilitation.
- ✓ Both the state governments have agreed that this agreement will be final with regard to these disputed villages and neither of the States will make any new claim related to any area or village in the future
- ✓ Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an 804.1-km-long border which has been in dispute since the latter was made a union territory in 1972.

- ✓ The agreement will end the dispute keeping in view the historical perspective, demographic profile, administrative convenience, proximity to the border and the aspirations of the residents.
- ✓ It is based on the report of the local commission, which was further fine-tuned by 12 regional committees from both the states in consultation with the local residents.
- ✓ A detailed survey will soon be undertaken by the survey of India in the presence of representatives of both the state governments to determine the boundaries of both the states.
- ✓ As a gesture of goodwill, the Arunachal Pradesh government will hand over a large tract of land under its possession in Assam's Jorhat to the Assam government
- ✓ Besides Arunachal Pradesh, Assam has border disputes with Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram—states which were carved out of it.
- ✓ Last year, Assam and Meghalaya signed a deal to resolve six of the 12 points of dispute along their border.

NATIONAL

- **For the first time ever, the Indian Institutes of Technology – have agreed for assessment by external agency for accreditation purpose**
- ✓ They were asked to go in for assessment either by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or get all their programmes accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA).
- ✓ The IITs indicated that they were not in favour of applying to the NAAC and instead chose the NBA to review their courses.
- ✓ Till now, the IITs have conducted their own internal review every five years.
- ✓ The modalities of the new assessment process will be designed by the committee appointed to review assessment, accreditation and ranking in India headed by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **SpaceX's new rocket Starship, the biggest and most powerful ever built - blasted off in the Pacific Ocean above the Gulf of Mexico on its first test flight, after suffering a mid-flight failure**
- ✓ Elon Musk's company launched the nearly 400-foot (120-metre) Starship rocket from the southern tip of Texas, near the Mexican border, for a round-the-world trip
- ✓ No people or satellites were aboard for this debut launch, which failed to reach orbit.
- ✓ The company plans to use Starship to send people and cargo to the moon and, eventually, Mars.
- ✓ It was SpaceX's first attempt to launch its Starship rocket after years of testing.



- ✓ It was the second launch attempt after the first scheduled launch on April 17 was called off less than 10 minutes ahead of time by a frozen booster valve.
- ✓ Starship comprises a 164-foot spacecraft that sits atop a 230-foot tall first-stage Super Heavy booster rocket with 33 methane-fueled engines.
- ✓ SpaceX conducted a successful test-firing of the 33 massive Raptor engines on the first-stage booster in February
- ✓ But, this is the first time the Starship spacecraft and the Super Heavy rocket were being flown together.
- ✓ The US space agency NASA has picked the Starship spacecraft to ferry astronauts to the Moon in late 2025 -- a mission known as Artemis III -- for the first time since the Apollo program ended in 1972.

