Justice M.V. Muralidaran named Chairperson of TN SC/ST Commission

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News

The Tamil Nadu government issued an order on 10 November 2026 appointing Justice M.V. Muralidaran, a former judge of the Madras High Court who retired from the Calcutta High Court in 2024, as Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The post had been vacant since the previous Chairperson, retired judge S. Tamilvanan, died in office on 22 March 2026. Reports say the appointment was made on the recommendation of a high-level committee headed by the Chief Secretary. He will hold office for three years from the date he takes charge or until he turns 75, whichever is earlier. The Commission was set up under the Tamil Nadu State Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 2021. Its main task is to inquire, on its own or on a victim's petition, into complaints of caste-based rights violations.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Order dated	10 Nov 2026
New Chairperson	Justice M.V. Muralidaran (retd); former judge, Madras High Court
Previous Chairperson	Justice S. Tamilvanan (died 22 Mar 2026)
Tenure	3 years or till age 75, whichever is earlier

Point	Details
Law	TN State Commission for SCs & STs Act, 2021 (TN Act 17 of 2021)
First members appointed	15 Oct 2021
Chairperson's qualification	Retired High Court judge from an SC/ST community
Age-limit amendment	2024 amendment: Chairperson 70 → 75 years
Powers	Civil-court powers under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908

Background

- Structure of the State Commission: under the 2021 Act (Bill introduced on 9 Sep 2021) the Commission has a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, five members (three SC, one ST and one person with special knowledge of SC/ST matters; at least one a woman) and an IAS officer as Member-Secretary. The Chairperson must be a retired High Court judge from an SC/ST community; a 2024 amendment raised the Chairperson's age limit from 70 to 75. Its annual report is laid before the Assembly with an action-taken memorandum.
- Laws it watches: the Commission inquires into violations of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 (originally the 'Untouchability (Offences) Act', renamed in 1976) and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. It has civil-court powers such as summoning witnesses and calling for documents. If the National Commission for SCs or STs is already dealing with a matter, the State Commission does not take it up.
- Constitutional background: Article 338 – National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC); Article 338A – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST; carved out by the 89th Amendment, 2003); Article 338B – National Commission for Backward Classes (102nd Amendment, 2018). These are constitutional bodies, whereas the State Commission is a statutory body created by a State law. Article 17 abolishes untouchability; Article 46 directs the State to promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections; under Articles 341 and 342 the President notifies the SC and ST lists for each State, and only Parliament can change them by law.
- Social-justice history: Rettamalai Srinivasan represented the Depressed Classes along with Dr B.R. Ambedkar at the First and Second Round Table Conferences in London (1930–31). Tamil Nadu's 69% reservation law (1993; including 18% for SCs and 1% for STs) was placed in the Ninth Schedule by the 76th Constitutional Amendment (1994).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu set up its State SC/ST Commission under its own law in 2021; the law requires the Chairperson to be a retired High Court judge from an SC/ST community. After the death of the previous Chairperson, Justice S. Tamilvanan, Justice M.V. Muralidaran now takes over. By hearing complaints under the Protection of Civil Rights Act and the Atrocities Act at the State level, it eases the load on the national commissions.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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2024, as Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Order dated: 10 Nov 2026; New Chairperson: Justice M.V. Muralidaran (retd); former judge, Madras High Court; Previous Chairperson: Justice S. Tamilvanan (died 22 Mar 2026); Tenure: 3 years or till age 75, whichever is earlier.

What is the background to this news?

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Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which Article of the Constitution provides for the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)?

A) Article 338A

B) Article 338

C) Article 338B

D) Article 340

Answer: A – Explanation: Article 338A – 89th Amendment (2003). 338 – NCSC; 338B – NCBC; 340 – commission to study backward classes.

2. Under the Tamil Nadu State Commission for SCs and STs Act, 2021, who is appointed as the Chairperson?

A) Retd Supreme Court judge

B) Retd High Court judge

C) Retired IAS officer

D) Serving district judge

Answer: B – Explanation: A retired High Court judge from an SC/ST community. Only the Member-Secretary is an IAS officer.

3. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 gives effect to which Fundamental Rights Article?

A) Article 17

B) Article 15

C) Article 23

D) Article 24

Answer: A – Explanation: Article 17 – abolition of untouchability. The law was first called the Untouchability (Offences) Act; renamed in 1976.

4. Under Article 341, who first notifies the Scheduled Castes in relation to a State?

A) State Governor

B) State Legislature

C) President

D) NCSC

Answer: C – Explanation: The President, after consulting the Governor. Only Parliament can later amend the list by law.

5. Which Tamil leader represented the Depressed Classes with Ambedkar at the 1930–31 Round Table Conferences?

A) M.C. Rajah

B) Rettamalai Srinivasan

C) N. Sivaraj

D) L. Elayaperumal

Answer: B – Explanation: Rettamalai Srinivasan – First and Second Round Table Conferences. He ran the journal 'Paraiyan' and was titled Diwan Bahadur.

Sources: Dinakaran; ETV Bharat Tamil; ThePrint Hindi (Bhasha); PRS – TN Bill 40 of 2021; PRS – TN Bill 30 of 2024; The Hindu; DT Next. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.