

# **The Hindu**

## **Over 1.3 lakh posts up for grabs in civic polls**

Chennai: A total of 1,31,794 posts, including 1,18,974 posts in rural local bodies and 12,820 posts in urban local bodies, would be filled in the two-phase direct polls to be held next month.

In the first phase, 10 Municipal Corporations, 64 Municipalities, 255 Town Panchayats, 332 District Panchayats, 3,250 village unions and 50,640 village panchayats, would be held on October 17.

In the second phase of polls on October 19, Chennai and Dindigul Municipal Corporations, 60 Municipalities, 273 Town Panchayats, 323 District Panchayats, 3,221 panchayat unions, 48,684 village panchayats would go for polls.

## **Four colours**

Since elections for four posts would be held simultaneously in village panchayats, ballot papers would be in four different colours.

A total of 91,098 polling stations, including 62,337 in rural areas and 28,761 in urban areas, have been set up for the polls. In Greater Chennai Corporation alone, a total of 5,531 polling stations have been set up.

There are about 5.80 crore persons in the State, including 2.92 crore women and 4,584 from the third gender. The electorate includes 3.19 crore voters in the rural areas and 2.61 crore in the urban areas. A total of 6.50 lakh officials would be involved in the conduct of elections.

About 2,17,500 ballot boxes are to be used in the upcoming local body polls and a total of 75,993 Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are to be used across the State. In a first, at Melpuram village panchayat in Kanniyakumari district, EVMs would be used in all polling stations, Mr. Seetharaman said.

A total of 37 IAS officials are to be appointed as observers to supervise election arrangements and conduct polls in all districts and Municipal Corporations.

In sensitive polling stations, central government employees and those in nationalised banks would be appointed as micro observers.

“All arrangements are in place to conduct free and fair polls so that people can come out and vote without fear,” Mr. Seetharaman said.

A total of 11,640 candidates, who failed to file their poll expenditure details to the TNSEC, have been disqualified from contesting the polls for three years, since the day of their disqualification.

While a total of 13,362 posts in rural local bodies and 1,328 posts in urban local bodies would be filled up through indirect polls.