

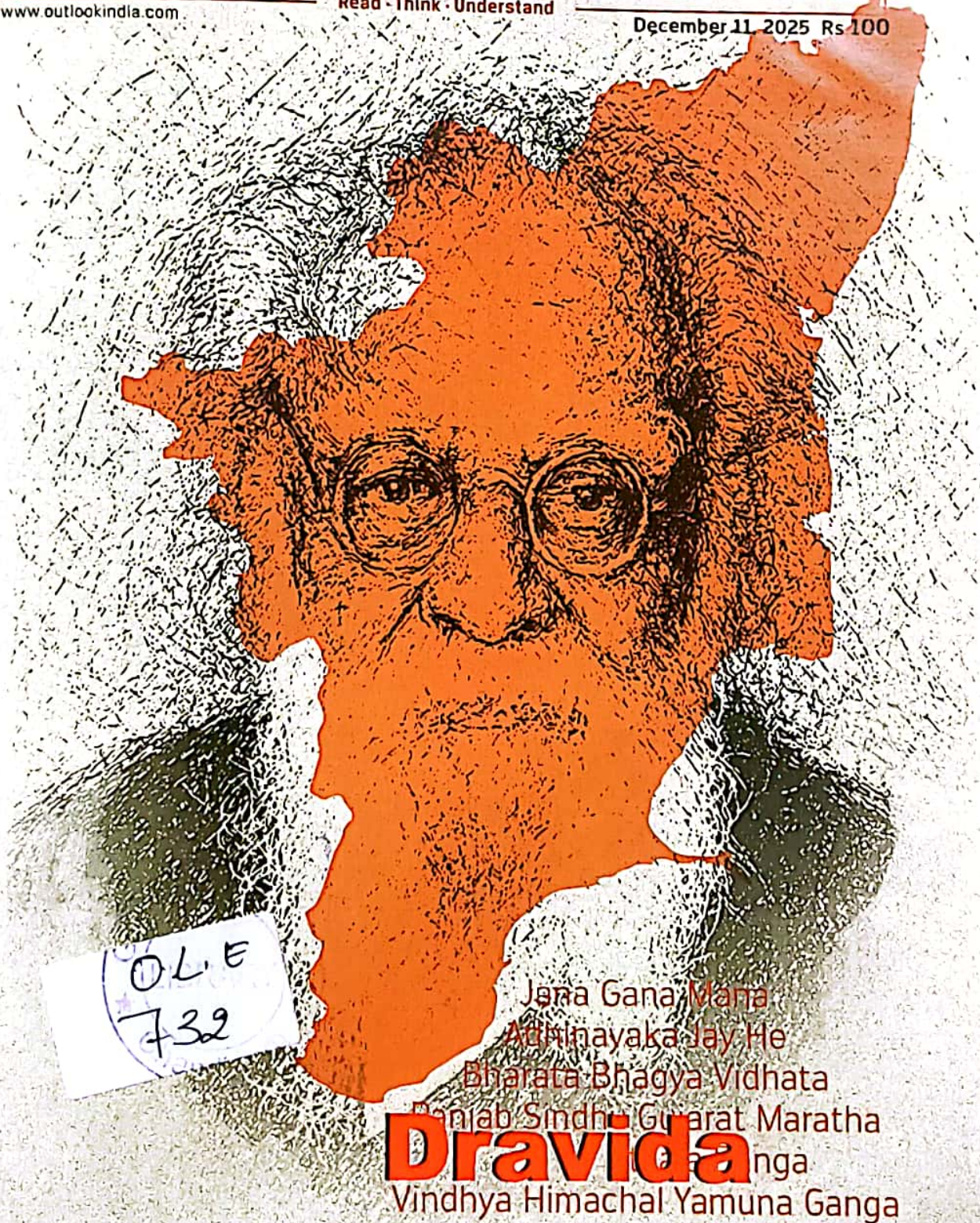
100 YEARS OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT

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Jana Gana Mana
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 Vindhya Himachal Yamuna Ganga

With the Tamil Nadu elections ahead, will Periyar's
 Self-Respect Movement be able to fight the forces of Hindutva?



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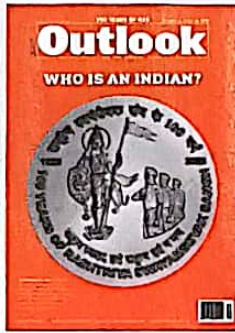
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October 21, 2025

The narrative of Dravidian vs Aryan, the South vs North, Tamil vs Hindi predates the freedom struggle. A 100 years ago, E. V. Ramasamy 'Periyar' gave it a solid political form through his Self-Respect Movement for the backward castes. It is this citadel, which even today a northern heartland party like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finds it impossible to break, and which forms all of Tamil Nadu politics—whether it is the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the Congress or any other newly-formed political party. A 100 years later, how far-reaching has the impact of the Dravidian Movement been in the hinterland? Has it helped in breaking caste barriers or has it left out the Dalits from its fold? How strong are Periyar's emphases on the federal structure of the country now? This issue of Outlook juxtaposes the various influences of the Dravidian Movement like rationalism and atheism to the present communally charged electoral politics. Outlook's three issues look at the intersection, dilemmas and challenges of the three ideologies and institutions that mark their centenary in 2025—the RSS, the Self-Respect Movement and the Communist Movement. This is the second one of the trilogy.

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By Ruchira Gupta

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