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Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020

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Why in News

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the **Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020** to be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament.

Key Points

- The Bill will **include Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi as official languages** in the newly-created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - **Only English and Urdu were official languages** in the former State, which was **bifurcated on 5th August 2019**, with **Ladakh becoming a separate Union Territory**.
 - **Dogri along with Bodo, Maithili and Santhali** was added to the **scheduled languages** under the **Eighth Schedule** by **92nd Amendment Act of 2003**, which consists of the **following 22 languages**:
 - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
 - Of these languages, **14 were initially included** in the Constitution.
 - **Sindhi** language was added by the **21st Amendment Act of 1967**.
 - **Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali** were included by the **71st Amendment Act of 1992**.
- The Bill not only **fulfills a long-pending public demand** of the region but also **keeps with the spirit of equality**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Part XVII of the Indian Constitution** deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.
 - Article 345:** Official language or languages of a State subject to the provisions of Article 346 and 347.

- The Constitutional provisions related to the **Eighth Schedule** are:
 - **Article 344:** Article 344(1) provides for the constitution of a Commission by the President on expiration of five years from the commencement of the Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement, which shall consist of a Chairman and such other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule to make recommendations to the President for the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union.
 - **Article 351:** It provides for the spread of the Hindi language to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

Source: TH