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Union Cabinet Approves Renaming of Kerala to Keralam

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The Union Cabinet of India has approved the proposal to change the official name of the State of Kerala to “Keralam”. This decision initiates the constitutional process for renaming the state.

Constitutional process:

The Cabinet has cleared the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026.

The President of India will first refer this Bill to the Kerala Legislative Assembly for their opinion, as mandated under Article 3 of the Indian Constitution.

After the Assembly’s views, the Bill will be introduced in the Parliament for approval.

Once passed by Parliament and assented to by the President, the name change will be formally effected in the First Schedule of the Constitution.

Reason for the change:

The name Keralam aligns with the state’s original Malayalam pronunciation and cultural identity.

The Kerala Legislative Assembly had earlier passed a resolution supporting this change, first in August 2023, and again in June 2024 with technical modifications as suggested by the Union Home Ministry.

Proponents say Keralam reflects the linguistic heritage and history of the Malayalam-speaking people.

Political and contextual significance:

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The name change comes ahead of the Kerala Assembly elections in 2026, making it a politically significant decision.

The decision has garnered broad bipartisan support within Kerala, including backing from leaders across political lines who argue it honors cultural roots.

Article 3 of the Constitution:

Empowers Parliament to create new states, alter areas, boundaries or names of existing states, but only after the state legislature's views are received.

The President must refer the Bill to the state legislature for its opinion before introducing it in Parliament.

First Schedule of the Constitution:

Lists all states and union territories in India by their official names.

Any change to state names requires amendment to this part of the Constitution.

States & Cities Renamed in Recent Years:

Orissa ? Odisha (2011)

Madras State ? Tamil Nad(1969)

Gurgaon ? Gurugram (2016)

This reflects a broader trend of renaming places to reflect local language or historical heritage.

Kerala reorganization:

Kerala as a state was formed on 1 November 1956 based on linguistic reorganisation, now celebrated as Kerala Piravi Day.

The term Keralam is the traditional Malayalam word for the region.