

### OFFICIAL VS NATIONAL LANGUAGE DEBATE: WHAT THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS SAY

#### Why in News?

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India observed that although there are at least 22 official languages in the country, Hindi is “the national language”.

#### Status of Hindi Language in Indian Constitution:

- Though over 100 languages and 270 mother tongues are spoken across the country, **the Constitution does not list any one language as India’s “national language”**.
- **Article 343 (1) (“Official language of the Union”)**: The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script and the form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.
- **Article 351 (“Directive for development of the Hindi language”)**: It shall be the duty of the Union to develop and promote the spread of the Hindi language, so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all.
  - This must be done without interfering with its genius, forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the **Eighth Schedule**.

#### What is the Eighth Schedule?

- **There are 22 languages** listed under the Eighth Schedule of the **Constitution**. These include Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Assamese, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, and Urdu, etc.
- **There were only 14 languages in this Schedule initially**, others including Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali were added in 2004.
- **There are demands to include another 38 languages** in the Eighth Schedule, such as Bhojpuri, Garhwali (Pahari), and Rajasthani.
- Notably, **English is absent from the list of 22** in the Eighth Schedule. It is one of the 99 **non-scheduled languages** of India.

## What is the Status of English?

- English, alongside Hindi, is one of the two **official languages** of the central government.
- **Article 343(2)**: For a period of 15 years from the commencement of this Constitution (January 26, 1950), the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union.
- **Article 343(3)**: Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of 15 years, of -  
(a) the English language, or (b) the Devanagari form of numerals, for such purposes as may be specified in the law.
- **The Official Languages Act 1963**: It provided for the **continuation** of English Language for official purposes of the Union and for use in Parliament even after the expiration of the 15-year period.

## What is the Language of the Judiciary?

- **Article 348 (1)**: Until Parliament by law otherwise provides, all proceedings in the SC and in every HC and all Bills, Acts, ordinances, rules, orders at the Union and state levels, shall be in the English language.
- **Article 348 (2)**: Permits the use of the **Hindi language or any other language** used for any official purposes of the State, in **proceedings** in the HC after authorisation by the **Governor** and with the previous consent of the **President**.
  - While the proceedings could be in any official language, it mandates that any judgment, decree or order passed or made by such HC must be in **English**.
- **The Official Languages Act 1963**: It dealt with optional use of Hindi or other official language in judgements, etc., of HCs.
  - **The Governor** of a state can, with the **President's** consent, authorise the use of Hindi or the official language of the State, in addition to the English, **for the purposes of any judgement, decree or order** made by the HC for that State.
  - However, it shall be accompanied by an English translation issued under the HC's authority.

## 4 YEARS AFTER REMOVAL OF ARTICLE 370: POLITICAL CHANGES AND SECURITY SITUATION IN J&K

### Why in News?

- The Union Territory of J&K has witnessed many firsts in the past four years after removal of its special status under Article 370 in August, 2019.
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the abrogation of Article 370 had paved the way for peace and development in J&K.

### Article 370 of the Indian Constitution:

| ACCESSION AND AFTER   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>OCT 26, 1947:</b> Following the invasion by tribesmen supported by Pak army, Maharaja Hari Singh sought Indian assistance, eventually leading him to sign Instrument of Accession (IoA). | <b>1952:</b> Delhi Agreement between Sheikh Abdullah and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru expanded the relationship between India and J&K.        |
| <b>MAY 27, 1949:</b> Constituent Assembly of India cleared draft Article 370, as per the terms in the IoA.  | <b>MAY 15, 1954:</b> Art. 35A introduced through a Presidential Order to protect laws passed by state legislature regarding permanent residents. |
| <b>MAY 1, 1951:</b> Dr Karan Singh issued a proclamation convening the Constituent Assembly for the State.  | <b>NOV 17, 1957:</b> Constitution of State of J&K adopted; came into force on Jan 26, 1958.  |

- **Article 370** is the first article of Part XXI of the Constitution - ‘**Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions**’.
- **It exempts** J&K from the application of the Constitution of India (except Article 1 and Article 370 itself) and permits the state to draft

its own Constitution.

- It **restricts Parliament’s legislative powers** in respect of J&K and for extending a central law on subjects included in the Instrument of Accession (IoA), mere “**consultation**” with the state government is needed.
  - IoA was signed by Raja Hari Singh of the then princely state of J&K and Governor General Lord Mountbatten in 1947.
  - **The IoA gave Parliament** the power to legislate in respect of J&K only on **Defence, External Affairs and Communications**.
- But for extending it to other matters, “**concurrence**” of the state government is **mandatory**.
- Article 370 had been described as a **tunnel** through which the Constitution was applied to J&K.
- **By the 1954 order**, almost the entire Constitution was extended to J&K including most Constitutional amendments.

## Removal of Special Status of J&K:

- **Article 370(3)** permits deletion of special status of J&K by a **Presidential Order**.
- Such an order, however, is to be preceded by the **concurrence of J&K's Constituent Assembly**.
- Since such an Assembly was **dissolved on January 26, 1957**, one view is that special status cannot be removed.
- But the other view is that it can be done, only **with the concurrence of the State Assembly**.
- **In 2019**, the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 2019, issued by the President, withdrew the special status of J&K and extended all provisions of the Indian Constitution to J&K.
- **The J&K (Reorganization) Act 2019** bifurcated J&K into two UTs - J&K was an UT with a Legislative Assembly; Ladakh was without an Assembly.
- Recently, the Supreme Court of India **began hearing the petitions challenging** the 2019 abrogation of Article 370.

## Many firsts in the past 4 years in J&K:

- **Establishment of all three tiers of Panchayati Raj**
- **Reservation of seats** for Scheduled Tribes (STs) during the delimitation of Assembly constituencies.
- **A change in domicile laws** to enable people from elsewhere in the country to settle in J&K.

## How has been the Security Situation in J&K in the past 4 years?

- **No more stone pelting:** With the unprecedented numbers of security forces in the Valley, and the harsh action taken by central agencies such as the NIA, incidents of stone throwing have been reduced to virtually zero.
- **Incidents of terrorism have witnessed a steep decline:** Government data show a **decline of 32% in "acts of terrorism"** between August 5, 2019 and June 6, 2022, compared with the 10 months preceding the historic decisions.

## Political Changes in J&K in the past 4 years:

- **District Council elections:**

- Elections were held to District Development Councils (DDCs) in all 20 districts of J&K in 2020, **raising hopes for a democratic process at the grassroots.**
- DDCs in J&K were earlier called District Planning and Development Boards, with members who were nominated by the state government.

- **Political realignments:**

- Almost all major opposition leaders were either **detained or had their movements curtailed** after the abrogation of Article 370.
- With political actions by mainstream parties frozen, **new outfits emerged, and several leaders changed loyalties.** For example, PDP joined hands with NC.

- **Delimitation Commission:**

- The Centre constituted a 3-member Commission under retired SC judge Justice Ranjana Desai in 2020 **to carve out 90 Assembly constituencies**, including reserved ones for SCs and STs.
- In its final report in 2022, the commission increased the number of Assembly seats in Jammu division from 37 to 43 and in Kashmir from 46 to 47.
- It also recommended reservation of 9 constituencies for STs, 6 for SCs, and a provision for nomination of two Kashmiri Hindus and a displaced person from PoK.

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## SORGHUM

According to a new study, new sorghum varieties developed by scientists from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can help meet the nutritional needs of mothers and children in sub-Saharan Africa.



### Key findings:

- The new varieties are enhanced with **both provitamin A and non-provitamin A carotenoids.**
- These varieties also contain a more efficient phytase enzyme, a protein that breaks down phytic acid. This improves the **absorption of nutrients from the diet.**



- The results show that sorghum made from the strain of this new variety can produce 32 times more provitamin A carotenoids than regular sorghum varieties.
- New healthier sorghum varieties with significant concentrations of provitamin A **carotenoids increase mineral absorption.**
- These sorghum lines also contained **high concentrations of lutein and zeaxanthin**, carotenoids which are important for eye health and brain development.

### Key facts about Sorghum:

- It is also called **great millet, Indian millet, milo, durra, or shallu**, cereal grain plant of the grass family (Poaceae) and its edible starchy seeds.
- The plant likely originated in Africa, where it is a major food crop.
- It is the fifth major staple cereal after wheat, rice, maize and barley.
- It is cultivated **worldwide in warmer climates** and is an important food crop in semiarid tropical areas of Africa, Asia and Central America.
- In India sorghum is known as jowar, cholam, or Jonna. Different varieties of sorghum range in colour from white and pale yellow to deep red, purple and brown.
- Sorghum is especially **valued in hot and arid regions for its resistance** to drought and heat.
- It is **tolerant to drought because of its root system.**
- It performs better than maize during drought and occupies areas unsuitable for maize in stress-prone semiarid areas.
- It is tolerant **of salinity and to some extent to waterlogging** for a short period. It is sensitive to frost and to sustain flooding.
- In recent years, there has been a shift in sorghum production from the drier western production areas to the wetter eastern

### WHAT IS BHU-VISION?



Recently, a revolutionary IoT-based automated soil testing and agronomy advisory platform, Bhu-Vision was officially launched at AICRP (ICAR-IIRR), Hyderabad.

## About Bhu-Vision:

- It is also known as KRISHI-RASTAA Soil Testing System.
- It has been jointly developed by ICAR-IIRR(Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Indian Institute of Rice Research) and KrishiTantra.
- This system seamlessly conducts 12 key soil parameter tests in just 30 minutes.
- It provides quick and accurate results directly to farmers and stakeholders through a soil health card on their mobile devices.

## Key facts about Indian Institute of Rice Research

- It was established as All India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project (AICRIP) by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1965.
- Headquarter: Hyderabad.
- **Mandate**
  - Basic and strategic research for enhancing rice productivity under irrigated ecosystem
  - Coordination of multi-location testing to develop location specific varieties and technologies for various ecosystems.
  - Dissemination of technologies, capacity building and establishing linkages

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## DIGITAL PORTAL OF THE CENTRAL REGISTRAR OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES (CRCS)

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation will soon launch the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS).

### Co-Operative Societies



About Digital Portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS):

- It is aimed at promoting ease of doing business in the cooperative sector and streamlining various processes.
- **Objectives:** Implementing completely paperless applications, ensuring automatic compliance with the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act (MSCS Act) and rules through software,

enhancing the ease of doing business, enabling **digital communication, ensuring transparent processing**, and improving analytics and management information system.

- This project of computerization will prove particularly **helpful in the registration of new Multi-State Cooperative Societies, simplifying their operations** and creating a more efficient and transparent digital ecosystem.
- **Features:**
  - The digital portal will **encompass various modules**, including **registration, amendment of bye-laws, annual return filing, appeal, audit, inspection**, inquiry, arbitration, winding up, liquidation, ombudsman, and election.
  - It will also **incorporate the recently passed amendments** to the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002, and its rules.
  - The portal will **expedite the processing of applications and service requests through electronic workflow**, facilitating a time-bound approach.
  - It will also feature **provisions for OTP-based user registration, validation checks to ensure compliance with the MSCS Act and Rules**, hearing through video conferencing, issuance of registration certificates, and electronic communication, read the release.

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## WHAT IS BHARATNET PROJECT?

The Union Cabinet recently approved an allotment of ₹1,39,579 crore for the next phase of Bharat Net to make 5G network available to remote areas of the country.



### About BharatNet Project:

- The National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN), launched in October 2011, was renamed the Bharat Net Project in 2015.
- It is an ambitious project of the Government of India to **provide broadband connectivity to all village panchayats in the country**.
- It aims to **provide affordable broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps for all households** and on-demand capacity to all institutions to realize the vision of Digital India, in partnership with States and the private sector.



- The objective is to **facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.**
- To achieve this, the **existing fibres of PSUs (BSNL, Railtel and Power Grid) were utilised and incremental fibre was laid** to connect to Gram Panchayats **wherever necessary.**
- The entire project is **being funded by the Universal service Obligation Fund (USOF)**, which was set up to improve telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country.
- The project is being executed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), namely Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL)**, which was incorporated on 25.02.2012 under Indian Companies Act 1956.

### **Key Facts about Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF):**

- It is a **government fund** established by the Government of India to **provide financial support for the expansion of telecommunications and broadband services in rural and remote areas of the country.**
- The **primary objective of USOF is to bridge the digital divide** and ensure that telecom and internet services are accessible to all, especially in areas where private telecom operators may find it economically unviable to operate due to high infrastructure costs and low population density.
- **Funding Mechanism:**
  - The USOF is **funded through a levy on the revenue earned by telecom operators.**
  - The **government imposes a Universal Service Levy (USL) on the gross revenue of the telecom companies**, which is a percentage of their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR).
  - **This levy is collected and deposited into the USOF.**
- The USOF is **managed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** under the Ministry of Communications.