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Centre gives nod to five official languages for J&K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its nod to a proposal to recognize five official languages in Jammu and Kashmir.

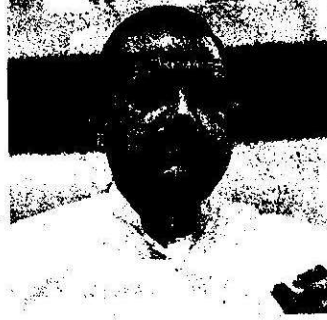
From Urdu as the official language, the Cabinet approval proposes additional four — Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, and English — in the list.

The move drew mixed reactions in J&K. While some Kashmir and Jammu-based parties welcomed it, the Congress said it would add to confusion and a Sikh group demanded inclusion of Punjabi language in the list.

The government will bring the proposal in the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament. It came over a year after the Centre did away with special provisions under Article 370 and carved out two Union territories.

While Urdu was recognized as the only official language of J&K, Kashmiri was given the status of the regional language.

"The government has approved the introduction in Parliament of the Jammu & Kashmir Official Languages



Decision corrects anomaly in UT: Minister

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that it was an anomaly that Dogri, Hindi and Kashmiri, which are spoken by nearly 70 per cent of the population of J&K, were not approved for use in official business. The Cabinet decision will not only help in governance, but also ease participation of citizens in governance, he added.

Bill, 2020," said Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar, adding that the decision fulfils long pending demands of the locals.

In Srinagar, senior vice president of Peoples Conference Abdul Gani Vakil welcomed the decision on the Kashmiri language. "It was a long pending demand of the people," he said. "Other languages should also be given their due importance".

Former minister and chairman of the Peoples Democratic Forum (PDF) Hakeem Yasin also welcomed the decision. "Now that they have included Kashmiri, Dogri and other languages, it is a good step. The government should also

include other languages as well," he said.

Jammu-based party Dogra Sadar Sabha chief and former minister Gulchain Singh Charak said English is a leading language and its inclusion was a must.

However, J&K Congress spokesperson Ravindra Sharma said including five languages would add to the problems and confusion. He said there should have been some sort of uniformity so that all subjects of J&K could read the documents in their own language. Similarly, All Party Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC) chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina said excluding the Punjabi language was an anti-minority move.