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Kerala Officially Becomes Keralam as the Centre Notifies Commencement

26 August 2026 ·

POLITY

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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Kerala Officially Becomes Keralam as the Centre Notifies Commencement

26 August 2026 · 6 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*The Ministry of Home Affairs notified that the **Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026** came into force on **August 25, 2026**. The notification states that the Central Government “hereby appoints the 25th day of August, 2026, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force.” The **First Schedule** to the Constitution now reads **Keralam**.*

WHY THE COMMENCEMENT NOTIFICATION MATTERS SEPARATELY

This is a point of legislative technique that examination questions reward. An Act passed by Parliament and assented to by the President does not automatically take legal effect. Where a statute contains a commencement clause empowering the Government to appoint a date, the Act operates **only from the date so notified**.

STAGE	WHAT IT DOES
Passage by both Houses	Approves the text
Presidential assent	Makes it an Act of Parliament
Commencement notification	Brings the provisions into force

The renaming had been legislated earlier in August 2026 but had no legal effect until August 25. This is why the commencement is a distinct news event rather than a repetition.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL ROUTE: ARTICLES 3 AND 4

Article 3

Article 3 empowers Parliament by law to form a new State, alter the area of a State, alter its boundaries, or **alter the name of any State**. Two procedural safeguards apply:

- The Bill may be introduced **only on the recommendation of the President**.

- The President must **refer the Bill to the legislature of the affected State** for its views, within a specified period.

Crucially, **the State legislature's views are not binding on Parliament**. This is the provision that led Dr B. R. Ambedkar to describe the Indian Union as an “**indestructible Union of destructible States**”, in contrast with the American federation of indestructible states.

Article 4: Why a Simple Majority Suffices

Article 4 provides that any law made under Article 2 or Article 3 which makes consequential amendments to the **First Schedule** (list of States and Union territories) and the **Fourth Schedule** (allocation of Rajya Sabha seats) **shall not be deemed to be an amendment of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 368**.

The consequence is decisive: renaming a State requires only a **simple majority** in both Houses, not the special majority and State ratification that Article 368 would otherwise demand for a schedule amendment.

SCHEDULE	CONTENTS
First Schedule	Names of States and Union territories, and their territories
Fourth Schedule	Allocation of seats in the Council of States

THE LEGISLATIVE TRAIL

DATE	STEP
August 2023	Kerala Legislative Assembly passes a resolution seeking the name “Keralam”
June 24, 2024	Resolution re-adopted after a drafting correction, as legislative background
February 24, 2026	Union Cabinet approves the proposal, background to the present commencement
August 11, 2026	Lok Sabha passes the Bill, a historical step in the trail
August 12, 2026	Rajya Sabha passes the Bill
August 2026	Presidential assent by President Droupadi Murmu
August 25, 2026	Act comes into force by commencement notification

The name **Keralam** is the Malayalam-language form of the State's name. Kerala itself was created on **November 1, 1956** under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, on a linguistic basis, following the report of the **Fazl Ali Commission (1953-55)**.

PRECEDENTS FOR RENAMING

YEAR	CHANGE
1950	United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh
1969	Madras to Tamil Nadu
1973	Mysore to Karnataka
2006	Pondicherry to Puducherry
2007	Uttaranchal to Uttarakhand
2011	Orissa to Odisha, under the Orissa (Alteration of Name) Act, 2011

The Odisha Contrast Worth Learning

The 2011 Odisha change is the most instructive comparator because it required **two different instruments**:

- The **State's name** was changed by an ordinary law under Articles 3 and 4, by simple majority.
- The **language's name**, from "Oriya" to "Odia", sits in the **Eighth Schedule** and therefore required the **96th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011** under Article 368.

The First Schedule is exempted by Article 4; the Eighth Schedule is not. That single distinction is a ready-made Prelims question.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Federalism in text versus federalism in practice. Article 3 gives Parliament **unilateral** competence over State names and boundaries, with the affected State having only a consultative voice. Yet the Kerala case shows convention performing the work the text does not require: the Centre moved only after a **unanimous Assembly resolution**. The formal position is unitary-tilted; the operating practice was cooperative.

The symbolic-versus-substantive objection. A recurring criticism of renaming exercises is that they consume legislative and administrative bandwidth without altering developmental outcomes. The counter is that toponymy is not costless either way: anglicised names are a colonial residue, and the linguistic-reorganisation logic of 1956 implies that a State constituted on a language basis should carry that language's form of its own name.

Transition cost has no standard framework. Every statute, seal, signboard, database and inter-State instrument citing "Kerala" now requires consequential updating. India has renamed six States and a Union territory without ever codifying a transition procedure: no standard commencement lag, no cost estimate, no grandfathering rule for existing documents, no Centre-State cost-sharing formula. Odisha's 2011 transition is the available comparator, and it was managed ad hoc.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 (Polity): Indian Constitution, features and amendment; federal structure; functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States.

Prelims focus: The Article 3 procedure and the non-binding nature of State views; Article 4's exemption from Article 368; what the First and Fourth Schedules contain; the Odisha two-instrument contrast.

Mains angle: Use this as the cleanest available illustration of **asymmetry between constitutional text and federal practice**. Parliament need not have consulted meaningfully; it did, because political convention required it. A strong answer notes that Indian federalism is frequently stabilised by convention rather than by text.

Way forward: **Codify** a standard operating procedure for Article 3 name alterations, covering the State-legislature consultation timeline, a fixed commencement lag to allow administrative preparation, and a Centre-State cost-sharing formula for transition, so future renamings are not managed case by case.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

THE CHANGE:

Instrument: Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026

Came into force: August 25, 2026, by Ministry of Home Affairs commencement notification

Amends the First Schedule to the Constitution

“Keralam” is the Malayalam form of the State’s name

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS:

Article 3: Parliament may alter the name of any State; Bill requires the President’s recommendation; must be referred to the State legislature, whose views are NOT binding

Article 4: consequential amendments to the First and Fourth Schedules are NOT amendments under Article 368, so a simple majority suffices

First Schedule: names and territories of States and Union territories

Fourth Schedule: allocation of Rajya Sabha seats

LEGISLATIVE TRAIL:

Background, Kerala Assembly resolutions: August 2023, re-adopted June 24, 2024

Background, Union Cabinet approval: February 24, 2026

Background, Lok Sabha: August 11, 2026; Rajya Sabha: August 12, 2026

Presidential assent by President Droupadi Murmu, August 2026

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Kerala formed November 1, 1956 under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, following the Fazl Ali Commission (1953-55)

Earlier renamings: United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh (1950), Madras to Tamil Nadu (1969), Mysore to Karnataka (1973), Puducherry (2006), Uttarakhand (2007), Odisha (2011)

Odisha contrast: the State name changed by ordinary law under Articles 3 and 4, but the language name “Odia” in the Eighth Schedule required the 96th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011

Ambedkar’s description: an “indestructible Union of destructible States”

Sources: PRS India, Ministry of Home Affairs

Source: Kerala Officially Becomes Keralam as the Centre Notifies Commencement — Ujjiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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