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Vande Mataram: From Novel to National Song

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Vande Mataram: From Novel to National Song

Vande Mataram is India's National Song. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote it in 1875. In 2026 Parliament gave it the same legal shield as the National Anthem. This article covers its story and the new law.

At a glance

Four key facts on this topic

01 **1875**Song first appears.

02 **1937**First two stanzas adopted.

03 **11 Aug 2026**President assents.

04 **3 years**Maximum jail term.

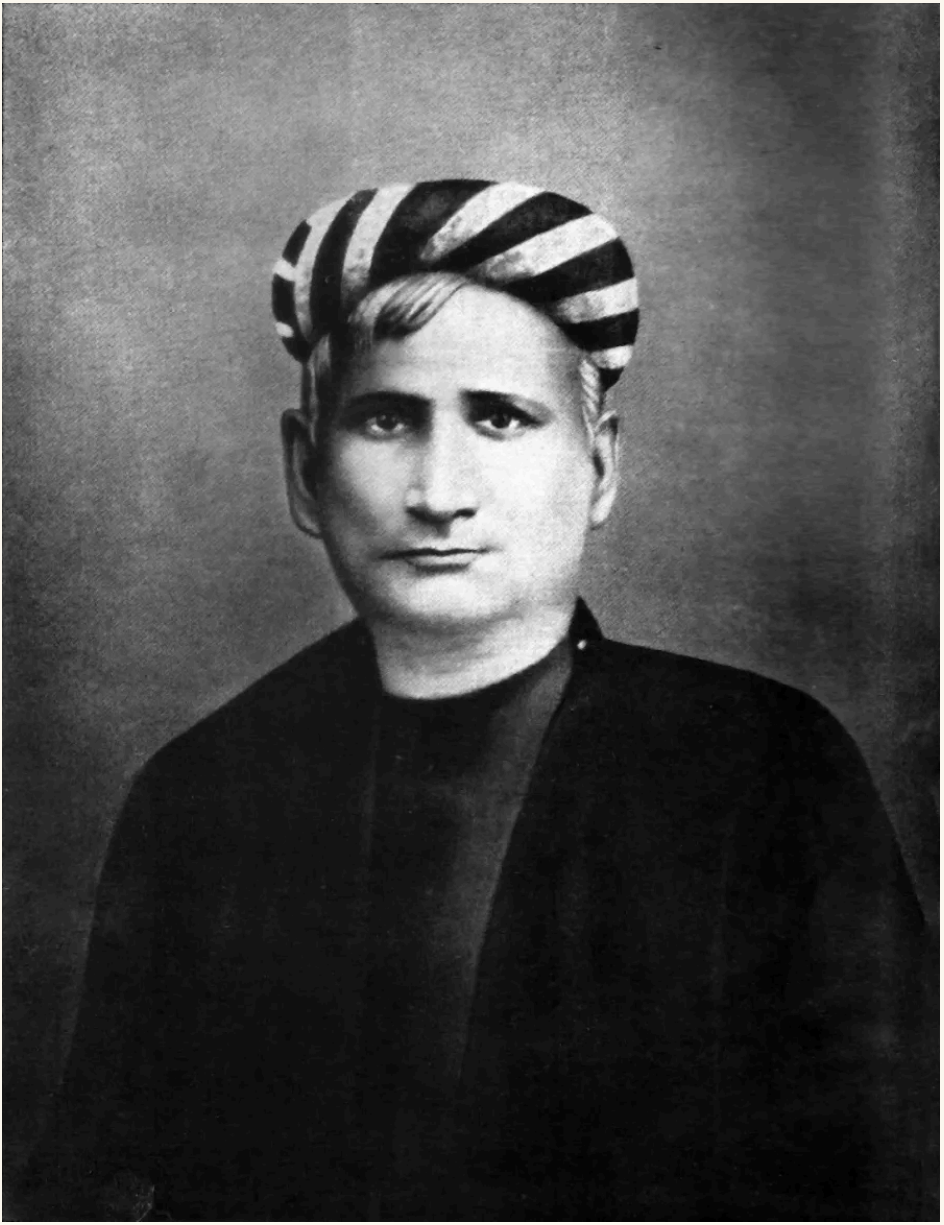
Who wrote Vande Mataram?

1 Origin: Bankim and Anandamath

1.1 Who wrote Vande Mataram, and when?

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote Vande Mataram. It first appeared in the journal Bangadarshan on 7 November 1875.

The song was later placed in his novel Anandamath, published in 1882. The novel was serialised from 1881.



Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Image: unknown author, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

10. **Think it through:** Which came first, the song or the novel?

See answer ↓

1.2 How did it reach a public stage?

Rabindranath Tagore sang it at the 1896 Congress session in Calcutta. That was its first big public airing.

The song then grew from a literary piece into a rallying cry.

1.3 Why is this pair easy to mix up?

Many students link the song to the novel. The song came first. The novel later gave it a wider readership.

Keep the order straight. The song is 1875. The novel is 1882.

Song and novel

Item	Year	Where
Vande Mataram (song)	1875	Bangadarshan journal
Anandamath (novel)	1882	Book form; serialised from 1881

1.4 When was it first sung?

Rabindranath Tagore first sang Vande Mataram at the 1896 Congress session in Calcutta.

Its first run in the novel came earlier. It appeared in the first instalment of the serial, in the March-April 1881 issue.

So the song moved from a journal in 1875 to a serial in 1881. Then it reached the Congress stage in 1896.

Quick check 1. True or false: Vande Mataram first appeared in the novel Anandamath in 1882. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 2. True or false: Tagore sang Vande Mataram at the 1896 Congress session in Calcutta. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: static.pib.gov.in; pmindia.gov.in; commons.wikimedia.org

How did it fuel freedom?

2 The Freedom Struggle

2.1 When did it become a slogan?

Vande Mataram became a political slogan on 7 August 1905. That was the start of the Swadeshi movement.

In October 1905 the Bande Mataram Sampradaya was formed.

2.2 What happened at Barisal in 1906?

On 20 May 1906 a procession of over ten thousand people marched at Barisal. Hindus and Muslims marched together.

In August 1906 an English daily, Bande Mataram, began under Bipin Chandra Pal.

2.3 Who carried it abroad?

In 1907 Bhikaiji Cama raised the tricolour flag at Stuttgart. It was the first time outside India. The words Vande Mataram were written on it.

Many martyrs went to the gallows chanting the words. Madan Lal Dhingra is among those named.

> 11. **Think it through:** Why did the slogan scare the British? See answer ↓

Freedom-struggle dates

Date	Event
7 Aug 1905	Slogan raised; Swadeshi movement begins
Oct 1905	Bande Mataram Sampradaya formed
20 May 1906	Barisal procession, over 10,000 people
Aug 1906	Bande Mataram daily begins under Bipin Chandra Pal
1907	Bhikaiji Cama's flag at Stuttgart
Later years	Martyrs go to the gallows chanting it

2.4 Why did a song matter so much?

A song needs no leader and no written speech. Crowds could say it together. That made it a strong symbol of unity.

2.5 Who edited the Bande Mataram daily?

Bipin Chandra Pal edited the English daily Bande Mataram from August 1906.

Sri Aurobindo joined him later as joint editor. The paper carried the slogan into print.

Quick check 3. True or false: The first political use of Vande Mataram as a slogan was in 1905. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 4. True or false: The Barisal procession of 1906 drew fewer than a thousand people. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What happened in 1937?

3 1937 and the National Song

3.1 What did the Congress decide in 1937?

On 29 October 1937 the Congress Working Committee adopted the first two stanzas.

The Congress says it acted on the advice of Rabindranath Tagore.

3.2 How did it get official status?

The Constituent Assembly decided the question on 24 January 1950. Rajendra Prasad made a statement. Vande Mataram was given equal honour with the National Anthem as the National Song.

The 150th anniversary of the song fell on 7 November 2025.

3.3 How do the dates line up?

Keep the dates in order. The Congress decision came in 1937. The Constituent Assembly statement came in 1950.

Key dates

Date	Event
29 Oct 1937	CWC adopts the first two stanzas
24 Jan 1950	Rajendra Prasad's statement, Constituent Assembly
7 Nov 2025	150th anniversary of the song

12. **Think it through:** Why only two stanzas in 1937? See answer ↓

Quick check 5. True or false: The Congress Working Committee adopted the first two stanzas on 29 October 1937. *(True or False?)*

See answer ↓

Sources: tribuneindia.com

What does the 2026 law say?

4 The 2026 Law

4.1 How did the Bill pass?

The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on 29 July 2026. The Lok Sabha passed it by voice vote on 30 July.

The President gave assent on 11 August 2026.

4.2 What does the Act do?

It amends the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971. Vande Mataram now gets the same protection as the National Anthem.

It is now an offence to deliberately prevent its singing. It is also an offence to cause disturbance while it is sung. The penalty is up to three years, a fine, or both.

The Bill was cleared amid protests and a walkout by the Opposition.

> 13. **Think it through:** What changed in 2026? See answer ↓

How the Bill became law

Date	Step
29 Jul 2026	Rajya Sabha passes it
30 Jul 2026	Lok Sabha passes it by voice vote
11 Aug 2026	President gives assent

4.3 Which date do students get wrong?

Some reports give 7 August for the assent. The All India Radio report gives 11 August. Use 11 August in exams.

> **Quick check 6.** True or false: The 2026 law allows imprisonment of up to three years. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: telanganatoday.com; onmanorama.com; newsonair.gov.in; indialegallive.com

What is the order of play?

5 Order of Play, 150th Year

5.1 What did the Home Ministry order?

A Home Ministry letter dated 9 July 2026 told the States and Central ministries how to order the songs. When both are performed at official functions, Vande Mataram is played first. The National Anthem follows.

The Ministry also reiterated that the full six-stanza version is the standard version for major State functions. It runs about 3 minutes 10 seconds.

5.2 What about State songs?

The Centre told the Madras High Court that Tamil Nadu is free to render Tamil Thaai Vaazhthu before the Anthem at official functions.

The court then closed a public interest plea against the order.

5.3 How was the 150th year marked?

A permanent exhibition on the Journey of Vande Mataram opened at IIAS, Shimla, in 2026. A seminar on Sardar Patel's vision ran with it.

On 15 August 2026 Vande Mataram echoed at the Red Fort for the first time. It was the 80th Independence Day event. About 2,500 cadets formed the words in a human display.

5.4 Why does the version matter?

The standard version has six stanzas. Organisers must plan about three minutes for it.

Order of play

Step	What is played
First	Vande Mataram
Second	National Anthem

> **Quick check 7.** True or false: When both are performed, the National Anthem is played before Vande Mataram. *(True or False?)*
>
> See answer ↓

Sources: newsarenaindia.com; livelaw.in; vicepresidentofindia.nic.in; outlookindia.com

What do exams ask?

6 Exam Traps

6.1 Which facts do students mix up?

- Song 1875 (Bangadarshan). Novel Anandamath 1882.
- Slogan 7 August 1905. Barisal procession 20 May 1906.
- Bhikaiji Cama flag at Stuttgart, 1907.
- CWC: first two stanzas, 29 October 1937.
- Assent to the Act: 11 August 2026. Vote dates 29 and 30 July.
- Order of play: Vande Mataram, then the Anthem.

6.2 How do exams frame this topic?

Questions usually ask for one date or one body. Match each date to its event.

The song is 1875. The novel is 1882. Do not swap them.

6.3 A quick check before the exam

Say each pair aloud. Song 1875, novel 1882. Slogan 1905, Barisal 1906. CWC 1937, Constituent Assembly 1950. Assent 11 August 2026.

> 14. **Think it through:** Which fact would you test first? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 8.** True or false: Anandamath was published before the song first appeared in Bangadarshan. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick revision

7 Quick Q&A

7.1 Who wrote it?

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.

7.2 Where did it first appear?

In Bangadarshan, on 7 November 1875.

7.3 What was adopted in 1937?

The first two stanzas, by the Congress Working Committee, on 29 October.

7.4 When did the President assent?

On 11 August 2026.

7.5 What is the maximum penalty?

Up to three years, a fine, or both.

7.6 Which is played first?

Vande Mataram, then the National Anthem.

> **Quick check 9.** True or false: The Lok Sabha passed the Bill before the Rajya Sabha. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Remember this

- **Song:** Bangadarshan, 7 November 1875.
- **Novel:** Anandamath, 1882.
- **1937:** first two stanzas, 29 October.
- **2026 Act:** assent 11 August; up to three years.

Explain it back: Why does the order of play matter at official functions?

Practice MCQs

1. In which year was Vande Mataram first published, in the journal Bangadarshan?

A. 1875

B. 1857

C. 1882

D. 1905

See answer ↓

2. Anandamath, the novel that carries Vande Mataram, was published in which year?

A. 1875

B. 1896

C. 1906

D. 1882

See answer ↓

3. Which body adopted only the first two stanzas of Vande Mataram on 29 October 1937?

A. Constituent Assembly

B. Imperial Legislative Council

C. Indian National Congress Working Committee

D. Muslim League Council

See answer ↓

4. On what date did the President give assent to the 2026 law protecting Vande Mataram?

A. 24 July 2026

B. 11 August 2026

C. 29 July 2026

D. 30 July 2026

See answer ↓

5. What is the maximum jail term for intentionally preventing the singing of Vande Mataram under the 2026 law?

A. Three years

B. One year

C. Seven years

D. Three months

See answer ↓

6. Under the Home Ministry's July 2026 instruction, which is played first when both are performed at an official function?

A. The State song

B. Vande Mataram

C. The National Anthem

D. Either one

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **A.** The answer is **1875**. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's song first appeared in Bangadarshan on 7 November 1875. Why the others fail: 1882 is when the novel Anandamath came out. 1905 is when the song became a political slogan. 1857 is the Revolt, unrelated. Memory hook: the song came seven years before the novel. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** The answer is **1882**. The novel was serialised first. The song was part of it. Why the others fail: 1875 is the song's first publication. 1896 is when Tagore sang it at the Congress session. 1906 is the Barisal procession. Memory hook: song 1875, novel 1882. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** The answer is **the Congress Working Committee**. It kept the first two stanzas and set the rest aside. The Congress says it acted on the advice of Rabindranath Tagore. Why the others fail: the Constituent Assembly decided on the National Song in 1950. The other two bodies took no such decision. Memory hook: 1937, two stanzas, the CWC. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** The answer is **11 August 2026**. The Act puts Vande Mataram on the same legal footing as the National Anthem. Why the others fail: 24 July is when the Bill was introduced. 29 July is the Rajya Sabha vote. 30 July is the Lok Sabha vote. Memory hook: introduced 24, passed 29 and 30, assent 11 August. ↑ Q4
5. **A.** The answer is **three years**. The law also allows a fine, or both. Why the others fail: the penalty is not a short term. It is also not as severe as seven years. Memory hook: the same three years as the National Anthem offence. ↑ Q5
6. **B.** The answer is **Vande Mataram**. The Home Ministry letter of 9 July 2026 says it comes before the National Anthem. Why the others fail: the Anthem follows it. The State song is left to the State Government. Memory hook: song first, anthem second. ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** It first appeared in Bangadarshan on 7 November 1875. The novel came later. ↑ 1
2. **True.** The PIB backgrounder records this. ↑ 2
3. **True.** It was raised on 7 August 1905. ↑ 3

4. **False.** It drew over ten thousand people on 20 May 1906. ↑ 4
5. **True.** The Tribune reports this date. ↑ 5
6. **True.** India Legal reports up to three years, a fine, or both. ↑ 6
7. **False.** The July 2026 letter puts Vande Mataram first. ↑ 7
8. **False.** The song was first. It came out in 1875 and the novel in 1882. ↑ 8
9. **False.** The Rajya Sabha passed it on 29 July. The Lok Sabha passed it on 30 July. ↑ 9
10. **Think it through.** The song. It appeared in 1875, seven years before the novel. ↑ 10
11. **Think it through.** A song with no weapon could still fill a street. Crowds said it together. ↑ 11
12. **Think it through.** The Congress Working Committee adopted the first two stanzas, acting on Tagore's advice. ↑ 12
13. **Think it through.** Vande Mataram gained the same legal shield that the National Anthem already had. ↑ 13
14. **Think it through.** Pick the date you confuse most. Then write it beside its event. ↑ 14

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