

4. Vande Mataram Protocol- Art & Culture

Centre issues detailed protocol for rendition of Vande Mataram at government/public events. The Union Home Ministry has issued new protocols standardizing the National Song *Vande Mataram* to a six-stanza version lasting 190 seconds, to be played before the National Anthem at official events. This initiative mandates citizens to stand at attention during its rendition to foster patriotism and institutionalize respect for the song alongside the National Anthem in schools and public functions.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has issued new guidelines standardising the protocol for singing and playing India's National Song, Vande Mataram, at official events, educational institutions, and ceremonial occasions.

Constitutional Status

No Explicit Mention- Neither the National Song nor the National Anthem is mentioned explicitly in the Constitution of India.

Source of Authority- Their status flows from Constituent Assembly resolutions adopted on 24 January 1950.

Key Guidelines for Vande Mataram

Order of Playing- When both the National Song and National Anthem are played at an event, Vande Mataram shall precede Jana Gana Mana.

Duration & Version- The government has prescribed a six-stanza official version of Vande Mataram. Total Duration- 3 minutes and 10 seconds (190 seconds).

Mandatory Standing- All citizens present are required to stand at attention whenever the National Song is sung or played in official settings.

Occasions for Official Playing

1. Flag unfurling ceremonies.
2. Arrival and departure of the President/Governors.
3. Before and after Presidential/Governors' addresses.
4. National parades and investiture ceremonies (e.g., Padma Awards).

Singing Guidelines

Cultural and Public Events- Guidelines encourage mass singing of the official version during the National Flag unfurling at cultural or ceremonial functions (excluding parade ceremonies). It should be sung collectively during the arrival of the President at public functions (other than formal state ceremonies) and immediately before his departure.

Educational Institutions- Schools are advised to begin the day with community singing of Vande Mataram to foster patriotism. Institutions are encouraged to spread awareness and promote respect for the National Song, Anthem, and Flag.

Exemptions and Special Provisions

Cinema Halls- Unlike the National Anthem, Vande Mataram will not be played in movie theatres.

Documentary Usage- If used within newsreels or documentaries, audiences are not required to stand to avoid disruption.

About National Song (Vande Mataram)

Author- Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Symbolism- It symbolises devotion to the motherland.

Composition History- Composed in the 1870s. Later published in the novel *Anandamath* (1882).

Adoption Date- Officially adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 24 January 1950.

Language- Originally written in a mix of Sanskrit and Bengali.

Judicial Interpretation

Case- M. K. Ramesh v. Union of India (2006).

Ruling- The Supreme Court held that singing Vande Mataram is not legally mandatory but morally desirable.

Principle- True patriotism stems from voluntary respect, not enforced compliance.

About National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana)

Author- Written by Rabindranath Tagore.

Adoption Date- Adopted on 24 January 1950.

First Recital- First sung on 27 December 1911 at the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress.

Language- Written in highly Sanskritised Bengali.

Duration

Full Version- Approximately 52 seconds.

Short Version- Approximately 20 seconds.

Legal Protection- Protected under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

Penalty- Disrespect is punishable by law with imprisonment up to three years, a fine, or both.

Judicial Interpretation-

1. Case- Bijoe Emmanuel Case (1986).
2. Ruling- The Supreme Court held that forcing individuals to sing the National Anthem violates Article 19(1)(a) (Freedom of Speech and Expression) if they respectfully stand in silence.

Comparison- National Song vs. National Anthem

Feature	National Song (Vande Mataram)	National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana)
Author	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee	Rabindranath Tagore
Source	Novel Anandamath (1882)	First sung at INC Calcutta Session (1911)
Adoption Date	24 January 1950	24 January 1950
Language	Sanskrit and Bengali	Sanskritised Bengali
Official Duration	190 seconds (New Guideline)	52 seconds (Full); 20 seconds (Short)
Legal Mandate	Not legally mandatory (SC, 2006)	Protected under Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971
Protocol Order	Precedes National Anthem at events	Follows National Song at events

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

Purpose- It is the primary law established to protect the dignity of India's national symbols, including the National Flag, National Anthem, and the Constitution of India.

Prohibitions- The Act strictly prohibits any deliberate insult, damage, or disrespect toward these symbols. Specific offenses include burning, defacing, defiling, or trampling the National Flag in public or private places.

Penalties- Any person found guilty under this Act faces punishment which may include imprisonment for up to three years, a monetary fine, or both.

Flag Code of India, 2002

Objective- Provides a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines regarding the correct display, use, and handling of the Indian National Flag by citizens, private organizations, and government bodies.

Rights of Citizens- Citizens are allowed to hoist the National Flag on any day, provided it is displayed with dignity, honour, and proper respect.

Restrictions on Usage- The Flag should never touch the ground, floor, or water. It cannot be used as clothing, costumes, drapery, decoration, or for commercial promotional purposes.

Specifications- The Flag must always be displayed in the correct proportion (3-2), colour combination (Saffron, White, Green), and design as specified under the Code.

Source- <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/centre-issues-detailed-protocol-for-rendition-of-vande-mataram-at-government-public-events/>

