Vande Mataram at 150 – the national song from Bangadarshan to the Constituent Assembly

History · 04-11-2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/knowledge-nugget/2026-11-04-vande-mataram-150/en

Why in news: The Government of India's year-long commemoration of 150 years of the national song 'Vande Mataram' – inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 7 November 2025 with the release of a commemorative postage stamp and coin – concludes on 7 November 2026.

Key points

- Origin: written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (Chatterjee); the 150-year count runs from 7 November 1875, and the song first appeared in the literary journal 'Bangadarshan'.
- Anandamath: Bankim later included the song in his novel 'Anandamath', published as a book in 1882.
- Freedom struggle: Rabindranath Tagore sang it at the 1896 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress; 'Vande Mataram' was first used as a political slogan on 7 August 1905, during the movement against the Partition of Bengal.
- Tamil Nadu link: Mahakavi Subramania Bharati translated the song into Tamil, carrying its message to Tamil readers during the freedom movement.
- Status: on 24 January 1950, Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, declared that 'Vande Mataram' shall be honoured equally with 'Jana Gana Mana' (the National Anthem) and have equal status with it.

In the exam: TNPSC – author and novel (Bankim – Anandamath), who first sang it at a Congress session (Tagore, 1896), Bharati's translation; UPSC Prelims – statement-type questions on the 24 January 1950 Constituent Assembly declaration, the 1905 anti-partition (Swadeshi) movement and the difference between the National Song and the National Anthem.

Questions

1. Who sang 'Vande Mataram' at the 1896 Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress?

A. Sarojini Naidu
B. Rabindranath Tagore
C. Bipin Chandra Pal
D. Sri Aurobindo

2. Consider the following statements about 'Vande Mataram':
1. It was included in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel 'Anandamath', published as a book in 1882.
2. On 24 January 1950, the President of the Constituent Assembly declared that it shall be honoured equally with 'Jana Gana Mana'.
3. It was first used as a political slogan during the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

Answers with explanations

1. **B) Rabindranath Tagore** – Rabindranath Tagore sang it at the 1896 Congress session in Calcutta.

2. **A) 1 and 2 only** – Statement 3 is wrong: it was first used as a political slogan on 7 August 1905, during the movement against the Partition of Bengal.

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