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Centre Moves to Give ‘Vande Mataram’ Legal Status Equal to National Anthem

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The Union Cabinet has reportedly approved a proposal to give “Vande Mataram” legal protection and status similar to India’s National Anthem, “Jana Gana Mana.” ?

Under the proposal, the government plans to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 to include “Vande Mataram” under the same legal protections currently available to the National Anthem. If passed by Parliament, intentionally disrupting or disrespecting the song during its rendition could become a punishable offence.

“Vande Mataram” was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the 1870s and was published in his novel Anandamath in 1882. The song became a major symbol of India’s freedom movement and was adopted as India’s National Song in 1950.

The proposal is also linked to the ongoing celebrations marking 150 years of Vande Mataram. Earlier in 2026, the government had issued guidelines regarding the song’s use in official events and ceremonies.

However, the move has triggered debate among legal experts and opposition groups regarding:

Freedom of expression

Constitutional validity

Difference between National Anthem and National Song

Whether patriotic respect can be legally enforced

Important Terms and Aspects

Term Meaning

Vande Mataram National Song of India

Jana Gana Mana National Anthem of India

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National Song Song with historic and cultural significance for the nation

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 Law protecting national symbols like the flag and anthem

No-Confidence/Disrespect Provision Legal punishment for intentional insult or disruption

Anandamath Novel by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in which “Vande Mataram” appeared

Constituent Assembly Body that framed the Constitution of India

National Symbols Official symbols representing the nation

Important Historical Facts

“Vande Mataram” was first sung at an Indian National Congress session in 1896 by Rabindranath Tagore.

In 1950, the Constituent Assembly gave “Vande Mataram” the status of National Song with “equal honour” to the National Anthem.

Only the first two stanzas are officially used because later verses contain references to Hindgoddesses, which had earlier sparked controversy.