



Debate Over National Anthem

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Why in News?

The [Governor](#) of Tamil Nadu left the [Legislative Assembly](#) without delivering his customary address on the opening day of the 2025 session citing **non-playing of the [National Anthem](#)** before his scheduled address.

- This has triggered a dispute over the ceremonial practices followed in the state legislature.

National Anthem & National Song

- The song **Jana-gana-mana (national anthem)** composed originally in Bangla by **Rabindranath Tagore (in 1911)**. It was adopted in its Hindi version as the national anthem of India.
 - It was **first sung on 27th December 1911 at the Calcutta Session** of the [Indian National Congress \(INC\)](#).
- The **National Song of India** is "**Vande Mataram**", written by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**.
 - The song was **first written in 1870** and later **included in his novel "Ananda" in 1882**. It was first sung at the **1896 INC session**.
 - It is a **patriotic hymn** that represents reverence for Mother India and was a source of inspiration during India's struggle for freedom.
- Both **National Song** and **National Anthem of India** were adopted by the [Constituent Assembly](#) on **24th January 1950**.

What are the Protocols and Conventions for Playing the National Anthem?

- **Presidential Address in Parliament:** During the [President's](#) address, the **National Anthem** is played as the President reaches the dais. The President then delivers the address and then the **National Anthem is played again** as the President exits the house in a procession.
- **Governor's Address to State Legislature:** Different states in India follow their own conventions regarding the playing of the National Anthem during legislative sessions.
 - **Nagaland:** The National Anthem was not played in the legislative assembly for several decades, and it was **first introduced in February 2021**.
 - **Tripura:** The National Anthem was first played in the Tripura Assembly in **March 2018**, reflecting a recent shift in its ceremonial practices.
 - **Tamil Nadu:** It follows a unique convention where the **State Anthem, Tamil Thai Vazhthu**, is played before the Governor's address, and the **National Anthem is played at the end**.
 - **This practice was introduced in 1991**, before which the Governor would simply enter, deliver the address, and leave without such ceremonial practices.

Playing National Anthem in Cinemas

- In the case of ***Shyam Narayan Chouksey vs Union of India (2018)***, the **Supreme Court** had initially passed an **interim order in 2016, directing all cinema halls in India to play the National Anthem** before the start of films, with attendees required to stand.
- However, in its final judgment in January 2018, the Court modified its stance, stating that the **playing of the National Anthem in cinema halls prior to films is not mandatory, but optional.**

What are the Safeguards to Protect the Honour of the National Anthem?

- **Constitutional Perspective:**
 - **Section 51 (A) (a)** of the **Constitution of India** dealing with **Fundamental Duties** states that “It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and **respect** its ideals and institutions, the **national flag and the national anthem.**”
- **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (PINH) Act, 1971:**
 - **PINH Act** provides for **strict punishment** for disrespecting the national anthem and breaking its restrictions with imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine or both.
 - A person convicted under the **PINH Act, 1971**, for offences such as **preventing the singing of the National Anthem** is disqualified from contesting elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures for a period of 6 years.
- **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Guidelines:**
 - The MHA mandates the playing of the **full National Anthem** during civil and military investitures, national salutes, parades, formal functions, and the arrival/departure of the President and Governor, as well as during the **National Flag's parade and Navy colour hoisting.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Who among the following is associated with ‘Songs from Prison’, a translation of ancient Indian religious lyrics in English? (2021)

- (a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- (d) Sarojini Naidu

Ans: (c)

Q. What is the number of spokes in the Dharmachakra in the National Flag of India? (2008)

- (a) 16
- (b) 18
- (c) 22
- (d) 24

Ans: (d)

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