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Topics Covered

- **Production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes**
- **The national song debate, a reading between the lines**
- **AI must pay**
- **Truce in Tatters**
- **Deepavali enters intangible heritage list**

Production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes

Over ₹1.8 lakh crore invested under PLI schemes: govt.

The various production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes active in the country have resulted in actual investment of over ₹1.88 lakh crore across 14 sectors as of June, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said on Wednesday. In its year-end review, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** said that investments through the PLI schemes had resulted in incremental production and sales of over ₹17 lakh crore and employment generation of over 12.3 lakh, including both direct and indirect employment.

The DPIIT said so far it had recognised 2,01,335 start-ups under the Startup India scheme, with these start-ups having created more than 21 lakh jobs.

The Open Network for Digital Commerce has processed more than 326 million orders as of October, the DPIIT said.

What are PLI Schemes?

The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are government programs that **give financial incentives to companies based on how much they produce in India.**

How do they work?

- A company that manufactures a product (like mobiles, electronics, medicines, solar panels, etc.) in India gets cash incentives from the government **if they meet certain production targets.**
- For example: If a mobile company increases production every year, it gets a percentage of its increased sales as an incentive.

Which sectors are covered?

The government has launched PLI schemes for 14 major sectors, such as:

- Mobile and electronics
- Pharmaceuticals
- Automobiles and EVs
- Solar modules
- Textiles
- Drones
- Specialty steel etc.

The national song debate, a reading between the lines

Before India celebrates **150 years of the national song Vande Mataram** in November 2025, the song has again become the center of a big political debate.

Few years ago, a famous music director (A R Rahman) released a very popular album (“Maa Tujhe Salaam”) based on this tune.

So why is Vande Mataram suddenly in the news again, with people in Parliament accusing the Congress of changing or muting parts of the original song?

The national song debate, a reading between the lines

Much before the celebrations of the 150th year of the national song, *Vande Mataram*, on November 7, 2025, one of India's leading music directors composed a song woven around the *Vande Mataram* tune (the album, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*). It was a song that was immensely popular. So, why the sudden focus on *Vande Mataram* and a debate in Parliament which saw accusations that words of the original song were muted to appease certain sections, and that all this amounted to a betrayal by the Congress?

The so-called ‘mutilation’ of the song – a line being peddled by the government of the day – was part of an official resolution of the Congress Party's Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Calcutta on October 30, 1937. The CWC meeting had Jawaharlal Nehru chairing the session and almost all the big stalwarts which included Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bhulabhai Desai, Jammalal Bajaj, Acharya J.B. Kripalani (General Secretary), Pattabi Seetharamiah, Rajaji, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in attendance.

The sense of the meeting

Though Mahatma Gandhi was not a member of the CWC, he was a special invitee and was finalising the working of the resolution which was moved by Rajendra Prasad (later, the President of India) and seconded by Sardar Patel (the Home Minister in independent India). The resolution was unanimous: “The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the question that has been raised in regard to the Congress anthem ‘*Vande Mataram*’. This song has a historic background and has evoked deep enthusiasm and powerful sentiment in the course of our struggle for freedom. It has thus acquired a unique place in the national movement. The Committee recognize the validity of the objections raised by Muslim friends to certain parts of the song. While the Committee have taken note of such objections in so far as it has felt justified in doing so, it is unable to go any further in the matter. The Committee have, however, come to the conclusion that the first two stanzas of the song, which alone have been generally sung on Congress and other public occasions, should be the only stanzas adopted as the National Song for the purpose of the Congress and other public bodies and functions. These two stanzas are in no sense objectionable even from the standpoint of those who have raised objections, and they contain the essence of the song. The Committee recommend that wherever the ‘*Vande Mataram*’ song is sung at national gatherings, only these two stanzas should be sung, and the version and music prepared by Rabindranath Tagore should be followed. The Committee trust that this decision will remove all causes of complaint and will have the willing acceptance of all communities in the country.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has indirectly targeted this resolution of the CWC in which even Sardar Patel was a part of. But has the Prime Minister realised that he has attacked a spectrum of national leaders, whose remarks on the song are being used selectively to try and score points?

What was the purpose of debating this in Parliament? Was it to have a debate on the issue



K. Chandru
is retired Judge,
Madras High Court

for the second time much after the one in the Constituent Assembly which sealed the issue? Composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, *Vande Mataram* was first published in the literary journal, *Bangadarshan*, in 1875 and was sung at the 1896 session of the Congress by Tagore. All these exercises took place much before the partition of Bengal.

There is no doubt that the song became the spirit of all meetings of the national movement which also had substantial representation by Muslims also. It was in 1935, when the Government of India Act was enacted, that Indians got a chance to participate in the electoral exercise to get into Provincial Assemblies and the Central Legislative Assembly. The issue of participation in the elections held in 1937 had inner party repercussions. The Congress captured the Provincial Assemblies. Some were won by the Muslim League.

When the Congress entered the portals of power, it also had the duty to ensure a diverse culture and have *Vande Mataram* sung at government functions. The Calcutta session became the focal point to decide to have the edited version so that it would have a pan-India appeal. The song obviously had references to Hindu goddesses, but if one wanted to ensure the broader unity of religious groups, a basic understanding on its theme was essential. It was this pragmatic decision which made them contest elections in alliance and continue in the government for the next two years. In 1939, the Congress ministries resigned in eight provinces of British India.

Later, when the Constituent Assembly was convened and the interim parliament was doubling as the Constituent Assembly in 1947, it had 208 Congress members, 73 Muslim League members, and 15 others. It also had 93 members nominated from the princely States, giving it a total of 389 members. After Partition, and the departure of the Muslim League members from the Constituent Assembly, there were only 299 members – a majority of them from the Hindu fold. It will not be out of place to state that the entry of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was possible when he was elected from Bengal Assembly by the Muslim League-dominated Assembly. After Partition, he could not continue and it was Nehru who made the decision to make the Bombay Governor nominate Dr. Ambedkar to the Assembly.

Making a choice

The Constituent Assembly also had ideas of having a national anthem for the country. Members were made to listen to three important songs that were in contention – *Vande Mataram*, *Sare Jahan Se Achha* and *Jana Gana Mana*. Though secular in its meaning and set to a marching tune, *Sare Jahan Se Achha* was not picked as the lyricist, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, had become an ardent Pakistan supporter. Even after the final draft of the Constitution was adopted in 1949 in the House headed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad and two days before the coming into force of the Constitution, in 1950, *Vande Mataram* was sung in the House by a group.

However, Members were in favour of *Jana Gana Mana*, passing a resolution that it would be the National Song. The Constitution, which has 395 Articles, never referred to any national song

as part of the constitutional framework. It was only in 1976, by the 42nd amendment, under Mrs. Gandhi's tenure, that a provision was introduced for a fundamental duty under Article 51A (which also had a clause obligating every citizen to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideas and institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem).

It was later, under the Prevention Of Insults To National Honour Act, 1971, that disrespect to the National Anthem was made a penal offence. The Supreme Court of India, in *Bijoe Emmanuel vs State of Kerala*, upheld the constitutional rights to freedom of religion and expression provided that actions do not disrupt public order or show disrespect to national symbols.

Despite being a Hindu majority, the Constituent Assembly selected *Jana Gana Mana* as the national anthem and was of the opinion that *Vande Mataram* would be the national song under its adopted version. It is against this background that one has to view the sudden ebullition over *Vande Mataram* with the request made by those in the ruling party to Members of Parliament to consider whether they should add a new fundamental duty under Article 51A, to accord the same respect to *Vande Mataram* as *Jana Gana Mana*.

In 2017, Justice M.V. Muralidharan of the Madras High Court gave a direction to the Tamil Nadu School Education Department that schools must sing *Vande Mataram* at least once a week, and crooned in offices once a month. Noting that the song could also be played in other government and private establishments at least once in a month, the judge said that if people felt that it was too difficult to sing it in Bengali or in Sanskrit, steps could be taken to translate the song into Tamil.

The Delhi High Court asked the Government of India to treat *Vande Mataram* on a par with the National Anthem. What is curious is that it was the same Narendra Modi government that told the court that both the National Anthem and the National Song had their sanctity and deserve equal respect. However, it said that the subject matter of the proceedings could never be a subject matter of a writ. The Modi government defended its position in court against granting equal legal status to the National Song as the National Anthem by citing the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, which specifically criminalises disrupting the anthem but lacks a parallel provision for the National Song, highlighting the legal distinction.

A deeper reading

The new controversy being sought to be created now over the National Song, 75 years after it was settled down by the Constituent Assembly, makes one doubt the intentions of the present government. Is there an agenda to replace the National Song by a simple resolution of Parliament akin to the similar exercise done to cancel the special status of Jammu and Kashmir?

The amount of importance and publicity being given now to a non-issue certainly makes one to believe that it could be the next move of the Narendra Modi government – which is to bring in a different National Anthem for the country without disturbing the Constitution of India and any law to the contrary.

The controversy being sought to be created now over *Vande Mataram* makes one doubt the intentions of the present government



What actually happened?

The claim that Congress “cut” or “mutilated” the song is not new. In 1937, the **Congress Working Committee (CWC)** met in Calcutta and discussed concerns raised by **Muslim leaders** about some religious parts of Vande Mataram. This meeting was chaired by **Jawaharlal Nehru**, and attended by almost all major national leaders:

Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad, J.B. Kripalani, Rajaji, Subhas Chandra Bose, and many others.

Mahatma Gandhi was also present as a special invitee.

The 1937 decision: After discussion, the CWC passed a **unanimous resolution:**

- Vande Mataram is emotionally powerful and important.
- But some stanzas contain references to Hindu goddesses that made some Muslim members uncomfortable.
- So, the **first two stanzas**, which were always sung publicly and are not objectionable, should be used.
- These two stanzas contain the **main message** of the song.
- They also said the version composed by **Rabindranath Tagore** should be followed.

This was a **practical compromise** to keep all communities united and maintain harmony.

Why the issue is being raised now?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has indirectly criticised this old 1937 decision — even though leaders like **Patel, Nehru, Prasad, Bose** and others had agreed to it.

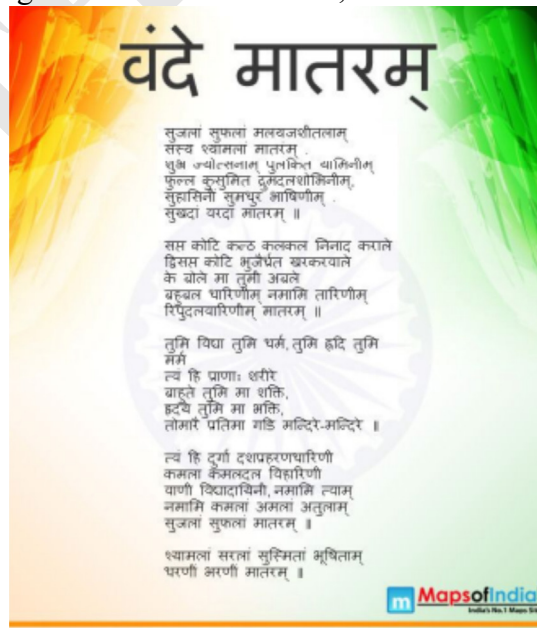
This raises questions:

Why debate this issue again in Parliament?

Why revive something that was already settled long ago?

History of the song

- Vande Mataram was written by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay**.
- First published in **1875**. Sung at the **Congress session of 1896** by Tagore.
- It was widely used during the freedom movement, and Muslims also took part.



Decisions after Independence

The **Constituent Assembly** considered three songs:

1. Vande Mataram
2. Sare Jahan Se Achha
3. Jana Gana Mana

They finally selected **Jana Gana Mana** as the national anthem.

Vande Mataram was accepted as the **National Song**, but not given equal legal status.

The Constitution does **not mention** a national song.

It was in 1976 that a **fundamental duty** was added to respect the national anthem, flag etc.

Legal position today

- **National Anthem** (Jana Gana Mana) has legal protection under the **1971 Act** — insulting it is a punishable offence.
- **Vande Mataram** does **not** have such legal protection.

AI must pay

The working paper on AI and Copyright Issues is a good start

Large Language Models (LLMs) are improving very fast because of two main reasons:

1. **Machine learning techniques keep getting better**, which naturally improves how these models think and respond.
2. **AI companies now have access to huge amounts of text, data and multimedia from the Internet**, which helps in training these models.

AI companies argue that anything available online should be free for use in training their models, even though normally, if someone else copied or reused the same content, they would need permission and would have to pay the content creator. This has created a big clash between **AI companies** and **content creators** (like news organisations, filmmakers, authors, etc.). Content creators feel their work is being used without payment.

In this situation, the **DPIIT's working paper on AI and copyright** is a positive move. It suggests a system where content **creators get paid** for the use of their material, but **without hurting India's growing AI industry**. It tries to strike a fair balance between both sides.

The paper suggests a **mandatory licensing system** to solve the conflict between AI companies and content creators. Under this system:

- AI companies would be allowed to freely scrape (collect) data from publicly available Internet sources.
- In return, they would have to pay money to a non-profit body, similar to a copyright society.
- This body would then distribute the money to Indian content creators whose work was used to train AI models.

The committee's logic is practical:

It is **not possible** for every content creator to stop AI companies from scraping their data or to enforce “opt-out” rules. AI models usually don't copy content exactly; they create new text from what they learn. Because of this, the committee believes that **data processing should be treated as a right for AI companies**, but only if they pay for it

There is a problem, though:

How should royalties be calculated?

A small independent publisher may feel it is unfair to receive the same amount as a large media company that publishes hundreds of articles every day. Still, some kind of payment system is urgently needed.]

Truce in Tatters

Fighting has broken out again between **Thailand and Cambodia**, breaking the fragile peace deal that U.S. President Donald Trump helped arrange just two months ago.

This is worrying because the conflict threatens the stability of the entire South-East Asian region.

Historical roots

- The conflict goes back to **colonial-era treaties (1904 and 1907)** between France and Siam (Thailand), which created unclear borders.
- The main point of tension is the **Preah Vihear temple**, an ancient Khmer temple.
- In **1962**, the International Court of Justice ruled that Cambodia owns the temple, but the border around it is still not agreed upon.
- Investors and tourists are worried.
- ASEAN is already struggling with the **Myanmar crisis**, and another conflict will further damage the region's stability and reputation.

What ASEAN should do now

- Countries like **Malaysia and Indonesia** should push Thailand and Cambodia to **restart dialogue immediately**.
- Once a ceasefire is back in place, ASEAN should promote **trust-building steps** to reduce future tensions.
- Preventing another round of fighting is essential for regional peace.

Truce in tatters ASEAN should do more to end dispute between Cambodia and Thailand

The resumption of hostilities between Thailand and Cambodia this week marks a dangerous unravelling of the fragile truce that U.S. President Donald Trump helped broker just two months ago, and a slide toward a conflict that threatens regional stability. The latest escalation began in May, when a Cambodian soldier was killed in skirmishes near the ancient Preah Vihear temple in the contested border region. Cambodia responded by banning Thai goods and closing key border crossings, driving bilateral ties to a new low. In July, five Thai soldiers were injured in a landmine explosion in the same area. Bangkok accused Cambodia of laying mines, and downgraded diplomatic ties. This was followed by cross-border fighting that killed at least 48 people and displaced over 3,00,000 civilians in five days. In late July, a diplomatic push by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, backed by Mr. Trump, produced a ceasefire. But tensions lingered. In November, Thailand announced that it would suspend implementation of the ceasefire after a landmine blast injured several soldiers. That decision set the stage for the fighting on December 7, with Cambodia accusing Thailand of launching air strikes.



Deepavali enters intangible heritage list

Deepavali, India's festival of lights, was on Wednesday inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

UNESCO acknowledges Deepavali as a living heritage that strengthens social bonds, supports traditional craftsmanship, reinforces values of generosity and well-being, and contributes meaningfully to several Sustainable Development Goals.

Deepavali enters intangible heritage list

UNESCO says it strengthens social bonds, supports traditional crafts, reinforces values of generosity; PM says people are thrilled at the honour; Minister calls it a moment of national pride

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Deepavali, India's festival of lights, was on Wednesday inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The inscription was adopted in the presence of Union Minister of Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, senior officials, and delegates from 194 member states, international experts, and representatives of UNESCO's global network, at an event held at the Red Fort here.

The announcement came during the 20th session of the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee.

UNESCO's inscription



Living heritage: Deepavali thrives through the contributions of potters crafting traditional earthen lamps. VIJAY SONEJI

acknowledges Deepavali as a living heritage that strengthens social bonds, supports traditional craftsmanship, reinforces values of generosity and well-being, and contributes meaningfully to several Sustainable Development Goals.

Prime Minister

Narendra Modi said people in India and around the world were thrilled at the UNESCO honour. "For us, Deepavali is very closely linked to our culture and ethos. It is the soul of our civilisation. The addition of Deepavali to the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List will

contribute to the festival's global popularity even further," he said in a post on X.

Addressing the international delegates at the event, the Union Minister said the inscription marks a moment of immense pride for India and for communities across the world who keep alive the timeless spirit of Deepavali.

Highlighting the people-centric nature of the festival, he emphasised that Deepavali thrives through the contributions of millions, including potters crafting traditional 'diyas' (earthen lamps), artisans preparing festive decor, farmers, sweet-makers, priests, and households that uphold age-old customs.

(With PTI inputs)

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List

What is the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List?

It's a list maintained by UNESCO that recognizes **living cultural expressions** — such as traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals, craftsmanship and knowledge systems — that communities continue to transmit across generations.

India has **16 elements** on UNESCO's Representative List as of December 2025, including the recently inscribed Deepavali:

1. **Tradition of Vedic Chanting** (2008) – All over India
2. **Kutiyattam: Sanskrit Theatre** (2008) – Kerala
3. **Ramlila: Traditional performance of the Ramayana** (2008) – Nationwide
4. **Ramman: Religious festival and ritual theatre** (2009) – Garhwal Himalayas (Uttarakhand)
5. **Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dances** (2010) – Rajasthan
6. **Chhau Dance** (2010) – Eastern India
7. **Mudiyettu: Ritual theatre & dance drama** (2010) – Kerala
8. **Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh** (2012) – Ladakh & Jammu & Kashmir
9. **Sankirtana: Ritual singing, drumming & dancing** (2013) – Manipur
10. **Traditional brass & copper craft of Thatheras** (2014) – Jandiala Guru, Punjab
11. **Nowruz** (2016) – Shared cultural festival across multiple countries, including India
12. **Yoga** (2016) – Practised worldwide
13. **Kumbh Mela** (2017) – Multiple locations in India
14. **Durga Puja in Kolkata** (2021) – West Bengal
15. **Garba of Gujarat** (2023) – Gujarat
16. **Deepavali** (2025) – Festival of Lights, celebrated across India and the Indian diaspora (new addition)