ISSUE 01 GS-I Modern Indian History

150 Years of "Vande Mataram": National Song's Year-Long Tribute Concludes on Its Anniversary

On 7 November 2026, India concluded a year-long nationwide commemoration marking exactly 150 years since Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed "Vande Mataram" on 7 November 1875. The commemoration, inaugurated by PM Modi a year earlier at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium with a commemorative stamp and coin, culminated in closing events led by the Ministry of Culture, with the Ministry of Railways holding its own ceremony at Rail Bhawan.

150	1875	1882	1950	1-Yr
YEARS SINCE COMPOSED	YEAR WRITTEN (7 NOV)	PUBLISHED IN ANANDAMATH	EQUAL STATUS GRANTED	COMMEMORATION SPAN

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on Akshaya Navami, 7 November 1875.
- First published in the literary journal *Bangadarshan*; later included in his 1882 novel *Anandamath*.
- On 24 January 1950, the Constituent Assembly gave it status equal to the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.
- It is India's National Song — a status distinct from the National Anthem.
- The 150th-anniversary commemoration ran from 7 November 2025 to 7 November 2026.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I | Modern History GS-II | National Symbols

Vande Mataram's journey — from an 1875 Bengali composition to a rallying cry of the Swadeshi movement and the freedom struggle, to its 1950 constitutional recognition — shows how literature and cultural nationalism fed into the national movement. **GS-II | Polity — National Symbols**: nothing in the Constitution or statute mandates when or how the National Song must be sung, unlike the structured Flag Code for the National Flag. Key themes: cultural nationalism · Swadeshi Movement · constitutional status of national symbols · Fundamental Duties (Article 51A).

ETHICS LENS

"Should a national symbol's significance be legislated, or does mandating it dilute genuine patriotic sentiment?" Debates around compulsory singing of Vande Mataram in schools and public institutions bring this tension to the fore: proponents argue it fosters collective pride, while critics caution that coerced patriotism can breed resentment and sit uneasily with India's pluralistic composition. ***GS-IV Value: Patriotism*** *— a freely-held, reasoned attachment to one's nation rather than a performative or imposed loyalty.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** VERIFIED

Which among the following events happened earliest?

(a) Swami Dayanand established Arya Samaj.

(b) Dinabandhu Mitra wrote Neel Darpan.

(c) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote Anandmath.

(d) Satyendranath Tagore became the first Indian to succeed in the Indian Civil Services Examination.

Answer: (b) Dinabandhu Mitra's Neel Darpan (1858–59) depicted the Indigo Revolt — earliest of the four. Dayanand founded Arya Samaj in 1875 (the same year Bankim wrote Vande Mataram, later woven into Anandamath, 1882); Satyendranath Tagore became the first Indian ICS officer in 1863.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Civil Services & Judicial Review

Jharkhand High Court Quashes State's Cancellation of JSSC CGL 2024 Exam

On 6 November 2026, Justice Deepak Roshan of the Jharkhand High Court quashed the state government's cancellation of the 2024 JSSC Combined Graduate Level (CGL) examination and the appointments made through it, calling the cancellation "unfair and unjust" and holding that selected candidates could not be presumed guilty en masse. A detailed order was expected the next day; the CID probe into alleged paper-leak irregularities continues.

1,900+	21	18 Aug	6 Nov	CID
CANDIDATES AFFECTED	OTHER EXAMS ALSO CANCELLED	CANCELLATION DATE	HC VERDICT DATE	PROBE CONTINUES

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- JSSC = Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission; CGL = Combined Graduate Level exam.
- State government cancelled the 2024 CGL exam and 21 other recruitment tests on 18 August, citing a CID probe and protests over alleged paper leaks.
- Jharkhand High Court verdict delivered by Justice Deepak Roshan on 6 November 2026.
- Over 1,900 selected candidates were affected by the cancellation.
- Final appointments remain subject to the outcome of the ongoing CID investigation.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II | Governance

The ruling sits at the intersection of two live GS-II themes: the transparency and credibility of competitive recruitment examinations, and the judiciary's power of judicial review over executive action. The Court's reasoning — that an entire batch of selected candidates cannot be penalised without individualised, substantiated evidence — reinforces natural-justice safeguards (Articles 14 and 21) against sweeping administrative cancellations. **GS-II | Judicial Review**: the verdict shows judicial review checking arbitrary executive action, even where the stated justification is anti-corruption vigilance. Key themes: recruitment integrity · judicial review of executive action · natural justice · civil services reform.

ETHICS LENS

"Is it just to let an entire batch of successful candidates bear the cost of a few individuals' alleged wrongdoing?" Paper-leak scandals often tempt governments toward blanket cancellations because they appear decisive, but such sweeping action can punish the innocent majority alongside the guilty few, eroding candidates' trust in the system and wasting years of preparation. ***GS-IV Value: Procedural fairness*** *— the principle that punitive state action must rest on individualised evidence and due process, not collective suspicion.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC CSE Prelims 2017** VERIFIED

In India, Judicial Review implies

(a) The power of the Judiciary to pronounce upon the Constitutionality of laws and executive orders.

(b) The power of the Judiciary to question the wisdom of the laws enacted by the Legislatures.

(c) The power of the Judiciary to review all the legislative enactments before they are assented to by the President.

(d) The power of the Judiciary to review its own judgements given earlier in similar or different cases.

Answer: (a) Judicial Review lets courts examine the constitutionality of laws and executive orders — exactly the power the Jharkhand HC exercised in testing the state's cancellation order against standards of fairness and due process.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Environment & Pollution

Delhi Ranked World's Most Polluted Major City on the Eve of Diwali

On 7 November 2026, Swiss air-quality monitor IQAir's live ranking placed Delhi first among the world's major cities, with a reading roughly double that of second-placed Lahore. India's own CPCB index recorded the city's air as "very poor." Authorities ordered schools in and around Delhi to switch to online classes and urged residents to work from home, as local media — citing official data — called it the worst pre-Diwali air in eight years.

581	363	#1	285	8-Yr
IQAIR US-AQI (DELHI)	CPCB AQI – "VERY POOR"	IQAIR WORLD RANKING	LAHORE'S READING (2ND)	WORST PRE-DIWALI AIR

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- IQAir is a Swiss air-quality monitoring group; its index differs methodologically from India's CPCB National Air Quality Index.
- CPCB's AQI uses eight pollutants: PM10, PM2.5, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, NH_3 and Pb.
- "Very poor" is a distinct CPCB AQI category, below "severe."
- Government response: online classes for Delhi-NCR schools; work-from-home advisories.
- Air quality typically worsens pre-Diwali due to stagnant winter winds, temperature inversion and firecracker use.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Environment

Delhi's recurring winter pollution crisis reflects the layered governance challenge of airshed management across a tri-state National Capital Region, where stubble burning, vehicular emissions, construction dust and firecracker use compound seasonal meteorological stagnation. Institutional responses — the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), GRAP-based graded restrictions, and recurring Supreme Court oversight — show the limits of episodic, command-based regulation absent sustained airshed-level coordination between Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and UP. Key themes: CAQM and GRAP · inter-state airshed governance · stubble burning · public health and vulnerable groups.

ETHICS LENS

"Who bears the real cost when clean air becomes a seasonal privilege rather than a guaranteed right?" Outdoor workers, street vendors, construction labourers and children in low-income households cannot simply "work from home" or avoid exposure the way more privileged residents can, turning a shared environmental crisis into one with starkly unequal human costs. ***GS-IV Value: Environmental justice*** *— the principle that environmental burdens, and the capacity to avoid them, should not fall disproportionately on the poor and vulnerable.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC CSE Prelims 2016** VERIFIED

In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of the Air Quality Index? 1. Carbon dioxide 2. Carbon monoxide 3. Nitrogen dioxide 4. Sulphur dioxide 5. Methane — Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: (b) India's AQI considers eight pollutants overall (PM10, PM2.5, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, NH_3, Pb); among the five listed here, only carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide are counted — not carbon dioxide or methane.

ISSUE 04 GS-III Disaster Management & Animal Husbandry

India Tests Readiness for Exotic Livestock Disease Threat in National Exercise 'VAJRA-SAT'

The two-day national tabletop exercise "VAJRA-SAT", held at ICAR-NIVEDI, Bengaluru, and concluding on 7 November 2026, brought together 83 participants from 25 states and 3 Union Territories to test India's preparedness against Foot-and-Mouth Disease serotype SAT-1 — a strain never reported in India but now spreading across West Asia. Organised by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying with ICAR-NIVEDI, under the theme "Detect Early, Confirm Fast, Contain Together," the exercise will feed into a national contingency plan and updated outbreak-response protocols.

83	25+3	530M+	17	2-Day
PARTICIPANTS	STATES & UTS	INDIA'S LIVESTOCK POPULATION	COUNTRIES WITH SAT-1 SPREAD	EXERCISE DURATION

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- VAJRA-SAT was conducted at ICAR-NIVEDI (National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics), Bengaluru.
- Organised by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) with ICAR-NIVEDI.
- Focus: FMD serotype SAT-1, not yet reported in India, but which has spread to 17 countries in West Asia.
- Exercise theme: "Detect Early, Confirm Fast, Contain Together."
- India currently has no domestic vaccine production against SAT-1.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Agriculture GS-III | Disaster Management

With over 530 million livestock — the world's largest herd — India's dairy and allied-sector livelihoods are acutely exposed to transboundary animal diseases, making early-warning exercises like VAJRA-SAT a direct extension of agricultural risk management. The involvement of the Army, Air Force, BSF and SSB alongside veterinary institutions signals a "whole-of-government" approach to biosecurity threats once treated as purely departmental. **GS-III | Disaster Management**: tabletop exercises of this kind operationalise pre-disaster mitigation and inter-agency coordination rather than post-outbreak response alone. Key themes: transboundary animal disease preparedness · livestock-dependent livelihoods · whole-of-government biosecurity · vaccine self-reliance.

ETHICS LENS

"Does preparing for a disease that has not yet arrived justify the resources spent, when so many existing livestock ailments go underfunded?" Preemptive biosecurity exercises are a hard sell politically because their success is invisible — a well-run drill that averts a future outbreak produces no headline, while the funds spent on it are visible and contestable against existing, underfunded animal-health priorities. ***GS-IV Value: Prudence / anticipatory responsibility*** *— the ethical duty to act on foreseeable but not-yet-realised risks, rather than waiting for a crisis to force the issue.*

PYQ CONNECT · **UPSC CSE Prelims 2025** VERIFIED

Consider the following statements about the Rashtriya Gokul Mission: 1. It is important for the upliftment of rural poor as majority of low producing indigenous animals are with small and marginal farmers and landless labourers. 2. It was initiated to promote indigenous cattle and buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) I only
(b) II only
(c) Both I and II
(d) Neither I nor II

Answer: (c) Both statements are correct — indigenous cattle and buffalo rearing is disproportionately concentrated among small, marginal and landless rural households, which is exactly why livestock-health preparedness exercises like VAJRA-SAT carry outsized livelihood stakes.

🧠 Memory Lab

Rapid revision · High-retention formats · Today's key concepts

SAT · 08 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Vande Mataram turns 150. India closed a year-long commemoration of the National Song, written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on 7 Nov 1875 and granted equal status with the National Anthem in 1950.

2. JSSC CGL cancellation quashed. Jharkhand HC struck down the state’s blanket cancellation of the 2024 CGL exam, protecting over 1,900 selected candidates while the CID probe continues.

3. Delhi, world’s most polluted city. IQAir ranked Delhi #1 globally on Diwali eve (AQI 581), prompting online classes and work-from-home advisories across the NCR.

4. VAJRA-SAT tests FMD readiness. A 2-day national exercise at ICAR-NIVEDI, Bengaluru brought 83 experts from 25 states and 3 UTs to prepare for a livestock disease never before reported in India.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

150 YEARS OF VANDE MATARAM	**1875** YEAR SONG WAS WRITTEN	**1,900+** JSSC CANDIDATES PROTECTED
21 EXAMS CANCELLED WITH JSSC CGL	**581** DELHI’S IQAIR US-AQI	**363** DELHI’S CPCB AQI (VERY POOR)
530M+ INDIA’S LIVESTOCK POPULATION	**83** VAJRA-SAT PARTICIPANTS	**17** COUNTRIES WITH FMD SAT-1

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — PATRIOTISM

Vande Mataram’s symbolism shows cultural nationalism at its best when it unites rather than compels. **Value: Patriotism** — freely-held attachment, not imposed loyalty.

ISSUE 02 — PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Jharkhand HC held that an entire candidate batch cannot be penalised without individualised evidence. **Value: Procedural fairness** — due process over collective suspicion.

ISSUE 03 — ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Delhi’s worst pre-Diwali air in 8 years falls hardest on those who cannot “work from home.” **Value: Environmental justice** — equitable distribution of environmental burdens.

ISSUE 04 — ANTICIPATORY RESPONSIBILITY

VAJRA-SAT prepares for a disease India has never seen. **Value: Prudence** — acting on foreseeable risk before crisis forces the issue.

QUICK NOTE

National Song ≠ National Anthem

Vande Mataram holds status “equal to” Jana Gana Mana (1950) but is not interchangeable with it — only the Anthem is explicitly protected under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Vande Mataram written 7 Nov 1875; equal status with National Anthem granted 24 Jan 1950.
- ☐ First appeared in Bangadarshan; later part of Anandamath (1882).
- ☐ JSSC CGL 2024 cancellation (18 Aug) quashed by Jharkhand HC on 6 Nov 2026.
- ☐ Over 1,900 selected candidates protected; CID probe into paper-leak claims continues.
- ☐ Delhi’s IQAir AQI hit 581 on 7 Nov 2026 — ranked world’s most polluted major city.
- ☐ CPCB’s official AQI uses 8 pollutants: PM10, PM2.5, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, NH_3, Pb.
- ☐ VAJRA-SAT (4–7 Nov 2026) tested FMD serotype SAT-1 readiness at ICAR-NIVEDI, Bengaluru.
- ☐ India has 530M+ livestock but no domestic SAT-1 vaccine yet.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW

Modern History	8/10
Polity – Judiciary	9/10
Environment – Pollution	7/10
Agriculture – Livestock	5/10
National Symbols	4/10
Disaster Management	3/10
Govt Schemes (CA)	6/10



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