

Kanishka Narayan Becomes UK's First Minister for Artificial Intelligence



The United Kingdom's technology governance, Kanishka Narayan has become the UK's first-ever Cabinet-level Minister for Artificial Intelligence (AI). The UK has put the AI portfolio on the Cabinet agenda, with Prime Minister Andy Burnham naming the field of intelligence as a key priority for national growth and competitiveness, and for innovation in the UK public service. Before this historic promotion, Kanishka Narayan, an Indian-origin Labour MP, served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for AI and Online Safety.

Who is Kanishka Narayan?

Kanishka Narayan is an Indian-born British politician who was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) in the Parliamentary re-election following the death of the father of Mother Teresa and has served as a Member of Parliament for Vale of Glamorgan, Wales since 1994. He was born in Muzaffarpur, Bihar (India) but came to the UK as a child, studying at Oxford University and Stanford University. Before embarking upon his political career, he served in the United Kingdom Civil Service and also held a position in the private sector. He has held the post of the UK's Minister for AI and Online Safety since 2025, and is therefore ideally positioned to spearhead the UK's AI agenda.

Why Has the UK Created an AI Minister?

Artificial Intelligence is being perceived as a strategic technology that affects economic growth, national security, healthcare, education, manufacturing and public administration and has put AI at the Cabinet level in the UK government.

The dedicated AI ministry aims to:

- Accelerate AI innovation
- Improve AI governance
- Advocate for ethical and responsible application of AI. Encourage the responsible building of AI.
- Strengthen digital infrastructure
- Encourage and support AI research.
- Inspire and support new AI start-ups and businesses
- Develop AI regulations
- Enhance international AI cooperation

Responsibilities of the AI Minister

It is expected that Kanishka Narayan is behind the wheel of the UK's first Minister for Artificial Intelligence.

- National AI Strategy
- Regulating AI and AI governance models
- AI Safety initiatives
- Digital innovation
- Emerging technologies
- AI investment policies
- Public sector AI adoption
- International AI partnerships
- The policies relating to semiconductors and advanced technology
- Online safety coordination

Why is this Appointment so important?

The appointment is important because it:

- Initiates the use of AI as a priority for the Cabinet.
- Shows the UK's leadership leading the way in AI.
- Promotes the adoption of ethical AI innovations.
- Promotes economic development (the use of technology).
- Improves AI governance and regulation.
- Enhances global competitiveness.
- Facilitates research and start-up activities in AI.

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- Acknowledges the increasing presence of AI in policymaking.

(PYQs) on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Exam & Year	Previous Year Question	Answer
SSC CHSL 2024	Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of a machine to: (a) Mimic human intelligence (b) Generate electricity (c) Store data only (d) Manufacture robots	(a) Mimic human intelligence
SSC CGL 2024	Which branch of Artificial Intelligence enables computers to learn automatically from data? (a) Blockchain (b) Machine Learning (c) Cloud Computing (d) Quantum Cryptography	(b) Machine Learning
SSC CPO 2024	AI-powered facial recognition technology is mainly used for: (a) Smart Surveillance (b) Water Conservation (c) Textile Production (d) Irrigation	(a) Smart Surveillance
RRB NTPC 2022	Which of the following is an application of Artificial Intelligence? (a) Voice Assistant (b) Calculator (c) Pen Drive (d) LED Bulb	(a) Voice Assistant
RRB Group D 2022	Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant are examples of: (a) Artificial Intelligence (b) Blockchain (c) Internet Banking (d) Cloud Storage	(a) Artificial Intelligence

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IBPS PO 2023	ChatGPT is based on which technology?	(b) Generative Artificial Intelligence
	(a) Blockchain (b) Generative Artificial Intelligence (c) Internet of Things (IoT) (d) Virtual Reality	
IBPS Clerk 2023	Artificial Intelligence is widely used in banks mainly for:	(a) Fraud Detection
	(a) Fraud Detection (b) Currency Printing (c) ATM Manufacturing (d) Gold Refining	
SBI PO 2024	AI-powered chatbots are mainly used for:	(a) Customer Service
	(a) Customer Service (b) Currency Exchange (c) Loan Printing (d) Gold Storage	
UGC NET Paper-I 2023	Which of the following is an application of Artificial Intelligence?	(d) All of the Above
	(a) Natural Language Processing (NLP) (b) Image Recognition (c) Recommendation Systems (d) All of the Above	
Delhi Police (SSC) 2023	AI-enabled CCTV systems are primarily used for:	(a) Smart Surveillance
	(a) Smart Surveillance (b) Mining (c) Fisheries (d) Textile Industry	

Conclusion on the UK's First AI Minister

The appointment of Kanishka Narayan as the UK's First Minister for Artificial Intelligence represents a historic moment in the governance of technology in the world. The United Kingdom's appointment of AI to a Cabinet-level portfolio demonstrates its commitment to

leveraging AI to form a core part of its economic growth and the nation's plans for digital transformation, public services and national security as a CSP. The transfer further illustrates responsible AI governance, innovation and international cooperation as we enter an increasingly AI-fuelled world. The UK's decision is a significant example for India and other nations on how governments are navigating opportunities and challenges posed by AI while integrating its capabilities into their institutions.

UK Appoints Kanishka Narayan as Its First AI Minister (FAQs)

1. Who is Kanishka Narayan?

Kanishka Narayan is an Indian-origin British politician and Labour Party Member of Parliament (MP) representing **Vale of Glamorgan** in Wales. He has become the **United Kingdom's first Cabinet-level Minister for Artificial Intelligence**.

2. Why has the UK appointed a dedicated Minister for Artificial Intelligence?

The UK created this position to accelerate AI innovation, improve AI governance, develop responsible regulations, encourage investment in advanced technologies, and ensure the safe adoption of artificial intelligence across government and industry.

3. What are the main responsibilities of the UK's AI Minister?

The AI Minister oversees national AI policies, promotes responsible AI development, supports research and innovation, strengthens AI safety measures, encourages digital transformation, and coordinates international cooperation on emerging technologies.

4. Why is Kanishka Narayan's appointment important?

The appointment reflects the UK's decision to make artificial intelligence a national strategic priority. It is expected to boost technological innovation, enhance public service delivery, attract AI investment, and strengthen the country's position as a global leader in emerging technologies.

5. How does this appointment benefit the UK's AI ecosystem?

A dedicated AI Minister can help create a coordinated policy framework, support AI startups and research institutions, encourage responsible innovation, improve digital infrastructure, and build public trust in AI technologies.

Vande Mataram Bill, Purpose, Key Provisions and Importance



The Vande Mataram Bill, 2026 is a pivotal legislation presented by the Central Government to show the National Song of India, "Vande Mataram," statutory recognition and protection under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971. The Bill aims to criminalise any intentional insult or obstruction or disruption of the singing of Vande Mataram, as is already the case with National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana. It also advocates for singing of the entire six-stanza version of the National Song on all occasions of the State. It also recommends that the 6-stanza version of the National Song be played at all occasions of the State. The Bill would increase awareness and understanding of the national symbols, would help in preserving the cultural heritage of the nation and would be good for the people to be patriotic towards their country at the time of the 150th anniversaries of Vande Mataram.

Why is the Vande Mataram Bill in News?

The Union Government has announced the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which will increase the legal rights of Vande Mataram, India's National Song. The levying of penalties even upon those who intentionally insult, stop or disturb the song of Vande Mataram will be made illegal once it is implemented. The Bill also prescribes the singing of the entire six-stanza version of the National Song in all the functions of the State and civil investiture services.

What is Vande Mataram Bill?

The amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 is the Vande Mataram Bill, which seeks to put the National Song on par with the National Anthem for legal protection. At present, the 1971 Act penalises the intentional prevention or disturbance of the National Anthem. The amendment aims to provide the same legal protection to Vande Mataram.

Objectives of the Vande Mataram Bill

- Give legal protection to Vande Mataram.
- Maintain the integrity of India's National Anthem.
- Spread Nationalistic and Patriotistic feelings and unity.
- Enhance appreciation of the national symbols.
- Ensure it is not disrupted in any way by intentional means or out of insult.
- Make people aware of the freedom struggle of India and their past culture.
- Build respect for constitutional values.

Key Provisions of the Vande Mataram Bill

Provision	Description
Legal Protection	Extends statutory protection to Vande Mataram under the 1971 Act
Punishment	Up to 3 years imprisonment , fine, or both for intentional insult or disruption
Equal Protection	Brings the National Song on par with the National Anthem for legal protection
Mandatory Rendition	Full six-stanza version to be sung at State functions and civil investiture ceremonies
Scope	Covers intentional obstruction, disturbance, or disrespect during rendition
Enforcement	Applicable across India after enactment

How Courts Have Interpreted the Existing Anthem Law

There have been numerous judgments by the Indian courts in favour of respecting Indian symbols, which has led to the conclusion that anything imposed on the National Anthem must also be in the spirit of the Fundamental Rights guarantee conferred by the Indian Constitution.

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As the years have gone by, the Supreme Court has set out strict guidelines concerning the compulsory aspects of patriotism that are not lawful in relation to individual rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of speech, conscience and religion.

Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala (1986)

Ruling in favour of the parents and the children, the Supreme Court stated in their decision that students of Jehovah's Witnesses were not required to sing the National Anthem when it violated their true religious beliefs. Still, they must stand reverently when performing it, however. The Court found that they would be coerced to sing, and this infringes on their right to Freedom of Speech and Expression as guaranteed by Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution and their right to freedom of religion under Article 25 of the Constitution.

Shyam Narayan Chouksey vs Union of India is the case (2016)

In the interim order, the Supreme Court ordered the playing of the National Anthem in cinema halls before showing films and made it mandatory for the audiences to stand in silence as a symbol of respect towards the anthem. It reiterated the need to display respect and dignity towards national symbols.

Shyam Narayan Chouksey v. Union of India (2018)

Later, the Supreme Court changed its stance with an order issued in 2016 and allowed cinema halls not to play the National Anthem before showing movies. The Court reiterated that the respect of the National Anthem is still a constitutional obligation, but the Government must delineate appropriate guidelines which may strike a balance between the obligation to honour the National Anthem and the rights that individuals have under the Constitution.

PYQs on National Anthem Law & National Symbols

Exam & Year	Previous Year Question	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims 2007	Which one of the following Fundamental Duties is directly related to respecting the National Flag and the National Anthem? (a) Article 48A(b) Article 51A(a)(c) Article 21A(d) Article 39A	(b) Article 51A(a)

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SSC CGL 2023	Which of the following is India's National Anthem? (a) Sare Jahan Se Achha(b) Vande Mataram(c) Jana Gana Mana(d) Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon	(c) Jana Gana Mana
SSC CHSL 2022	Who composed the National Anthem of India? (a) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay(b) Rabindranath Tagore(c) Subhas Chandra Bose(d) Sarojini Naidu	(b) Rabindranath Tagore
RRB NTPC 2021	Under which Act is the National Anthem legally protected against intentional insult? (a) Representation of the People Act, 1951(b) Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971(c) National Security Act, 1980(d) Indian Penal Code, 1860	(b) Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971
IBPS PO 2023	The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act was enacted in which year? (a) 1950(b) 1962(c) 1971(d) 1976	(c) 1971
State PCS (BPSC) 2021	Which Fundamental Duty requires every citizen to respect the Constitution, the National Flag and the National Anthem? (a) Article 51A(a)(b) Article 51A(g)(c) Article 19(1)(a)(d) Article 25	(a) Article 51A(a)
MPPSC Prelims 2022	The National Anthem of India was officially adopted on: (a) 26 January 1950(b) 24 January 1950(c) 15 August 1947(d) 26 November 1949	(b) 24 January 1950
SSC MTS 2023	'Jana Gana Mana' was originally composed in which language? (a) Hindi(b) Bengali(c) Sanskrit(d) Urdu	(b) Bengali
State PCS (UPPSC) 2020	Which Supreme Court case held that citizens cannot be compelled to sing the National Anthem if it violates their genuine religious beliefs? (a) Kesavananda Bharati Case(b) Bijoe Emmanuel Case(c) Minerva Mills Case(d) Golaknath Case	(b) Bijoe Emmanuel Case
SSC GD 2024	Which law protects India's National Flag and National Anthem from intentional insult? (a) National Symbols Act, 1972(b) Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971(c) Emblems Act, 1956(d) Official Secrets Act, 1923	(b) Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

Conclusion on Vande Mataram Protection Bill

The Vande Mataram Bill, 2026 underscores the government's push to bring the country's National Song under the ambit of law and enhances the dignity of India's flag, emblem and symbols connected with India's freedom movement. The Bill aims to discourage instances of deliberate and intentional disrespect or interference with the performance of the song Vande Mataram through the proposed amendments. As in all laws relating to matters of the national symbol, there will need to be room for the Constitution and interpretations to decide some things. The discussion on the Bill highlights the dilemma of nation-building and the protection of people's basic rights and freedoms in a democratic state.

Vande Mataram Bill 2026 FAQs

1. What is the Vande Mataram Bill, 2026?

The **Vande Mataram Bill, 2026** is a proposed legislative amendment that aims to provide legal protection to **Vande Mataram**, India's National Song, by bringing it under the ambit of the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.

2. What penalties are proposed under the Bill?

The proposed legislation provides for punishment, including **imprisonment of up to three years, a monetary fine, or both**, for individuals found guilty of intentionally insulting, preventing, or disrupting the singing of **Vande Mataram**.

3. Why is the Vande Mataram Bill important?

The Bill is intended to enhance respect for India's National Song, preserve its historical significance, promote patriotic values, and ensure that acts of deliberate disrespect towards it are legally addressed.

4. Who wrote Vande Mataram?

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay authored **Vande Mataram**, which appeared in his famous novel **Anandamath**, published in 1882. The song later became an important symbol of India's freedom movement.

5. What is the difference between the National Anthem and the National Song?

Jana Gana Mana is India's **National Anthem**, while **Vande Mataram** holds the status of the **National Song**. Both have immense national significance, but they have different historical backgrounds and official recognition.

RBI Invites EoI for Polymer Substrates: India Revives Plastic Currency Initiative



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has embarked on a significant move for commercialisation of the polymer (plastic) banknotes by inviting a worldwide Expression of Interest (EoI) for supply of security-grade polymer substrate sheets. This initiative, which is spearheaded through the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) publishing house Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited (BRBNMPL), revives a proposal that was first presented more than 10 years ago. Initially, the pilot is expected to cover ₹10 and ₹20 denomination notes that are susceptible to wear-and-tear because of their frequent circulation. Unlike paper notes, polymer banknotes are predicted to last much longer and have additional security features that make counterfeiting more challenging.

Why is RBI's Polymer Currency Initiative in News?

RBI's currency printing unit, BRBNMPL, has issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) to make and supply polymer substrate sheets with additional security features in a move towards developing different supplier countries. If the procurement and testing go smoothly, India will likely advance to field trials of polymer banknotes starting with low-denomination notes.

What are Polymer Banknotes?

Polymer banknotes are currency notes utilised in a polymer substrate made from an advanced security-grade plastic instead of conventional cotton-based paper. They also include more advanced state-of-the-art anti-counterfeiting technologies along with a moisture-, dirt-, and folding-resistant durability built into common use. Polymer notes are also cleaner for longer, with a lifecycle that outlasts paper.

Why is RBI Reviving the Plastic Currency Initiative?

Reasons the RBI wants to introduce polymer banknotes:

- Extend the life of your currency notes.
- Less frequent note replacement.
- Better against moisture and dirt.
- Strengthen security against counterfeiting.
- Lower long-term currency management costs.
- Enhance note quality for high-circulating denominations.
- Modernise India's currency printing technology.

Advantages of Polymer Banknotes

- **Increased lifespan:** They last 2-4 times longer than paper notes, which means that they need to be replaced less frequently.
- **Improved Security:** They include more complex protection systems such as unobscured windows, holograms, microprinting, and colour-shifting components that make counterfeiting difficult.
- **Water and Moisture Resistant:** Polymer notes are not absorbent, making them a better choice for humid/wet conditions.
- **Tear Resistant:** They are made from sturdy material that resists tears, folding damage, and general wear and tear to keep them in circulation longer.
- **Cleaner Banknotes:** The smooth polymer surface resists dirt, oil, and dust.

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- **Reduced Long-Term Expenditure:** While production costs are initially higher, their longer service life dramatically decreases printing and replacement costs.
- **Eco-friendly:** Since there are fewer switches, resources consumed, and old polymer notes can frequently be repurposed into plastic goods.
- **Improved Public Handling:** The strong, thin, and flexible construction results in improved circulation (note quality) through increased stiffness.

RBI's Earlier Polymer Currency Proposal

India has not recently looked at polymer (plastic) banknotes. In 2010, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) suggested that polymer currency should be launched to increase banknote longevity and reduce counterfeiting. **The Government approved a pilot in 2011**, and the RBI announced polymer notes of ₹10 denomination to be issued in five cities with diverse weather conditions (**Kochi, Mysuru, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar and Shimla**). The purpose was to test how the notes performed in different environmental conditions. The project faced high production cost, reliance on imported polymer substrates and scarcity of infrastructure, leading to it being shelved. Then, in 2026, RBI was back to work with a global Expression of Interest (EoI) for buying security-grade polymer substrates, possibly heralding another attempt to modernise the Indian currency system with long-lasting and counterfeiting-proof notes.

PYQs on RBI & Polymer Currency

Exam & Year	Previous Year Question	Answer
RBI Grade B 2023	Which institution in India has the sole authority to issue banknotes (except ₹1 notes)? (a) Ministry of Finance (b) Reserve Bank of India (c) NABARD (d) SEBI	(b) Reserve Bank of India
IBPS PO 2023	Which Act empowers the Reserve Bank of India to issue currency notes in India? (a) Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (b) RBI Act, 1934 (c) FEMA, 1999 (d) Coinage Act, 2011	(b) RBI Act, 1934

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SSC CGL 2022	Who signs the ₹500 and ₹2,000 currency notes issued in India?	(c) RBI Governor
	(a) Finance Minister (b) Prime Minister (c) RBI Governor (d) President of India	
RRB NTPC 2021	The issue and management of currency in India is the responsibility of:	(b) RBI
	(a) SEBI (b) RBI (c) NABARD (d) SIDBI	
SBI PO 2022	Which department of the RBI is responsible for issuing banknotes?	(b) Issue Department
	(a) Banking Department (b) Issue Department (c) Monetary Policy Department (d) Financial Stability Unit	
SSC CHSL 2023	Which material is primarily used to manufacture India's current banknotes?	(b) Cotton-based Paper Substrate
	(a) Polymer Plastic (b) Cotton-based Paper Substrate (c) Aluminium Foil (d) Synthetic Rubber	
IBPS Clerk 2024	Polymer banknotes are mainly introduced to:	(b) Improve durability and security
	(a) Increase currency weight (b) Improve durability and security (c) Reduce the number of denominations (d) Replace digital payments	

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RBI Assistant 2022	Which of the following is a key advantage of polymer banknotes?	(b) They are more durable and difficult to counterfeit
	(a) They dissolve in water (b) They are more durable and difficult to counterfeit (c) They require no security features (d) They can only be used once	
State PCS (MPPSC) 2023	Australia is known for being the first country to introduce:	(b) Polymer Banknotes
	(a) Digital Currency (b) Polymer Banknotes (c) Gold Coins (d) Plastic Coins	
NABARD Grade A 2021	Which of the following is an expected benefit of introducing polymer currency notes?	(b) Better resistance to wear and counterfeiting
	(a) Shorter circulation life (b) Better resistance to wear and counterfeiting (c) Elimination of all paper currency (d) Removal of security features	

Conclusion

The Expression of Interest (EoI) for polymer substrates by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) indicates a re-focus on upgrading India's note-printing logistics. The central bank analyses the use of polymer notes to replace traditional paper currency with more durable, safe and counterfeit-resistant notes. If successful, it will make replacing notes, in the medium- to long-term at least, less frequent and cheaper for the taxpayer as well as lower the number of unsatisfactory-quality banknotes entering circulation. Most of the world already has polymer currency, so India reinitiating its pursuit of it (after a half-hearted attempt last time) makes sense for fitting the bill with a trend and strengthening currency security against forgery and decreased lifespan, as well as improving operational efficiency and bringing us toward newer global banknote technology best practices.

RBI Seeks EoI for Polymer Banknotes (FAQs)

1. Why has the RBI invited an Expression of Interest (Eoi) for polymer substrates?

The RBI has invited an **Expression of Interest (Eoi)** to identify qualified global suppliers capable of providing **security-grade polymer substrates** for manufacturing durable and counterfeit-resistant banknotes.

2. What are polymer banknotes?

Polymer banknotes are currency notes made from a **special plastic-based polymer substrate** instead of traditional cotton paper. They offer greater durability, enhanced security features, and a longer circulation life.

3. Which denominations are likely to be introduced first?

As part of the proposed pilot project, the RBI is expected to initially test **₹10 and ₹20 polymer banknotes**, as these denominations experience the highest frequency of circulation and wear.

4. What are the major advantages of polymer currency?

Polymer banknotes are **more durable, waterproof, tear-resistant, cleaner, and more secure** than conventional paper notes. They also reduce replacement frequency and improve protection against counterfeiting.

5. Why was India's earlier polymer currency proposal not implemented?

Although the RBI proposed polymer banknotes in **2010–11**, the initiative was deferred due to factors such as **high production costs, dependence on imported substrates, and technical infrastructure requirements**.