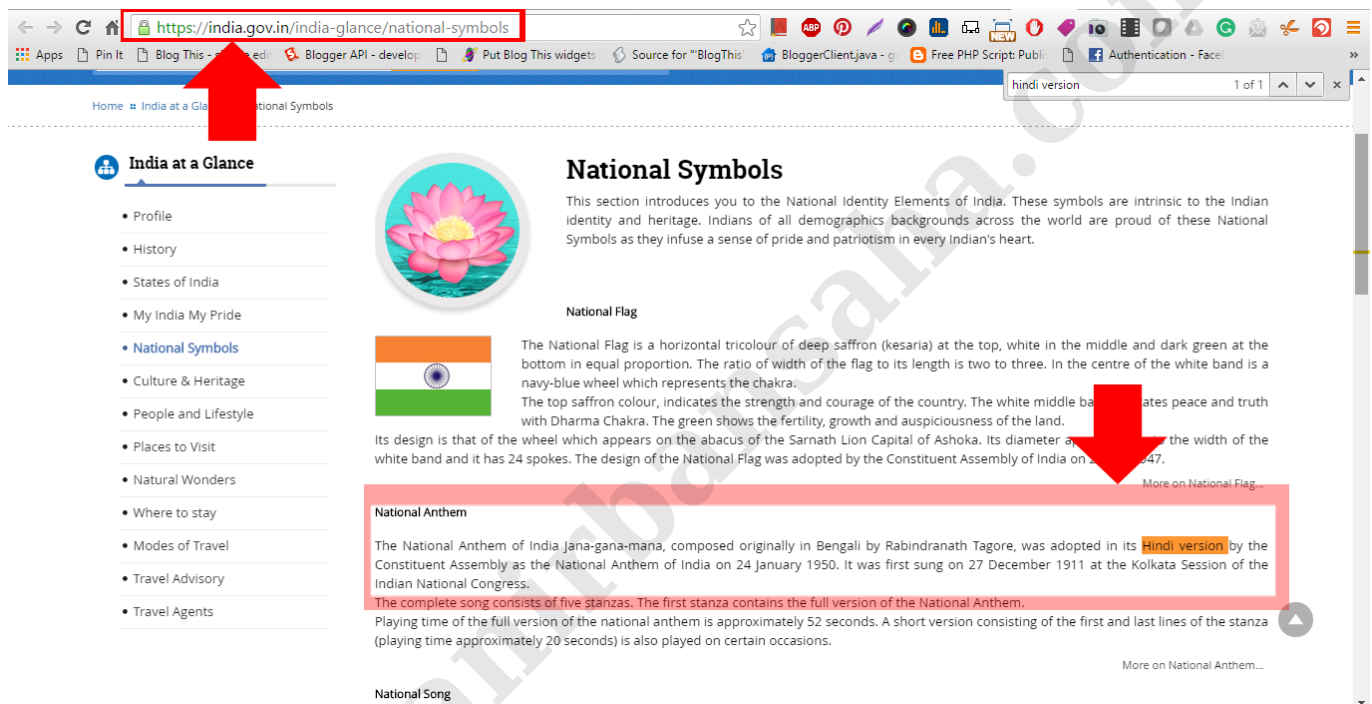


What was supposed to be an article to promote a Bengali film “Rajkahini” caught my attention for reasons not related to the film. Barring the first stanza of “Jana Gana Mana”, which is accepted as the Indian national anthem, director Srijit Mukherjee’s film had the latter 4 stanzas composed and sung in the film. Most of the national news agencies mentioned this as the “Bengali version of the national anthem”. Prajakta Hebbar of Huffington Post went on to say that the “Hindi version” of the song was accepted as the national anthem. It is not her fault.

A slight research showed me that INDIA.GOV.IN website mentions “National Anthem” under “National Symbols” ([link](#)) and mentions “The National Anthem of India Jana-Gana-Mana, **composed originally in Bengali** by Rabindranath Tagore, **was adopted in its Hindi version** by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on 24 January 1950.”

Screenshot (16.05.2016 09:27 AM)



That's such a shame | India.gov.in

After Huffington Post shared it on their Facebook page, there was a furore. People questioned them about their research and the authenticity of the article. While I knew that Prajakta or any other sensible writer, would not write without a proper citation, I thought of filing an RTI after expressing my discontent over the social media ([link](#)). Agnivo Niyogi (prominent blogger from Kolkata) too took this up and filed another RTI.



The screenshot shows a Facebook post and its comments. The post is by Anirban Saha, asking for information about the Hindi and Bengali versions of the national anthem. The comments are from various users, including Sarnava Mitra, Yazad Boga, Saurabh Bhattacharya, Anish Bagh, Kala Vaideeswaran, and Subhabrata Basu, all discussing the origins and versions of the national anthem.

Anirban Saha Could we get the information correctly, please?
a. When was the "Hindi version" of "Jana Gana Mana" ever made and accepted as the national anthem of this country?
b. What is the "Bengali version" of the song that was originally written and ALWAYS sung in Sanskritised Bengali?
Like · Reply · 6 · September 22, 2015 at 7:19am · Edited
3 Replies

Sarnava Mitra Hey admin. there is no Hindi version of National anthem. Be educated first. The original sanskritized Bengali song is sung everywhere
Like · Reply · 16 · September 22, 2015 at 2:15pm

Yazad Boga Beautiful... The best national anthem in the world. So proud to be an Indian..
Like · Reply · 3 · September 21, 2015 at 11:50pm

Saurabh Bhattacharya Dear Huffington Post. Grow up. Learn to do research before u do s story. This is not a version of national anthem. This is 2nd paragraph of the long song by Tagore, whose first paragraph is Indian national anthem. So stop being shoddy. Disgusting! I tell u. Wish we said something like this about your culture.
Like · Reply · 5 · September 23, 2015 at 7:02am

Anish Bagh This is not any version of national anthem. Grow up man. This song is penned by kabi guru rabindranath tagore whose 1st stanza is used as national anthem. This is tagore song and it do not have any version of national anthem. Learn first before posting
Like · Reply · 1 · September 23, 2015 at 5:58pm · Edited

Kala Vaideeswaran Really Goosebumps. ...proud to be INDIAN.
Like · Reply · September 22, 2015 at 3:28pm

Subhabrata Basu "Bengali Version"?????....from when did the national anthem being made in different versions???...it was written in Sanskritized Bengali and it is sung in that way only....where would you find Hindi, Marathi or Tamil versions of Jana Gana Mana??...

People responding to Huffington Post article | Screenshot 16.05.2016 09:40 AM | Download the full screenshot here: [Link](#)

The National Anthem of India Jana-gana-mana, **composed originally in Bengali** by Rabindranath Tagore, **was adopted in its Hindi version** by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on 24 January 1950. (Source: India.gov.in)

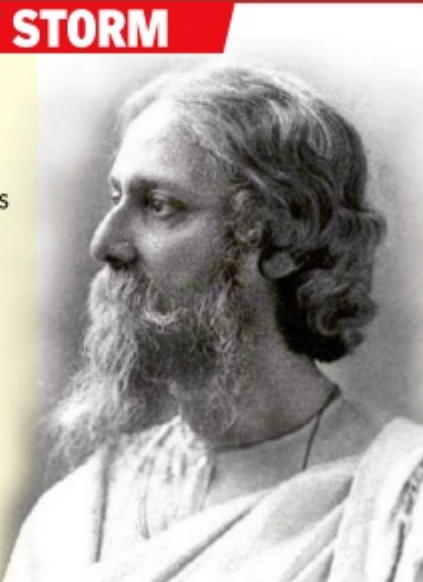
My update caught the attention of the senior assistant editors of The Times of India Kolkata. Jaideep Mazumder and Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey connected to a few prominent authorities to get their reactions. They wrote it in the next days newspaper ([link](#) | 23.09.2015). It was subsequently published in The Indian Express and other newspapers.

Various people significant or otherwise, started talking about it. I've never liked too much of an attention and decided to not talk about this to the media. Instead, I filed an RTI on the 22nd and kept calm.

Do give your honest feedback. Email me at "mailme@anirbansaha.com"

IN EYE OF STORM

- Controversies are nothing new to the song penned by Tagore. The colonial authorities propagated that Tagore composed it as a tribute to King George V and his consort Queen Mary while the royals were visiting India in 1911. An upset Tagore wrote to the King stating that the mentor and creator of Bharat as mentioned in the song was not the King but God Himself
- Another major one was when Captain Ram Singh, an associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, claimed he and not Tagore composed the score of Jana Gana Mana. That controversy was doused by experts who held out proof that it was Tagore who composed the score of what is now the national anthem



TOI image used on 23.09.2015 | ([link](#))

On social media, a Hindi-Bangla debate rages on national anthem

Man files RTI with PMO, asks if Tagore's poem was translated

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 23

MORE than 100 years after it was written and 65 years after it was adopted as the national anthem, the social media is busy debating what language is it written in.

Was it written in Bangla, the mother tongue of its author Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore, and translated in Hindi? Was it written in Hindi, or did Kabiguru liberally sprinkle 'tatsam' words (words taken as it is from Sanskrit) in Bangla?

These were some of the questions that many asked and sought to answer on social media Wednesday.

Ever since the theme song, titled 'Bharat Bhagya Bidhata', of the forthcoming Bangla film 'Rajkahini', was released last week, it is being shared by many news portals as the "Bangla version" of the national anthem.

"There is no other version. It was written by Tagore as a Bangla song in 1911 and was later adopted by the Constituent



A still from Srijit Mukherjee's latest film Rajkahini

Assembly as the national anthem. It's a Bangla song with many 'tatsam' words," says Sankha Ghosh, a renowned Tagore specialist.

The fact that the India government's official portal states that "the national anthem of India Jana-gana-mana, composed originally in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on 24

January, 1950," incensed Ghosh.

"I don't know what is this Hindi version that they talk about," he says. "Tatsam words found their way in many languages such as Bangla, Marathi, Oriya, Hindi, Gujarati, Sinhala, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu. Many Bangla writers such as Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Ramram Basu, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, who wrote our national song, used tatsam words liberally," says Ghosh.

The song, which has already crossed more than 1 lakh views on YouTube, is the remaining four stanzas of the poem. The first stanza is the national anthem.

Agnivo Niyogi, 29, who works for the Trinamool Congress-owned website *maamaatimanush.tv*, filed a RTI application with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) asking for documentary evidence of the Hindi translated version. "If there is indeed such a version, I also want to know who translated it," says Lahiri.

This is not the first controversy over the national anthem in the recent times. Ever since India gained Independence, questions have been raised about it having been written in praise of George V, the king of England. This issue was brought up once again by Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh on July 7, while speaking at a function organised by Rajasthan University. Singh, a former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, said that the word "adhinayak" in the national anthem refers to the British and should be replaced by 'Jana Gana Mangal Gaye'. "There seems to be a concentrated effort by the central government to undermine the national anthem and undermine Bangla culture," says Lahiri.

Filmmaker Srijit Mukherji, who included the song in his film because "it suited the theme of his subject", doesn't feel there is any scope of any controversy. "It was a five stanza Rabin dra sangeet of which the first stanza was adopted by the Constituent Assembly as the anthem," says Mukherji.

The Indian EXPRESS Thu, 24 September 2015
epaper editions epaper.indianexpress.com/c/6642477

The Indian Express report .

Since this was the first RTI that I filed, I was a little confused. However, here are the details:

RTI number: PMOIN/R/2015/62642 renamed to MHOME/R/2015/81742

Subsequent RTI numbers were MHOME/A/2015/60419, re-appeal number MHOME/R/2015/81742.

These are the questions I had briefly asked:

If there is a "Hindi Version of the National Anthem", who wrote this?

Where is the Hindi Text?

Do give your honest feedback. Email me at "mailme@anirbansaha.com"

Was it Sanskritised Bengali written in Devnagari script mistaken to be Hindi?

If it has been translated, where is the documentary evidence?

Who wrote the Hindi version?

The response that came had no relation to the questions. ([link to the response file](#))

Response:

Rest of the information as asked by you is not available with the undersigned.

A little bit of Information:

The Indian National Anthem was written by Rabindranath Tagore. It was written in Tatsama Bengali, which is very much Bengali and is not Hindi version of the same. It sounds like Sanskrit, from which the language Bengali has drawn a lot of influences. There is no "Hindi version" of the same and what is sung today is the first paragraph of the song unaltered. Another example of Tatsama Bengali is "Vande Mataram" which is the Indian National Song.

There has always been a tendency of the imposition of Hindi over the non-Hindi speakers. One of the prominent lie imposed upon us, is that Hindi is our national language. Hindi is popular because Mumbai film industry makes Hindi films which are distributed across the Globe. Hindi singularly is not the most spoken language in India.

India to sustain itself needs to empower and strengthen the regional identities. For us Bengalis, to know about Diwali celebrations but not Bhoot Chaturdoshi, Holi but not Dol Jatra, Dusshera but not Rabon Kata- is a shame. They are well-marketed imports from the Hindi-speaking parts of this great nation. We as Bengalis can be Bengalis and still contribute to the building of the nation.

I have nothing against the great language that Hindi is. But to call the national anthem as "Hindi version" or to associate everything Indian with Hindi is simply wrong. I prefer to speak in English, not that it makes me any less Indian or Bengali.

I thank the lady who had come to The Edutainment Show to ask me about the RTI filed, after months of even me forgetting it. Today when I revisited the Huffington post article, I saw the texts changed. "It was an editorial decision", mentioned Prajakta Hebbler.

It's time the Indian Government takes this simple step and make necessary changes in the national website.

Do give your honest feedback. Email me at "mailme@anirbansaha.com"