

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the Cultural Event at
Embassy; 25 January 2026**

My dear students, their friends and family members, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Embassy of India for this special cultural programme.

We are gathered here today as part of the ongoing series of performances marking the 150th anniversary of the composition of “Vande Mataram”, a song that holds a unique place in India’s national consciousness. More than a patriotic hymn, Vande Mataram has, over generations, symbolised India’s values, aspirations, and deep emotional bond with the nation.

Composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the late nineteenth century, Vande Mataram became a source of inspiration during India’s freedom movement. It gave voice to the collective spirit of the people and continues to remind us of the ideals of unity, dedication and service. Commemorating its 150th anniversary is therefore not only a remembrance of history, but also a reaffirmation of the values that guide India today.

It is particularly fitting that this commemoration is being marked through classical arts. Indian classical dance and music have always served as powerful mediums of expression, carrying stories, traditions, and emotions across generations. They connect the past with the present and help preserve the richness of our cultural heritage.

This evening, we are honoured to have a Kathak performance led by Shri Rajendra Gangani, one of the foremost exponents of this classical dance form. Kathak is known for its grace, rhythm, storytelling and technical precision. Rooted in tradition and continuously evolving, it reflects the depth and vitality of Indian culture.

Shri Rajendra Gangani and his troupe have contributed immensely to promoting Kathak in India and abroad. Through their artistry, discipline and dedication, they have helped bring this classical form to audiences across the world. We are grateful to them for sharing their talent with us here in Tokyo.

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On the other note, we are also celebrating Uttar Pradesh Diwas today. It is also meaningful that today's programme coincides with Uttar Pradesh Diwas, which marks the formation of one of India's most historically and culturally rich states. Kathak, in particular, has deep roots in the cultural traditions of Uttar Pradesh, especially through the Lucknow and Banaras gharanas, which have shaped the evolution of this classical dance form over generations. The refined aesthetics, expressive storytelling and technical excellence associated with Kathak are closely linked to this heritage.

I am pleased to see the strong participation of the VCC students and Japanese friends at this event. Your presence reflects the growing interest in Indian culture and your continued support for our cultural initiatives.

I hope you enjoy this afternoon's performance and take with you a deeper appreciation of India's rich artistic traditions and the enduring spirit of Vande Mataram.

Thank you.
