



# Abul Kalam Azad: National Education Day

## Why in News

Every year, **11<sup>th</sup> November is celebrated as National education day**, which commemorates the **birth anniversary of independent India's first education minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.**

- In 2008, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Now Ministry of Education) decided to celebrate Azad's birthday as National Education Day. Educational institutions across India mark the event with seminars, essay-writing, workshops etc to highlight the importance of education.

## Key Points

- **Birth:** Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, **originally named Muhiyuddin Ahmad**, was born **on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1888 in Mecca, Saudi-Arabia.**

- Azad was **a brilliant debater**, as indicated by his name - "Abul Kalam" which literally means "Lord of Dialogues".

- **Brief Profile:**

- He donned many hats of being a **journalist, freedom fighter, politician, and educationist.**

- **Contributions (Pre-Independence):** [//](#)



- He was a **proponent of Hindu Muslim unity, opposed to Partition.**

- **In 1912**, he started **a weekly journal in Urdu called Al-Hilal** which played an important role in forging Hindu-Muslim unity after the bad blood created between the two communities in the aftermath of **[Morley-Minto reforms \(1909\)](#).**

- Under the 1909 reforms, the **provision of separate electorates for Muslims was resented by Hindu.**

- The government regarded Al- Hilal as a propagator of secessionist views and **banned it in 1914.**

- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad then **started another weekly called Al-Balagh** with

the same mission of propagating Indian nationalism and revolutionary ideas based on Hindu-Muslim unity.

- **In 1916, the government banned this paper too** and expelled Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from Calcutta and exiled him to Bihar from where he was released after the **First World War 1920**.
- Azad **supported the Non-Cooperation Movement** (1920-22) started by Gandhiji and **entered the Indian National Congress in 1920**.
- In **1923**, he was **elected as the president of Indian National Congress**. At an age of 35, he **became the youngest person** to serve as the President of the Indian National Congress.
- Maulana Azad was **arrested in 1930 for violation of the salt laws** as part of **Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha**. He was put in Meerut jail for a year and a half.
- He **again became the president of Congress in 1940** and remained in the post till 1946.

▪ **An Educationist:**

- In the field of education, Maulana Azad had been **an uncompromising exponent of universalism**, a truly liberal and humanitarian educational system.
- Azad's ideal was **a fusion of the Eastern and Western concepts of man**, to create a fully integrated personality. Whereas the Eastern concept dwelt on spiritual excellence and individual salvation, the Western concept laid stress on worldly achievements and social progress.
- He was **one of the founding members of the Jamia Milia Islamia University**, originally established at Aligarh in the United Provinces in 1920.

▪ **His Works:** Basic Concept of Quran, Ghubar-e-Khatir, Dars-e-Wafa, India Wins Freedom, etc.

▪ **Contributions (Post-Independence):**

- In 1947, he became the **first education minister of free India and remained at this post till his death in 1958**. In his tenure, he did tremendous work for the upliftment of the country.
  - The first IIT, IISc, School of Planning and Architecture and the University Grants Commission were established under his tenure as the education minister.
  - **Indian Council for Cultural Relations**, for introduction of Indian culture to other nations.
  - Following **three academics** were formed:
    - **Sahitya Academy** for development of literature;
    - **Sangeet Natak Academy** for the development of Indian music and dance;
    - **Lalit Kala Academy** for the development of painting.
  - Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, **Bharat Ratna** in 1992.

[Source: PIB](#)