



# Allahabad High Court Declares UP Madrasa Education Act Unconstitutional | Uttar Pradesh | 26 Mar 2024

## Why in News?

Recently, the Allahabad High Court ruled that the **Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004**, is "unconstitutional" and violates the principle of secularism, and ordered the state government to accommodate current students in the formal schooling system.

## Key Points

- The petitioner had challenged the **constitutionality of the UP Madarsa Board** as well as objected to the management of madarsa by the **Minority Welfare Department**, rather than the education department.
- The petitioner and his counsel submitted that the Madarsa Act **violates the principles of secularism**, which is the **basic structure of the Constitution**, fails to provide quality compulsory education up to the age of 14 years/Class-VIII as is mandatorily under **Article 21-A**; and fails to provide universal and quality school education to all the children studying in madarasas.
  - There are about **25,000 madrassas in UP** of which 16,500 are recognised by the UP Madrasa Education Board. Of them, 560 madrassas receive grants from the government. Apart from this, there are 8,500 unrecognized madrassas in the state.
- In 2004, the Madarsa Education Act was enacted by the government. Similarly, the **Sanskrit Education Council** has also been formed in the state.
  - The objective of both the boards was to **promote languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit**.
- According to the UP Madrasa Education Board Chairman the board will study the decision and decide the further course of action.

## UP Madrasa Education Act, 2004

- The legislation was **enacted in 2004 to streamline madrasa education**, defining it as education in Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Islamic studies, Tibb (traditional medicine), philosophy and other specified branches.
- The board was then reconstituted, comprising a **chairperson, director, principal** of the state-run Oriental College in Rampur, a **legislator** each representing the **Sunni and Shia sects**, an **NCERT representative**, heads and teachers of Sunni and Shia institutions, and a science or Tibb teacher.

## Article 21 (A)

- Right to Education declares that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the **age of six to fourteen years**.
- This provision makes only elementary education a Fundamental Right and not higher or professional education.
- This provision was added by the **86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002**.
- Before the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment, the Constitution contained a provision for free and compulsory education for children under **Article 45 in Part IV** of the constitution.

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## Singapore President Arrives in Jodhpur | Rajasthan | 26 Mar 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, **Singapore President** Tharman Shanmugaratnam **arrived in Rajasthan's Jodhpur**. His visit to India comes at a time when **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is on a visit to Singapore**.

- Indian-origin economist, **Tharman Shanmugaratnam was sworn in as the 9th Singapore President in September 2023**.

### Key Points

- According to the sources, the External Affairs Minister started his Singapore visit by paying homage to [Subhash Chandra Bose](#) and the brave [Indian National Army](#) soldiers.
  - He also engaged in discussions with prominent corporate figures from the country who offered positive feedback on India's growth story derived from their investment experiences.
- According to the High Commission of India in Singapore, the [ties between India and Singapore](#) have a history rooted in **strong commercial, cultural and people-to-people links**. India was one of the **first countries to recognise Singapore in 1965**.
  - The relations between India and Singapore are based on shared values and approaches, economic opportunities and convergence of interests on key issues.
  - There are more than **20 regular bilateral mechanisms, dialogues and exercises**.
  - The two nations have great convergence on a broad range of international issues and both are members of a number of forums, including the [East Asia Summit](#), [G20](#), [the Commonwealth](#), [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#) and the [Indian Ocean Naval Symposium \(IONS\)](#).

### Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- It is an intergovernmental organisation established to promote economic cooperation and regional integration among countries bordering the **Indian Ocean**.
- IORA member states **work on various initiatives related to trade, investment, and sustainable development** in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).

### Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- The IONS is a **voluntary and inclusive initiative that brings together navies of IOR littoral states** to increase maritime co-operation and enhance regional security.
- It also serves to develop an effective response mechanism and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) against [natural disasters](#).

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## ONGC to Drill Well in Bihar | Bihar | 26 Mar 2024

## Why in News?

[Oil and Natural Gas Corp \(ONGC\)](#) plans to drill a well in Bihar to look for oil and gas.

- A **commercial discovery** will put the state on India's oil map and also open up for exploration the entire [Ganga basin](#) stretching from **Bihar to Uttar Pradesh and Punjab**.

## Key Points

- The company has **acquired 3D seismic data for 300 sq. km** for its block in **Samastipur** and is set to drill two exploratory wells.
  - The first drilling will be carried out in 2024.
  - Besides this, the oil and gas producer also plans to drill an exploratory well in another block in the **Ganga basin in Ballia**, Uttar Pradesh.
- Data from the first well's drilling will help guide the company's plans for the rest of the exploration block, including drilling of the second well.
  - Both blocks in Samastipur and Ballia were obtained in the fourth [Open Acreage Licensing Policy \(OALP\)](#) round a few years ago.

## Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

- It is a [Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking \(PSU\)](#) of the Government of India.
- It was **set up in 1995** and is under the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.
- It is the largest crude oil and natural gas company in India, **contributing around 70% to Indian domestic production**.

## Ganga Basin

- The headwaters of the Ganga called the '**Bhagirathi**' are **fed by the Gangotri Glacier** and joined by the Alaknanda at Devprayag in Uttarakhand.
- At Haridwar, **Ganga emerges from the mountains** to the plains.
- The Ganga is joined by many tributaries from the Himalayas, a few of them being major rivers such as the Yamuna, the Ghaghara, the Gandak, and the Kosi.



# Bihar Diwas 2024 | Bihar | 26 Mar 2024

## Why in News?

Bihar day or Bihar diwas is **marked on 22<sup>nd</sup> March every year**. It is a public holiday across the state as offices, organisations, banks, and educational institutions under the central and state government remain shut.

## Key Points

- The Bihar Day 2024 marks the **fulfilment of 111 years since the state was founded**, making it a critical achievement for individuals of Bihar to consider their history and celebrate their identity.
  - The Bihar government has coordinated a line of multicultural events and programs to celebrate the entire day.
  - The celebration was held with the intention of restoring the people's pride in the state of Bihar.
- Bihar Diwas marks the development of the state from the Bengal presidency. The state was shaped on **22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1912**, when the British government partitioned the Bengal Province.
  - The celebration of Bihar Diwas is marked by gaiety and enthusiasm. This is due to the fact that it denotes the foundation of their way of life as a particular state with a **unique cultural legacy**.
  - The day also gives the people of Bihar a chance to show off their **history, culture, traditions, and heritage**.
- Apart from India, it is celebrated in nations including the United States, Canada, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Britain (Scotland), Australia, Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius.



## Over 700 Yoga Exponents Participated in Global Fest in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 26 Mar 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, more than 700 yoga exponents and practitioners from across the country and abroad participated in the week-long annual [International Yoga Festival](#) in Uttarakhand's Rishikesh.

### Key Points

- Organised by the **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board**, the festival was held at the **Yog Bharat Ganga Ghat at Muni-Ki-Reti**.
  - The state government has been promoting the International Yoga Festival with an intent to provide a common platform for yoga enthusiasts, trainers, experts and students within India and beyond. **Rishikesh has become the global yoga capital** and this festival plays a vital role to further that.
- Yoga and religious institutions like **Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Isha Foundation, Shivanand Ashram, Manav Dharma Ashram and Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram** also participated in the festival.

### International Day of Yoga (IDY)

- It is celebrated on **21<sup>st</sup> June**, every year. The idea of IDY was proposed by India during the opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**, held in 2014.
- The **first Yoga Day celebrations in 2015** at Rajpath in New Delhi created two Guinness World Records.

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## Chhattisgarh HC Rules Against Exemption of Economic Offenses Bureau | Chhattisgarh | 26 Mar 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, in a significant judgment, the Chhattisgarh high court has ruled that the notification dated **7<sup>th</sup> November, 2006**, exempting the **Chhattisgarh State Economic Offenses Investigation Bureau** from the provisions of the [Right to Information \(RTI\) Act, 2005](#) contradicts the first proviso to **Section 24(4)** of the said Act.

### Key Points

- According to the judgment, the impugned notification issued by the **General Administration Department of the Government of Chhattisgarh** cannot allow the government to withhold information pertaining to allegations of corruption involving the Bureau, except for information relating to sensitive and confidential activities undertaken by the said Bureau.
- In light of this ruling, the court directed the state government to issue a clarificatory notification within three weeks.
- On 15 November, 2016, the RTI activist and the petitioner had filed an application seeking information from the Economic Offenses Investigation Bureau.

- In response, the Economic Offenses refused to provide information, stating that the state government had exempted the agency from providing information under the Right to Information Act through the notification issued on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2006.
- Challenging this notification, the RTI activist filed a petition before the division bench of the Chhattisgarh High Court, stating that **Section 24(4) of the Right to Information Act, 2005 mentions that no institution can be exempted from providing information** related to corruption and violations of human rights.

## Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005

- It is a legislative framework that empowers Indian citizens to **access information held by public authorities**. Enacted in 2005, the act aims to promote **transparency, accountability, and participation in government processes**.
- It replaced the **Freedom of Information Act 2002**.
- According to Section 22 of RTI Act, the provisions of this Act will be **effective regardless of any contradictions with the Official Secrets Act of 1923**, existing laws, or any agreements established through laws other than this Act

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