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Price: - ₹ 20/-

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Owned, Printed & Published by  
Deepak Singh

Pages 20 Including Cover

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Printed at:

Five Stars Printers, Gaushala Marg, Karol Bagh  
New Delhi-110005.

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## CHIEF EDITOR DESK



Dear Readers,

On behalf of National Awareness Times (India's National Weekly), the editorial board and the team of our journal would like to wish all the readers a wonderful week ahead & Wish you a very Happy Lohri and Makar Sankranti to all.

Every year on 9th January, India observes Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

Tensions between neighbouring states Karnataka and Kerala have escalated following the passage of the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, by the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

A fresh political controversy erupted in West Bengal after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee personally intervened during an Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid, taking custody of certain documents from officials.

In a major escalation of economic pressure on Moscow, former US President Donald Trump has approved a sweeping Russia sanctions bill that proposes an unprecedented 500 percent tariff on oil and energy imports linked to Russia.

Deepak Singh,  
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# CELEBRATING PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS 2026 INDIA IS PROUD OF YOU

By Editor – Gaurav Singh



Every year on 9th January, India observes Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. This day recognises the invaluable contribution of the Indian diaspora to the nation's growth, global influence, and cultural outreach. This day is not merely ceremonial. Instead, it symbolises India's deep and evolving relationship with millions of Indians living and working across the world.

"The call of the moment is do or die. The Indians abroad are not merely sojourners; they are ambassadors of India's honour and dignity." – Mahatma Gandhi

For aspirants preparing for UPSC, APSC, and other civil services examinations, this day holds immense relevance. It connects themes of Indian society, international relations, migration, soft power, and economic diplomacy. Therefore, understanding this day in depth helps students develop conceptual clarity as well as analytical depth.

This article explores the history, objectives, importance, and contemporary relevance of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

while linking it directly to exam preparation and nation-building.

## Why is Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Celebrated on 9th January?

India celebrates Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 9th January to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa in 1915. This historic return marked a turning point in India's freedom struggle.

Importantly, Mahatma Gandhi was not just a freedom fighter. Rather, he was also one of the earliest and most influential members of the Indian diaspora. His experiences abroad shaped his political philosophy and strengthened India's global moral voice. Therefore, the date symbolically connects the diaspora's global experiences with India's national journey.

As a result, 9th January serves as a reminder that Indians abroad have consistently contributed ideas, capital, skills, and leadership to the country.

## Historical Background of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:

The Government of India first celebrated Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2003. The initiative aimed to create a structured platform where overseas Indians could connect with India's development agenda.

Since its inception, the event has evolved significantly. Initially, it was organised annually. However, later reforms ensured that the main convention takes place once every two years, while theme-based or regional events are held in between. This approach improved policy focus and strengthened engagement outcomes.

Over time, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has transformed into a global dialogue forum, where economic cooperation, technology transfer, and cultural diplomacy take centre stage.

## Who Are Pravasi Bharatiyas?

Pravasi Bharatiyas broadly include:

- Non-Resident Indians (NRIs): Indian citizens residing abroad.



• Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs): Foreign citizens with Indian ancestry.

Together, they form one of the largest diaspora communities in the world. As of 2025, there are around 35.42 million overseas Indians spread across the United States, Gulf countries, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and Oceania.

Notably, India's diaspora plays a decisive role in shaping international perceptions of the country. Through entrepreneurship, academia, healthcare, technology, and public service, they actively project India's strengths globally.

**Objectives of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:**

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas serves multiple strategic objectives.

- First, it aims to strengthen emotional and cultural bonds between India and its diaspora. Cultural identity remains a powerful unifying force, and the event celebrates shared heritage.
- Second, it seeks to facilitate economic engagement. Overseas Indians contribute

significantly through foreign direct investment, remittances, and startup collaborations and thus contributing towards Viksit Bharat.

• Third, the event encourages knowledge and skill transfer. Indian professionals abroad bring global best practices in governance, technology, healthcare, and education.

• Finally, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas enables the government to address diaspora concerns related to welfare, migration policies, and consular services.

Because of these objectives, the event aligns closely with India's long-term development vision.

**Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and India's Soft Power:**

Soft power refers to a nation's ability to influence others through culture, values, and ideas rather than force. In this context, the Indian diaspora acts as India's most effective soft power asset.

Through Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, India showcases its democratic values,

pluralism, and civilisational depth. Diaspora communities promote Indian culture through yoga, Ayurveda, cuisine, cinema, and festivals. Consequently, India's global image strengthens organically.

Moreover, influential members of the diaspora often shape public opinion and policy debates in their host countries. This influence enhances India's diplomatic leverage in international forums.

**Economic Importance of the Indian Diaspora:**

India consistently ranks among the top recipients of global remittances. In 2025 (FY25), India's remittances hit a record high reaching approximately \$135.46 billion. It was a significant rise of 14% from FY24. This increase was driven by strong inflows from high-income economies like the US, UK, and Canada, strengthening the Indian economy and covering a substantial portion of its trade deficit. Moreover, these remittances support millions of households, stabilise foreign exchange reserves, and strengthen the economy.

In addition, diaspora-led investments fuel India's startup ecosystem. Many successful entrepreneurs of Indian origin actively mentor and invest in Indian ventures. As a result, innovation ecosystems in cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Gurugram benefit immensely.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas provides a platform to channel this economic potential into structured partnerships, ensuring long-term growth.





**Roles of Pravasi Bharatiyas towards Viksit Bharat:**

- Firstly, economic contributors: They strengthen India’s economy through remittances, FDI, entrepreneurship, and job creation.
- Secondly, knowledge and technology bridges: They enable technology transfer, research collaboration, and innovation, especially in high-tech sectors.
- Thirdly, soft power ambassadors: They promote Indian culture, values, yoga, and traditions, enhancing India’s global image.
- Moreover, diplomatic influencers: They support India’s interests abroad through policy advocacy, lobbying, and people-to-people ties.
- In addition, partners in social development: They contribute to education, healthcare, skill development, and philanthropy in India.
- Furthermore, global market connectors: They help Indian businesses access global supply chains, markets, and best practices.
- Finally, nation-building stakeholders: Their global exposure and investments support India’s goal of becoming a developed and globally influential nation by 2047.

**Role of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Governance and Policy:**

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is not limited to speeches and cultural programmes. Instead, it actively informs policymaking. During these conventions, the government consults diaspora leaders on:

- Migration and labour mobility
- Overseas worker welfare
- Dual citizenship and OCI policies
- Education and skill development
- Investment facilitation mechanisms

Such consultations help align domestic policies with global realities. Consequently, India’s governance framework becomes more inclusive and globally responsive.

**Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award:**

One of the highlights of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, India’s highest honour for overseas Indians.

The award recognises individuals who have:

- Enhanced India’s prestige abroad
- Contributed to social and humanitarian causes
- Strengthened India’s global engagement
- Excelled in professional or academic fields

By celebrating these achievements, India reinforces the idea that national service transcends geographical boundaries.

**Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Youth Aspirations:**

India’s youth increasingly seek global exposure while remaining rooted in national identity. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas inspires young Indians to view the diaspora not as a brain drain, but as a brain network.

The event highlights how global exposure can ultimately contribute to national progress. This perspective encourages ethical leadership, global thinking, and responsible citizenship.

**Conclusion:**

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is far more than a symbolic celebration. It represents India’s recognition of its global citizens as partners in progress. The day reinforces the idea that India’s growth story is incomplete without the contributions of its diaspora.

As India moves towards becoming a leading global power, engagement with overseas Indians will only deepen. Therefore, understanding the significance of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is essential, not just for examinations, but for appreciating India’s evolving place in the world.

For aspirants, educators, and institutions alike, 9th January serves as a reminder that nation-building today extends beyond borders, driven by shared values, collective aspirations, and global collaboration.



# EVENTS



*The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan addressing during a memorial lecture organised to commemorate the birth centenary of Lt SK Gen Sinha, in New Delhi.*

*The Minister of State for Science & Technology (Independent Charge), Earth Sciences (Independent Charge), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh and the Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari grace the CSIR's Technology Transfer Ceremony 'From Farm Residue to Road: Bio Bitumen via Pyrolysis' at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, in New Delhi.*



*The Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, Shri Chirag Paswan addressing the gathering at the inauguration of the 9th edition of IndusFood - 2026, Asia's premier food and beverage trade show held at India Exposition Mart Ltd, in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.*



*The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah addresses at the inauguration of National IED Data Management System of NSG through video conferencing.*

*PM offers darshan and pooja during the 'Somnath Swabhimani Parv' at Somnath Temple, in Gujarat.*



*PM and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, participates in the International Kite Festival at the Sabarmati Riverfront at Ahmedabad, in Gujarat.*

## KARNATAKA–KERALA TENSIONS RISE OVER MALAYALAM LANGUAGE BILL 2025



**T**ensions between neighbouring states Karnataka and Kerala have escalated following the passage of the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, by the Kerala Legislative Assembly. What began as a move by Kerala to strengthen and promote its official language has now turned into a politically sensitive issue, especially in the border regions where linguistic identities are deeply intertwined.

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, seeks to reinforce Malayalam as the principal language of administration and education in Kerala. One of its key provisions proposes Malayalam as a compulsory subject in schools across the state. The Kerala government has described the Bill as a cultural and administrative measure aimed at preserving the language and ensuring its wider use in public life, education, and governance.

However, the Bill has triggered strong objections from Karnataka, particularly concerning its impact on Kannada-speaking communities living in Kerala's northern border districts such as Kasaragod. These regions have a long history of Kannada-medium education and

cultural ties with Karnataka. Leaders in Karnataka argue that making Malayalam compulsory in schools could undermine the educational choices and cultural rights of Kannada-speaking families.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has voiced firm opposition, calling the proposed law an example of language imposition. He has stressed that India's Constitution guarantees linguistic freedom and protects minority languages, especially in border areas where multiple languages coexist. According to Karnataka's leadership, any attempt to enforce a single language in education could create hardship for students and dilute the cultural identity of linguistic minorities.

The issue has also been taken up by Karnataka-based organisations and border development authorities, which have appealed to Kerala to reconsider the Bill. They argue that the legislation may marginalise non-Malayalam speakers and disrupt the existing educational framework in border districts. Memorandums and representations have been submitted, urging constitutional scrutiny of the Bill's provisions. Kerala's ruling government,

however, has rejected these allegations. State leaders maintain that the Bill does not intend to suppress any language or community. They have clarified that safeguards exist for linguistic minorities and that students belonging to non-Malayalam backgrounds will not be denied opportunities to learn or study in their mother tongue. According to Kerala officials, the Bill is being misinterpreted for political reasons and is not aimed at altering the multicultural character of the state.

The controversy has gradually taken on a broader political tone, with leaders from both states using strong language to defend their positions. In Karnataka, the issue has resonated emotionally, as language remains a powerful symbol of identity and pride. In Kerala, the government argues that promoting Malayalam is essential for preserving cultural heritage in an era of increasing linguistic homogenisation.

Political analysts believe the dispute highlights the delicate balance between a state's right to promote its official language and the constitutional responsibility to protect linguistic diversity. Language-related disagreements have surfaced in India before, particularly in border regions, but they often require dialogue and compromise to prevent long-term friction.

As the Bill awaits further procedural steps, both states face the challenge of resolving the issue without deepening regional and linguistic divides. The situation underscores the need for cooperative federalism and sensitive policymaking in a multilingual nation like India. How Kerala and Karnataka handle this dispute may set an important precedent for future language policies across the country.

## MAMATA BANERJEE INTERVENES DURING ED RAID, TAKES CUSTODY OF DOCUMENTS



A fresh political controversy erupted in West Bengal after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee personally intervened during an Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid, taking custody of certain documents from officials. The incident has intensified tensions between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government and central investigating agencies, once again bringing the debate over federalism, political vendetta, and misuse of agencies into the national spotlight. According to reports, ED officials were conducting searches in connection with an ongoing financial investigation when Mamata Banerjee arrived at the scene. Eyewitnesses said the Chief Minister closely monitored the proceedings and insisted on reviewing documents that were being examined by the agency. She reportedly took possession of some papers, stating that she would ensure transparency and prevent what she described as harassment of individuals linked to her party and administration. Mamata Banerjee later addressed the media, accusing the ED and the central government of targeting opposition-ruled states. She alleged that investigative agencies were being used as political tools ahead of elections to intimidate leaders

and destabilize elected governments. The Chief Minister asserted that she had every right to intervene when she believed constitutional norms were being violated. "This is nothing but political vendetta," Banerjee said, claiming that repeated raids were aimed at maligning her government's image. She added that her presence was meant to protect democratic values and ensure that officials acted within the law. The TMC leadership echoed her stance, arguing that the ED's actions were selective and biased. However, the opposition strongly criticized Mamata Banerjee's conduct, accusing her of interfering in a lawful investigation. Leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said the Chief Minister's actions amounted to obstruction of justice. They questioned how a constitutional authority could personally step into an enforcement operation and take documents from an agency empowered by law. BJP leaders demanded a thorough probe into the incident, arguing that no individual, regardless of position, is above the law. They claimed that Banerjee's move exposed the TMC's alleged fear of investigations and raised serious concerns about transparency and accountability in

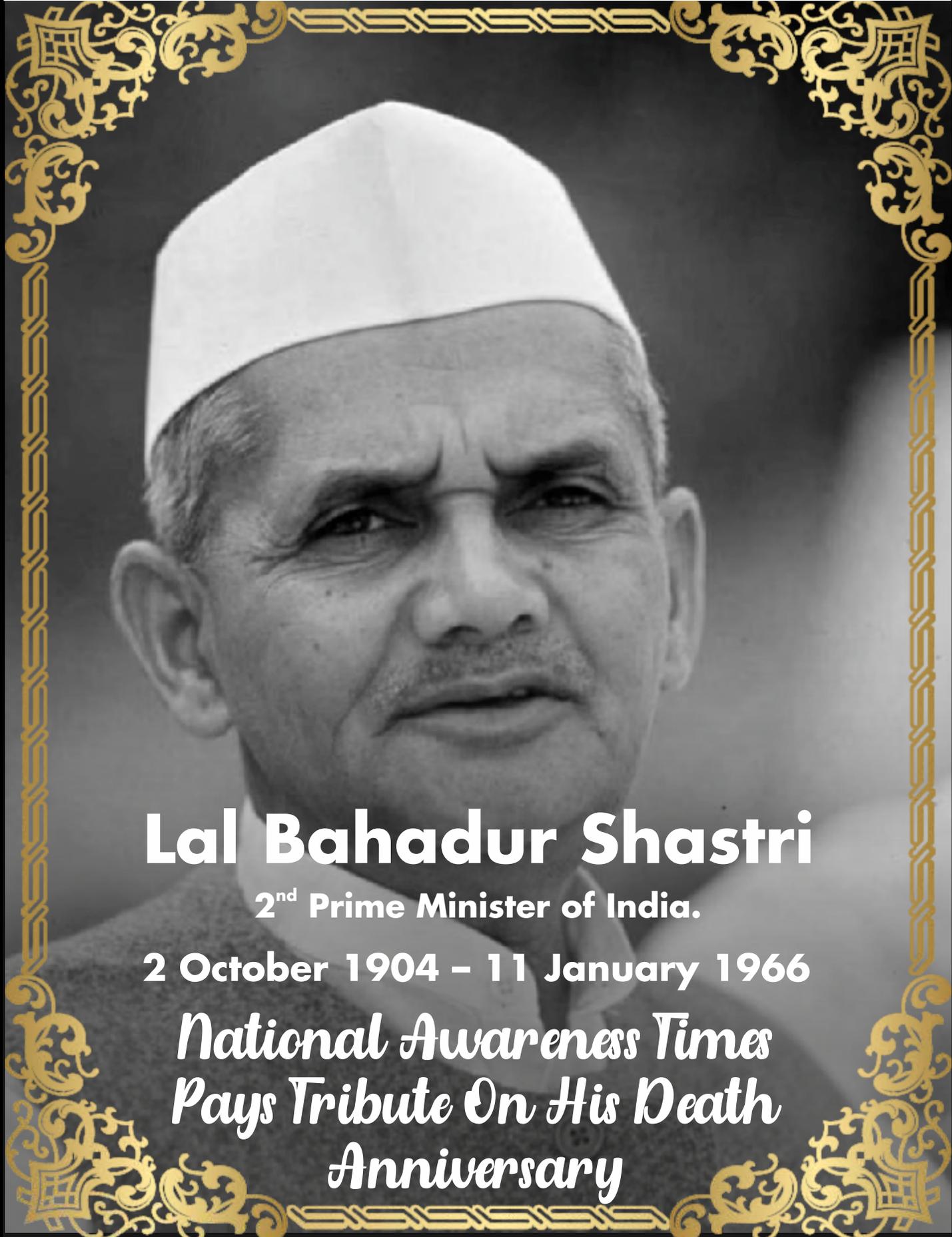
the state.

Legal experts are divided on the matter. Some argue that while a Chief Minister has the right to ensure that due process is followed, directly intervening in an active investigation could blur institutional boundaries. Others believe the incident reflects growing friction between state governments and central agencies, especially in politically sensitive cases.

The ED, meanwhile, has maintained that it was carrying out its duties strictly in accordance with the law. Officials have not publicly commented on the specifics of the interaction but reiterated that the agency operates independently and without political influence.

This episode has reignited the broader debate on the functioning of central investigative agencies in India. Opposition parties across the country have repeatedly accused the Centre of weaponising agencies like the ED and CBI against political rivals. The ruling party at the Centre, however, has consistently rejected these claims, stating that agencies are merely acting against corruption and financial irregularities.

For West Bengal, the incident adds another chapter to the long-running confrontation between Mamata Banerjee and the central government. Known for her combative political style, Banerjee has often positioned herself as a defender of state rights against what she calls central overreach. As political reactions continue to pour in, the incident is likely to have legal and political ramifications in the days ahead. Whether Mamata Banerjee's intervention will be seen as a bold stand against alleged misuse of power or an inappropriate intrusion into an investigation remains a subject of intense debate. What is certain is that the episode has further deepened the already sharp divide between the Centre and the opposition-ruled states.



# Lal Bahadur Shastri

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# TRUMP APPROVES SANCTIONS BILL PROPOSING 500% TARIFF ON RUSSIAN OIL TRADE



In a major escalation of economic pressure on Moscow, former US President Donald Trump has approved a sweeping Russia sanctions bill that proposes an unprecedented 500 percent tariff on oil and energy imports linked to Russia. The move signals a hardline approach aimed not only at Russia but also at countries that continue to purchase Russian oil, reshaping global trade dynamics and intensifying geopolitical tensions. The proposed legislation is designed to cut off one of Russia's most critical revenue streams: energy exports. Since the start of the Ukraine conflict, oil and gas sales have remained a lifeline for the Russian economy. While Western nations imposed direct sanctions on Moscow, several large economies continued importing discounted Russian crude to meet their domestic energy needs. The new bill seeks to close this gap by targeting buyers of Russian oil rather than Russia alone. Under the sanctions framework, countries that continue importing Russian oil or petroleum products could face a 500 percent tariff on their exports to the United States. Such a steep tariff would effectively make trade with the US economically unviable for affected

nations. The intent is clear: force countries to choose between access to the US market and continued energy trade with Russia. Trump's approval of the bill reflects his renewed emphasis on aggressive economic tools as instruments of foreign policy. Supporters of the move argue that softer sanctions have failed to significantly weaken Russia's war capabilities. According to them, secondary sanctions targeting oil buyers are necessary to exert real pressure and push Moscow toward negotiations. The announcement has sent shockwaves through global markets. Energy-importing nations that rely heavily on Russian crude are now facing uncertainty over future trade relations with the United States. For many developing economies, Russian oil has been an attractive option due to lower prices and flexible payment arrangements. A sudden shift away from these supplies could increase fuel costs, worsen inflation, and strain public finances. Major exporters to the US are also concerned. A 500 percent tariff would severely hit industries ranging from manufacturing to technology and agriculture. Businesses fear that even the threat

of such tariffs could disrupt supply chains, delay investments, and trigger volatility in currency and stock markets.

Diplomatically, the bill has complicated international relations. Several countries have maintained that their energy purchases from Russia are driven by national interest and energy security, not political alignment. They argue that imposing punitive tariffs undermines sovereign decision-making and could destabilize already fragile global economic conditions.

Critics within the US have also raised concerns. Some lawmakers and trade experts warn that such extreme tariffs could violate international trade norms and provoke retaliatory measures. There are fears that a tariff war could emerge, hurting American exporters and consumers in the process. Others caution that forcing allies and partners into economic compliance could weaken long-term diplomatic relationships. Supporters counter that the moral and strategic stakes justify the risks. They believe that allowing Russia to continue earning billions from oil exports prolongs conflict and instability. In their view, decisive economic action is necessary even if it comes at a short-term cost to global trade.

The bill now moves through the legislative process, where its scope and implementation details will be closely scrutinized. Amendments, exemptions, or phased enforcement could still alter its final impact. However, Trump's backing has already given the proposal significant political momentum. If enacted, the sanctions would mark one of the most aggressive uses of trade policy in recent history. Beyond targeting Russia, the bill could redefine how economic power is used to influence global behavior, setting a precedent with far-reaching consequences for international energy markets and geopolitical alignments.

## RAVI KISHAN TO PLAY ANTAGONIST IN KARTIK AARYAN STARRER NAAGZILLA



A few days ago, we reported that the comic caper might not be able to make it on Independence Day as planned. We now bring to you another exciting news from the sets of the film. Bollywood Hungama has learned that the role of the antagonist is being played by none other than Ravi Kishan.

A source told us, "Kartik Aaryan's character is important and so is that of the villain in the story. The makers realized that Ravi Kishan fits the bill perfectly. He has always been a fine actor and has proved his worth in recent times with his performances in Laapataa Ladies (2024), Mamla Legal Hai (2024), Son Of Sardaar 2 (2025) etc. Ravi was quite excited to come on board this unique film and to play a very interesting and well-written character."

The source further said, "The scenes between Kartik Aaryan and Ravi Kishan are expected to be something to watch out for." In Naagzilla, Kartik Aaryan plays a shape-shifting nag. The film was announced last year and was scheduled for a release on August 14 to take advantage of the Independence Day weekend and is now expected to release later this year.

Earlier, a source told Bollywood Hungama, "The shoot is expected to be wrapped up in a few months. Moreover, this is a film with heavy VFX. As a result, the post-production is going to take a lot of time. The makers of the film and lead actor Kartik Aaryan are very clear that they don't want to rush through the process. They are aware that they have a special film in hand and want to nurture and fine-tune it properly before presenting it to the audience."

Naagzilla is directed by Mrighdeep Singh Lamba of Fukrey fame and backed by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Mahaveer Jain's Mahaveer Jain Films. It marks the first association of Kartik Aaryan and Mahaveer Jain, Mahaveer Jain and Karan Johar and the second film for Kartik and KJo after Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri.

## SONU SOOD DONATES RS 22 LAKHS TO COW SHELTER IN GUJARAT



Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood has once again stepped forward for a social cause, this time extending support to animal welfare. The actor has donated Rs 22 lakhs to a cow shelter in Gujarat, reinforcing his long-standing commitment to humanitarian and charitable initiatives.

According to reports, the contribution was made to help sustain the operations of the shelter, which provides care, food and medical support to abandoned and injured cattle. The donation is expected to aid the day-to-day functioning of the facility, particularly at a time when many shelters face financial constraints.

A PTI report quoted Sonu Sood sharing, "Caring for animals is as

important as caring for humans. They depend on us for protection and dignity." He further emphasised the need for collective responsibility when it comes to supporting such institutions that work quietly but consistently for animal welfare. This is not the first time Sonu has come forward to support social causes beyond the film industry. Over the years, he has been widely recognised for his efforts in healthcare support, education assistance, disaster relief, and aiding underprivileged communities across the country. His involvement in animal welfare initiatives adds another dimension to his ongoing philanthropic work.

The cow shelter's management reportedly expressed gratitude for the donation, noting that contributions of this scale help them continue providing essential services, including medical treatment and rehabilitation for rescued animals.

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**PIC OF  
THE WEEK**



*Mina Dobrev*

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