

## **Bharat Bandh on Monday 10th September : All you need to know**

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**Congress has demanded that the Centre cut excise duty as was done by previous governments which reduced rates each time there was a surge in the international oil prices.**

**New Delhi:** The Congress party has called for a Bharat Bandh on September 10 against the rising fuel prices. While other Opposition parties like DMK, NCP, RJD, JD(S), have extended their support, the Congress has also asked civil society groups and NGOs to join the nationwide protest.

When is Bharat Bandh?

The bandh will be observed across the country on September 10, between 9 am and 3 pm. Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said the timing of the bandh is such that "the common person is not inconvenienced".

Why is the Opposition calling for bandh?

Stating the increase in fuel prices and excise duties on them as the reason behind the call for Bharat Bandh, the Opposition accused the ruling BJP government of fleecing the common man. An immediate reduction of central excise duty and excessive VAT in the states, bringing petrol and diesel under the ambit of GST are amongst some of the demands of the Opposition.

Surjewala claimed the prices of petrol and diesel have gone up by around 50 per cent while the excise duties on petrol and diesel have risen by 211 and 443 per cent, respectively, since 2014.

Blaming the BJP-led government for failing on multiple fronts, rebel JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav also raised the issue of increasing attacks against Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs. Congress leader Ashok Gehlot said the bandh is to awaken the government and vent the people's anger.

Who all are supporting the bandh?

Several opposition parties, including the Samajwadi Party, DMK and the NCP have extended their support to the strike. While the Left parties have given a separate call for bandh on the same day, the Trinamool Congress will organise street protests but would not enforce a shutdown in West Bengal. Parties like the RJD, JD(S), JVM and JMM have also lent their support to the call for bandh.

Where will the bandh be observed?

The Bharat Bandh will be observed in several states like Maharashtra, Bihar Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, where regional opposition parties have come in support of the bandh call. In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress said it supported the issues raised by the Opposition but it was against the shutdown and the West Bengal government would take all measures to maintain the public utility services on Monday.

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