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“

“People do not seem to realize that their opinion of the world is also a confession of their character.”

— Ralph Emerson

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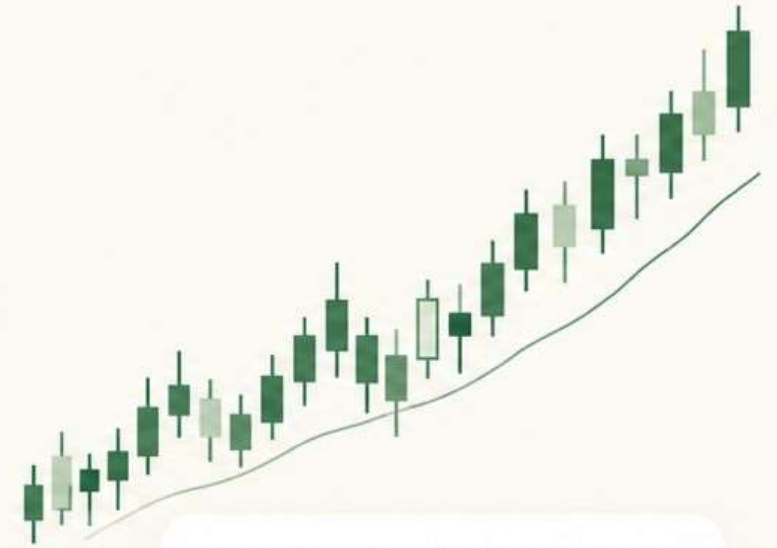
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Today's Current Affairs | 21 October 2026

आज के समसामयिक मुद्दे — The Hindu • Indian Express • Financial Express — 7 articles + exam
PYQs + MCQs + Myth Buster

1

Rubio pitches U.S.,
Venezuelan oil
अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल

2

Centre's Ladakh plan: L-G
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लद्दाख योजना

3

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Syria's first DNA
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The economic mess
behind France's protests
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How the Army treats
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THE HINDU • 21 OCT 2026

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1 Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil | अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल



Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil

अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल

Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil to India

External Affairs Minister hosts U.S. Secretary of State and UAE counterpart in financial capital

Rubio praises India's refining capabilities, says free trade agreement 'very, very close'

Rubio to visit Jamnagar, to discuss sending more Venezuelan oil to Ambani-owned plant

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Calling India a "refining superpower", U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday said he discussed possible Indian oil purchases from the U.S. during talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, adding that the two countries are "very, very close".



number of issues, including the U.S.'s recent moves to stop H-1B visas, threatened sanctions (that have since been held off) over India's import of Russian oil, and delayed FTA negotiations.

"We're very, very close. I would say we're about as close as you can be without having executed the [free trade] agreement. I think there's a small num-

ber of issues, including to Jamnagar, as well as criticism that he had "summoned" Mr. Jaishankar to Mumbai rather than travelling to meet him in Delhi. Speaking to journalists at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai where he and Mr. Jaishankar offered tributes to those who were killed in the 26/11 terror attacks, Mr. Rubio fielded questions over the purpose of his visit, and why

der to discuss more Venezuelan oil being brought to the refinery. "We've talked to them [Reliance Energy] about it in the past. We're going to go see what the holdup is and what opportunities exist. We'll see how the conversation goes. This is a company that has had a presence in Venezuela in the past and whose refining capabilities are substantial," he added.

Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil

अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल

tries are “very, very close” to wrapping up negotiations on a much-delayed free trade agreement.

He will also discuss a plan for more Venezuelan oil to be refined at the Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Energy plant in Jamnagar, Mr. Rubio said.

Energy ties, trade, and connectivity were on the agenda as Mr. Jaishankar hosted Mr. Rubio and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Mumbai. The External Affairs Minister met with each of his counterparts separately, and then held a meeting with both of them



Trilateral talks: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and UAE Finance Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Mumbai on Tuesday. ANI

together, indicating that trilateral cooperation on the issues was also discussed.

Mr. Jaishankar called the trilateral meeting a “useful exchange of perspectives on energy, connectivity and contemporary developments”.

The trilateral meeting, which was not earlier announced by the External

Affairs Ministry, comes at a time when the UAE is facing many challenges in energy exports and trade due to the U.S. war in Iran and Tehran’s blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

“The U.S., India, and the UAE have real opportunities to advance cooperation on energy, trade, technology, and regional connectivity,” said U.S.

Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

However, the comments made no mention of plans for the ‘I2U2’ that the three countries formed with Israel in 2021 or the India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) that was announced in 2023.

The U.S. official’s visit comes at a time of tension in India-U.S. ties due to a

think there’s a small number of items left to wrap up, so I think that will happen shortly,” Mr. Rubio said.

‘Strong partner’

While Mr. Jaishankar met Mr. Abdullah in Mumbai just four days after he had travelled to Abu Dhabi where the two Foreign Ministers had also spent time together, this is Mr. Rubio’s second visit to India in five months after his last visit to Delhi for the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting in May this year.

There have been questions raised about Mr. Rubio’s planned two-day visit

pose of his visit, and why he had returned to India so soon.

“First of all, I will point out that the Foreign Minister of India [Mr. Jaishankar] has been to the United States four times this year,” Mr. Rubio explained, adding that as the most populous country and largest democracy that is a trade and defence partner, a “strong strategic partner” and a Quad member, India is an important country to interact with.

He explained that his visit to Jamnagar, where he will see the Reliance energy refinery and the Vantara animal facility, was in or-

stantial,” he added.

When asked about India’s purchase of Russian oil that makes up about 45% to 50% of its intake, Mr. Rubio said that he was “happy” to see India has made “substantial progress” on diversifying its oil purchases, adding that the U.S. and Venezuela can be the source of more energy inputs to India. Last month, oil from Russia, the U.S., and Venezuela made up two-thirds of India’s oil imports.

(with inputs from Vinaya Deshpande in Mumbai)

‘PERFECTLY ALIGNED’

» PAGE 5

Rubio Pitches U.S., Venezuelan Oil to India

अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री मार्को रुबियो ने भारत को “रिफ़ाइनिंग महाशक्ति” कहा – अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल खरीद पर चर्चा; व्यापार समझौता “बहुत करीब”; मुंबई में भारत-अमेरिका-UAE त्रिपक्षीय बैठक



“Refining
superpower”
रिफ़ाइनिंग महाशक्ति

1 What Rubio said रुबियो के बयान

- ▶ India a “**refining superpower**”
रिफ़ाइनिंग महाशक्ति
- ▶ Trade deal “**very, very close**”
व्यापार समझौता
- ▶ India-U.S. “**perfectly aligned**” on core issues
पूर्ण सहमति

2 Oil diplomacy | तेल कूटनीति



- ▶ Push for more **U.S. crude** purchases
अमेरिकी तेल
- ▶ More **Venezuelan oil** to Reliance, Jamnagar
वेनेजुएला
- ▶ Russia: **45–50%** of India’s intake; U.S. “happy” with diversification
रूस

3 Friction points | तनाव



- ▶ U.S. moves on **H-1B visas**
H-1B
- ▶ Threatened **sanctions** over Russian oil
प्रतिबंध
- ▶ Delayed **FTA** negotiations
FTA में देरी

Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil — in depth (1/2)

अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

Trilateral in Mumbai
त्रिपक्षीय बैठक



Country देश	Leader नेता
India भारत	EAM S. Jaishankar
U.S. अमेरिका	Sec. of State Marco Rubio
UAE UAE	FM Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed

5

Related groupings
संबंधित समूह



- ▶ **I2U2** – India, Israel, UAE, U.S. (2021)
I2U2
- ▶ **IMEC** – India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (2023)
IMEC
- ▶ **Quad** – India, U.S., Japan, Australia
क्वाड

6

About Venezuela
वेनेजुएला



- ▶ Capital **Caracas**; South America's north coast
कराकस
- ▶ Founding member of **OPEC (1960)**
OPEC संस्थापक
- ▶ Heavy, sour crude – suits **complex refineries**
भारी कच्चा तेल

Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil — in depth (2/2)

अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 From crude to export | कच्चे तेल से निर्यात



Import crude
आयात

U.S., Venezuela
अमेरिका



Refine
शोधन

Jamnagar
जामनगर



Diesel, petrol,
ATF
ईंधन

Products
उत्पाद



Export
निर्यात

Top export item
शीर्ष निर्यात

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Petroleum products are among India's **largest exports**

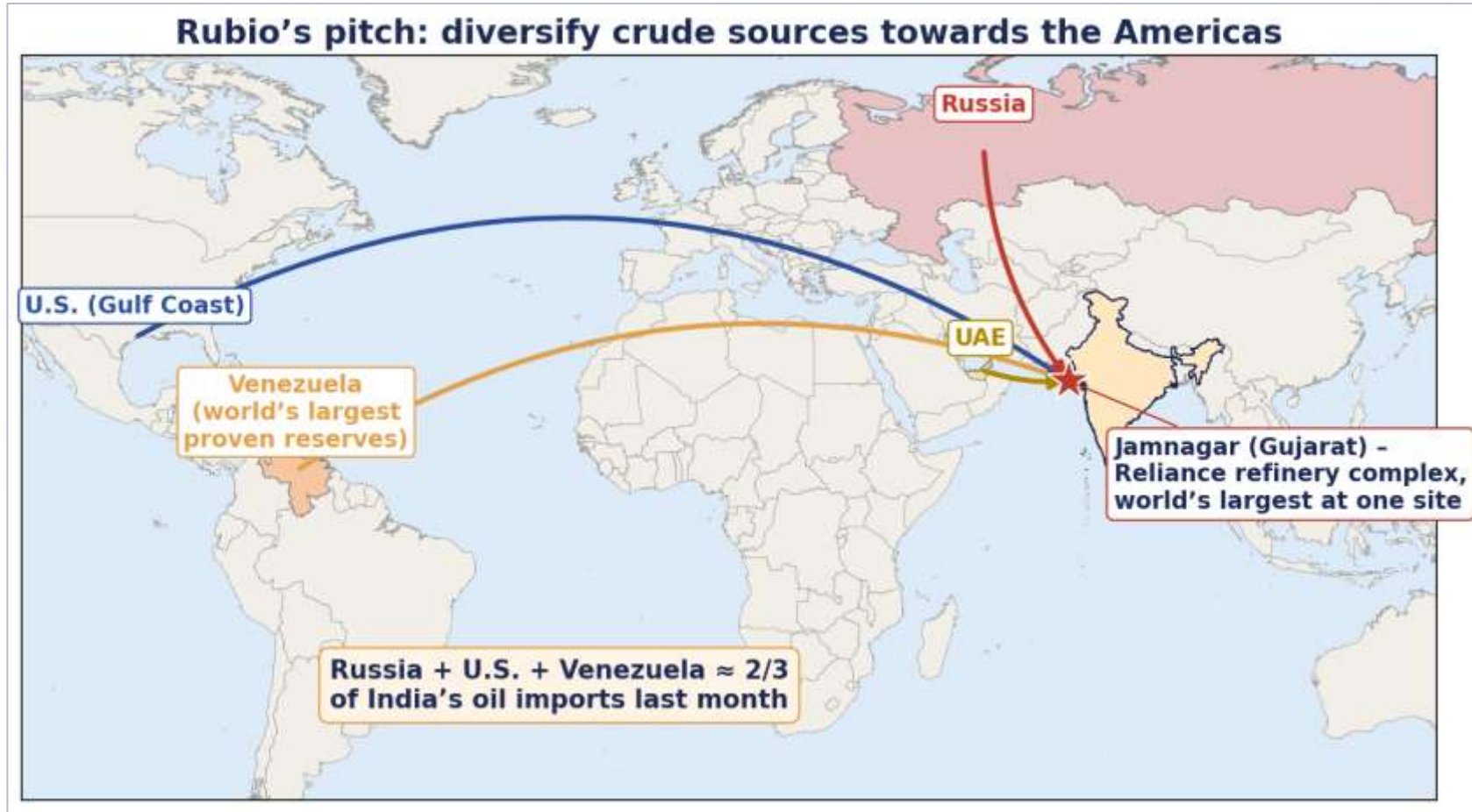
सबसे बड़ा निर्यात

► Rubio's visit marks **26/11** tributes at **Taj Mahal Palace**, Mumbai

26/11

Rubio pitches U.S., Venezuelan oil — Map & Diagram

अमेरिकी व वेनेजुएला तेल — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual

चित्र को समझें

- ▶ Oil from **U.S. Gulf Coast & Venezuela** to Jamnagar
- ▶ **Venezuela** – world's largest proven reserves
- ▶ **Jamnagar** – world's largest single-site refinery
- ▶ Russia + U.S. + Venezuela $\approx$ 2/3 of imports

दो-तिहाई

Factor	US oil	Russian oil	Gulf oil	Venezuelan oil
Representative grades	WTI Midland, Mars	Urals, ESPO, Sokol	Arab Light, Basrah, Kuwait Export, Murban	Merey, Boscan
Typical quality	WTI: light, low sulphur	Urals: medium, sour	Many grades medium/heavy, sour; some lighter	Heavy to extra-heavy, sour
Sulphur removal	Relatively low for WTI	Moderate–high for Urals	Varies; often substantial	Generally substantial
Processing requirements	WTI needs less intensive upgrading	Desulphurisation and upgrading	Desulphurisation; heavier grades need more upgrading	Extensive upgrading, hydrogen and sulphur removal; metals also complicate processing
Products before upgrading	More light fractions such as naphtha	Useful diesel-range fractions plus heavier products	Varies widely by grade	More heavy residue; advanced units convert it into petrol and diesel
Fit for Indian refiners	Useful for blending and diversification	Fits part of the medium/sour crude basket	Established fit across many refineries	Best suited to complex refineries with cokers and other residue-conversion units
Transport to India	Long voyage	Long from western Russian ports	Normally shortest	Long voyage across the Atlantic and onward to India
Main economic advantage	Lower treatment burden for light, sweet grades	Attractive when delivered discounts are sufficient	Proximity, grade choice and established contracts	Discounted heavy crude can reward refiners able to upgrade it efficiently
Main disadvantage	Freight and potentially unsuitable product mix	Shipping, payment and trade-policy uncertainty	Regional shipping disruption; sour-grade treatment	Higher processing costs, residue/metals, freight and trade-policy uncertainty
When it makes sense	Price and product yields justify freight	Discount exceeds additional costs	Delivered price and refinery compatibility are favourable	Discount covers the extra transport and intensive processing costs

Overall rank	Oil source	Why it suits Indian refiners	Main drawback	When it could rank higher
1	Gulf — Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait	Nearby supplies, wide choice of grades and established compatibility with Indian refining systems	Regional shipping disruptions; many grades need substantial sulphur removal	Best general-purpose supply base when routes operate normally
2	Russia — especially Urals	Medium/sour crude can fit India's refining needs; discounts can improve margins	Longer voyages and changing shipping, payment and trade restrictions	Can be No. 1 for profitability when its delivered discount is sufficiently large
3	USA — especially WTI Midland	Light, low-sulphur crude reduces treatment requirements and diversifies supply	Long-distance freight; very light crude may not deliver the most profitable product mix	Can move ahead when US pricing, freight and the refinery's desired yields align
4	Venezuela — especially Merey	Discounted heavy crude offers opportunities for advanced refineries	Heavy residue, sulphur and metals require intensive processing; long voyage	Can outperform lighter crudes at a complex refinery if the discount covers extra costs

4

THE HINDU

News

Thursday, October 26, 2020

Call to classify assistive devices as essential products

Disability Rights Foundation (DRF) has urged the Union government to classify assistive devices as essential products under the Essential Commodities Act, 1956, to ensure their availability to all citizens.

The DRF, in a letter to the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Hardeep Singh Kohli, said that assistive devices are essential for the lives of people with disabilities and should be treated as such.

The letter also urged the government to take steps to ensure the production and distribution of these devices, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Centre's plan for Ladakh gives final authority over laws

The Union government's plan to create hill councils in Ladakh has given the central government the final authority over laws in the region, according to a senior official.

The official said that the plan, which was approved by the Union Cabinet, gives the central government the power to make laws in Ladakh, even in areas where the state government has jurisdiction.

This move, the official said, is a clear signal that the central government is committed to maintaining its authority in Ladakh.

Hill councils to be created in all eight districts of Ladakh

The Union government has decided to create hill councils in all eight districts of Ladakh, a move that has sparked controversy in the region.

The government said that the hill councils will be created to address the needs of the hill communities in Ladakh and to improve their living conditions.

However, some people in Ladakh are concerned that the creation of hill councils will undermine the autonomy of the region and that it will lead to further centralisation of power.

THE HINDU • 21 OCT 2026

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पृष्ठ 4 • समाचार

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 Centre's Ladakh plan + hill councils | लद्दाख

Mumbai Police get transit remand for suspects in Tiger Shroff's attack case

Mumbai Police have secured transit remand for two suspects in the case of actor Tiger Shroff's alleged assault on a woman in a Mumbai restaurant.

The police said that the suspects, who are from the same area, were arrested after a lengthy investigation.

The woman, who is recovering from her injuries, has been shifted to a private hospital for further treatment.

Shah visits Punjab; drug menace takes centre stage ahead of polls

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's son, Vikram, visited Punjab on Thursday to meet with the state government and discuss the drug menace in the state.

Vikram said that the drug problem in Punjab is a major concern and that the central government is committed to helping the state government to tackle it.

He also met with the Punjab Chief Minister, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and discussed the state's development plans.

Cyclones, floods and landslides threaten telecom resilience: study

A study by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has warned that cyclones, floods, and landslides could threaten the resilience of the telecom network in India.

The study found that the telecom network is vulnerable to natural disasters and that there is a need to improve its resilience.

TRAI has urged the telecom operators to take steps to strengthen the network and to ensure that it is able to withstand such disasters.

Kuki man killed in Manipur; calls for shutdown intensify

A Kuki man was killed in Manipur on Thursday, a day after the state government announced a shutdown in the state.

The killing has intensified calls for a shutdown in Manipur and has led to further unrest in the state.

The state government has said that it is committed to maintaining law and order in Manipur and that it will take all necessary steps to do so.

Daily Current Affairs • 21 October 2020 • The Hindu | Indian Express | Financial Express

12

Centre's Ladakh plan: L-G final authority

लद्दाख योजना

Centre's plan for Ladakh gives L-G final authority over laws

Draft asks whether the delimitation of constituencies for proposed elected body will be done by election authority or a Delimitation Commission; it also explores reservation of seats for women

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The draft proposed by the Centre for a unique constitutional arrangement in Ladakh says that the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) would be the final authority on any regulation made by the Union Territory-level elected body.

In the document titled "Constitutional and Statutory Framework", in response to a question on how the U.T.-level body's decisions would take effect, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said, "As a legislative practice enshrined in the Constitution of India, every regulation (law) made by the U.T.-level body would go to the Lt. Governor and would take effect after his assent."

Two civil society groups, Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), are part of a high-level committee constituted by the Centre in 2023, to ensure constitutional safeguards for the region, following the revocation of Article



Members of the LAB and the KDA have long demanded the inclusion of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. FILE PHOTO

and Kashmir in 2019.

The draft, accessed by *The Hindu*, asks, whether the delimitation of constituencies for the proposed U.T.-level elected body will be done by an election authority or a Delimitation Commission.

It asks whether the delimitation would be only population-based or based on both population and area in different proportions such as 50-50, 60-40 or 40-60 or based on population, panchayat boundaries, seasonal inaccessibility, administrative boundaries and public convenience. There are questions about the electoral rolls whether it will be

receive constitutional status or continue under the existing LAHDC Act, 1997; whether members of the U.T.-level body should be elected directly by the public or indirectly through LAHDCs and panchayati raj institutions; whether nominated members should include experts with special knowledge; the role of Member of Parliament and LAHDC Chief Executive Councillors in the body.

"The principal task at this stage is to settle the constitutional and institutional choices that determine the coherence of the entire framework. The proposed next step is therefore to approve the answers to the options in principle, before proceeding to the clause-by-clause finalisation of the legislative instruments," the draft said.

It added that once the decisions have been settled, the constitutional amendment and the proposed regulation under Article 240 of the Constitution can be revised into a coherent package, sup-

Hill councils to be created in all eight districts of Ladakh

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Ladakh is all set to hold elections to eight hill councils for eight districts as President Droupadi Murmu promulgated the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) (Amendment) Regulation, 2026, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said on Tuesday.

Terming it a "historic regulation", Mr. Saxena said: "It was implemented in a record time of just six days and now paves the way for creation of LAHDC in all eight districts of Ladakh, including the newly created Sankoo district. The Union Cabinet had approved the amendments on October 14, followed by its promulgation by the Honourable President on 16th October."

Elaborating on the council's composition, Mr. Saxena said the amended regulation rationalises the number of constituencies from the earlier 26 seats in each council, to a minimum of seven seats and maximum 24 seats now. "It also provides for nomina-

ted communities" for greater people's participation in the local governance," said Mr. Saxena.

Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory in 2019 from the Kashmir division of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. Prior to 2019, Ladakh had only two hill councils, Kargil and Leh. However, the L-G administration has created eight districts this year.

At present, LAHDC-Kargil, which held elections in 2023, remains in place.

Questions on timing

Meanwhile, the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), one of the key civil society bodies holding dialogue with the Centre over the demands of Statehood and Sixth Schedule, questioned the timing of the amendments to the LAHDC.

"At a time when talks are ongoing to negotiate a settlement for Ladakh it is deeply problematic that the government has chosen to make substantial changes to the composition, powers and functioning of these councils without consulting the people and stakeholders of La-

Centre's Plan for Ladakh Gives L-G Final Authority over Laws

केंद्र के मसौदे में लद्दाख के UT-स्तरीय निर्वाचित निकाय के नियमों पर उपराज्यपाल को अंतिम अधिकार; सभी 8 ज़िलों में पहाड़ी विकास परिषदें बनेंगी



Draft framework
मसौदा ढाँचा

1 The draft | मसौदा



- ▶ New **Article** in Constitution for Ladakh
नया अनुच्छेद
- ▶ **UT-wide elected body** to make regulations
निर्वाचित निकाय
- ▶ Every regulation needs **L-G's assent**
उपराज्यपाल की स्वीकृति

2 Open questions | प्रश्न



- ▶ Delimitation: **Election body or Commission?**
परिसीमन
- ▶ Population vs area (50-50, 60-40...)
जनसंख्या बनाम क्षेत्र
- ▶ **One-third to 50% seats for women?**
महिला आरक्षण

3 Hill councils पहाड़ी परिषदें



8

Districts /
councils
ज़िले

2

Councils before
पहले

7–24

Seats each now
सीटें

26

Seats earlier
पहले सीटें

Centre's Ladakh plan: L-G final authority — in depth (1/2)

लद्दाख योजना — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 Key players | प्रमुख पक्ष

Group समूह	Region क्षेत्र
Leh Apex Body (LAB) LAB	Leh
Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) KDA	Kargil
High-level committee (2023) समिति	MHA-led talks

5 Constitutional tools संवैधानिक प्रावधान

- **Art 239** – UTs run by President via Administrator
अनु. 239
- **Art 240** – President makes regulations for some UTs
अनु. 240
- **Sixth Schedule** – tribal autonomy (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram)
छठी अनुसूची

6 Criticism | आलोचना

- KDA: changes made **during ongoing talks**
बातचीत के बीच
- Elected body's power limited by **L-G veto**
सीमित शक्ति
- Demand for **Statehood** not addressed
राज्य का दर्जा

Centre's Ladakh plan: L-G final authority — in depth (2/2)

लद्दाख योजना — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 Ladakh's journey | लद्दाख की यात्रा



**1995 LAHDC
Leh
1995**

Hill council
परिषद



**2019 UT
2019**

Without
legislature
विधायिका नहीं



**2023 talks
2023**

LAB–KDA–MHA
वार्ता



**2026 draft
2026**

UT-level body
निर्वाचित निकाय

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?

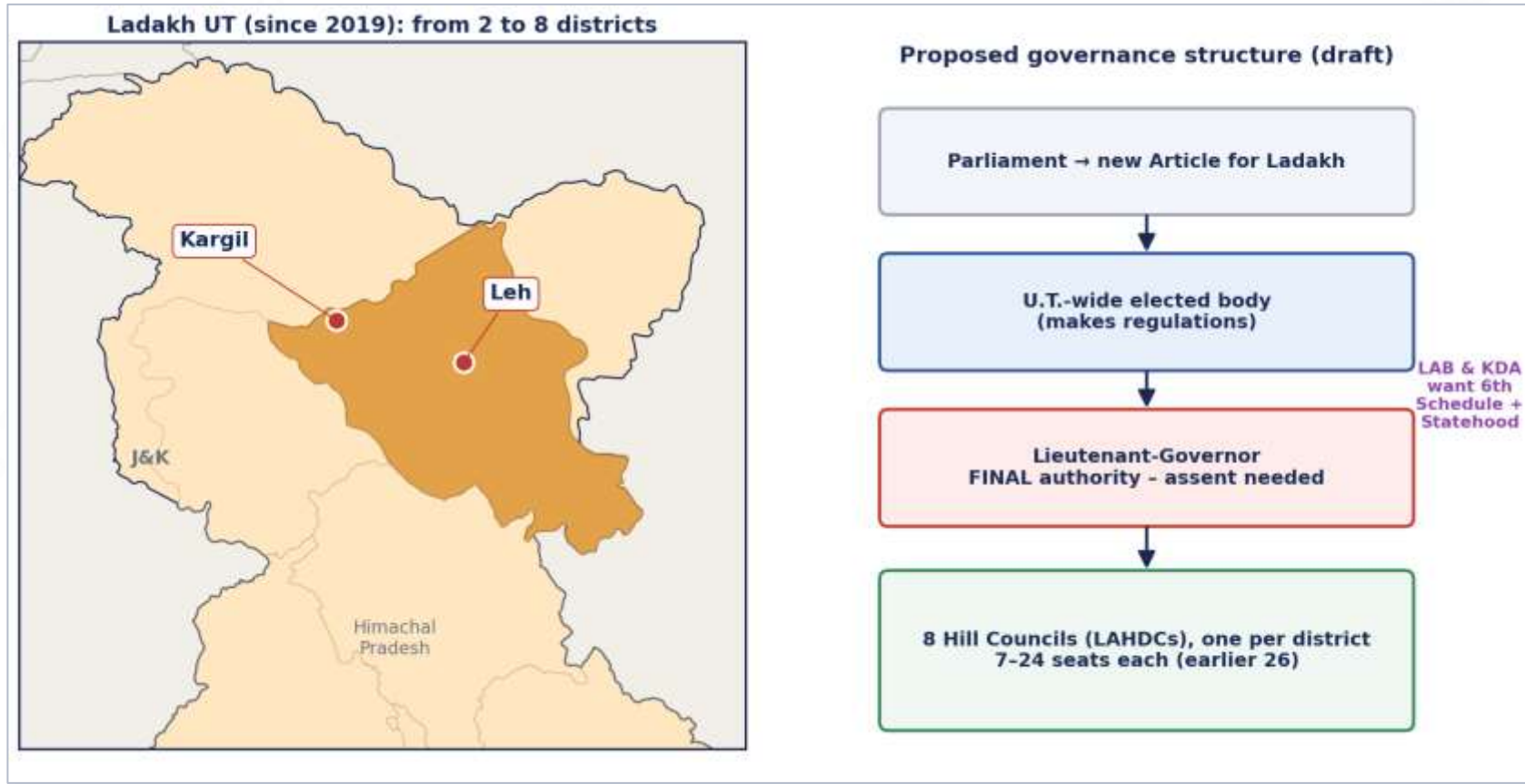


► Ladakh is India's
largest UT by area
सबसे बड़ा UT

► Over **90%** of Ladakh's
people are **Scheduled
Tribes**
90% अनुसूचित जनजाति

Centre's Ladakh plan: L-G final authority — Map & Diagram

लद्दाख योजना — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual
चित्र को समझें

- Ladakh UT since **2019**
– Leh & Kargil
2019
- Now **8 districts**, 8 hill councils
8 जिले
- UT-wide body → **L-G assent**
उपराज्यपाल
- LAB & KDA want **6th Schedule + Statehood**
छठी अनुसूची

Feature	Ladakh hill councils — Leh and Kargil	UT without Assembly, e.g. Chandigarh	UT with Assembly, e.g. Delhi, Puducherry, J&K	Sixth Schedule autonomous councils
What is it?	Elected local bodies within Ladakh UT	Administration of an entire UT	Elected legislature and government for a UT	Autonomous bodies for specified tribal areas within states
Legal foundation	LAHDC Act, 1997 , as amended	Constitutional UT framework and applicable laws	Constitutional provisions and applicable UT laws	Sixth Schedule , linked to Articles 244(2) and 275(1)
Main role	Local development, planning and administration of assigned subjects	Administration through an Administrator/LG	Law-making and government within permitted subjects	Tribal self-government, development and protection of specified local institutions
Can it make laws?	No Assembly-like legislative power ; exercises statutory administrative and regulatory powers	No elected UT legislature	Yes , within its jurisdiction; restrictions vary by UT	Yes, on specified subjects , generally requiring Governor's assent
Land powers	Specified land-management/allotment powers under the Act; subject to legal limits and government oversight	Governed through applicable laws and administration	Depends on the UT's legal framework; Delhi has major exclusions	Can legislate on allotment, occupation and use of land, excluding reserved forests , subject to constitutional limits
Customs, inheritance, marriage	No equivalent general Sixth Schedule legislative authority	Governed by applicable laws	Governed by applicable laws and legislative competence	Can make laws on inheritance, marriage/divorce and social customs
Courts	No Sixth Schedule-style council court system	Regular judicial system	Regular judicial system	Can establish village/council courts for specified cases involving tribal parties
Taxes and funds	Specified taxes, fees and council funds; substantial dependence on government allocations	UT budgeting arrangements	Assembly votes on budgets within the applicable framework	Specified taxation and revenue powers, council funds and government grants
Who oversees it?	UT administration/LG and government under the governing law	Union government through Administrator/LG	Elected government alongside LG; division varies	Governor and state government have important supervisory powers
Does it provide statehood?	No	No	No	No

THE HINDU • 21 OCT 2026

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पृष्ठ 14 • विश्व

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 China quits Sri Lanka port venture | श्रीलंका बंदरगाह



1 China pulls out of key investment in Sri Lanka port logistics venture

When China Merchants pledged the investment in 2013, it was touted as the first major foreign direct investment in port infrastructure in the country. But now, it is the second instance of a high-profile project.

China Merchants
The decision to pull out of the investment in the Colombo South Asia Container Port Logistics Venture (CSAPLV) is a significant blow to the country's port infrastructure. The venture, a joint venture between China Merchants and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, was set up in 2013. It was the first major foreign direct investment in port infrastructure in the country. But now, it is the second instance of a high-profile project.

Death toll rises to 73 in Houthi hit on Yemen camp

The death toll from a Houthi attack on a military camp in southern Yemen has risen to 73, with at least 100 wounded, according to a statement from the Yemeni government.

Houthi attack
The Houthi attack on a military camp in southern Yemen has resulted in a significant loss of life. The Yemeni government has condemned the attack and called for international action to stop the Houthi forces.

Russia and Iran have 'never' worked so closely, says Araghchi

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that Russia and Iran have "never" worked so closely in history.

Iranian Foreign Minister
Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that Russia and Iran have "never" worked so closely in history. He made the statement during a meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister.

Silent dissent



Protesters during an anti-government rally in a shopping district in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Tuesday. (AP Photo/Hoang Thi)

Russian strikes kill 9 in Ukraine; Zelenskyy meets U.S. officials

Russian strikes on Ukraine have killed nine people, including a child, and wounded dozens, according to a statement from the Ukrainian government.

Russian strikes
Russian strikes on Ukraine have resulted in a significant loss of life. The Ukrainian government has condemned the strikes and called for international action to stop the Russian forces.

Lula takes to the streets as Flavio leans on Big Tech in Brazil's runoff polls

Flavio Costa
In the past few weeks, the streets of Brazil have seen a significant increase in protests. The protests are against the government of President Lula da Silva. The protests are led by Flavio Costa, a prominent figure in the opposition.

China quits Sri Lanka port venture

श्रीलंका बंदरगाह

China pulls out of key investment in Sri Lanka port logistics venture

When China Merchants pledged the investment in 2023, it was touted as the 'first major Foreign Direct Investment' to enter Sri Lanka after the country defaulted on its foreign debt; this is also the second instance of a big investor exiting a project

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

In a significant development concerning Chinese investment in Sri Lanka, state-owned China Merchants Port Holdings has withdrawn from a \$392 million joint venture for a logistics hub at the Colombo port.

In 2023, China Merchants Group announced its decision to invest in the proposed South Asia Commercial and Logistics Hub (SACLH) at the Colombo port, taking its cumulative investment in the island nation to \$2 billion. According to the joint venture agreed upon then, China



In 2023, China Merchants Group announced its decision to invest in the South Asia Commercial and Logistics Hub at Colombo port. AFP

Merchants was to hold 70% stakes, while the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) and a Sri Lankan private construction company were to hold 15% each.

"However, following an assessment of the prevailing external circumstances, commercial considerations and the interests of the respective sharehol-

ders, a decision was reached not to proceed with the proposed joint venture," the SLPA said on Monday. Further, the SLPA statement said it would pursue "an alternative development strategy" through the establishment of a "new logistics hub" under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, through a competitive bidding process.

When China Merchants pledged the investment in 2023, it was touted as the "first major Foreign Direct Investment" to enter Sri Lanka after the country defaulted on its foreign debt the previous year amid a crushing economic crisis.

The firm pulling out now is the second instance of a big investor exiting a project previously agreed upon in Sri Lanka. In February 2025, Adani Green withdrew from a controversial \$442-million renewable energy project in northern Sri Lanka, after the ruling government sought to renegotiate the power-purchasing tariff.

On its reasons for the recent decision, China Merchants said: "In view of changes in external circumstances, the Company has reassessed the SACLH Project and concluded that terminating the project would be in the best interests of the parties."

China Pulls Out of Key Investment in Sri Lanka Port Logistics Venture

चीन की सरकारी कंपनी चाइना मर्चेन्ट्स पोर्ट होल्डिंग्स कोलंबो बंदरगाह पर \$39.2 करोड़ के लॉजिस्टिक्स हब संयुक्त उद्यम से हटी – श्रीलंका से बड़े निवेशक का दूसरा निकास



\$392 mn venture
\$39.2 करोड़

1 The deal | सौदा



\$392 mn

Logistics hub
लॉजिस्टिक्स हब

70%

China Merchants
stake
हिस्सेदारी

15% + 15%

SLPA + local
firm
स्थानीय

\$2 bn

China Merchants total
in SL
कुल निवेश

2 Why it mattered | महत्व



► Touted as **first major FDI** after 2022 default
पहला बड़ा FDI

► South Asia Commercial & Logistics Hub (**SACLH**)
SACLH

► At **Colombo port** – busiest in South Asia
कोलंबो

3 What next | आगे



► SLPA: new hub via **PPP**, competitive bid
PPP मॉडल

► “**Changed external circumstances**” cited
बाहरी परिस्थितियाँ

► 2nd big exit after **Adani Green** (Feb 2025)
दूसरा निकास

China quits Sri Lanka port venture — in depth (1/2)

श्रीलंका बंदरगाह — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

China in Sri Lanka
चीन की उपस्थिति



- ▶ **Hambantota** – 99-year lease (2017)
हंबनटोटा
- ▶ **Colombo Port City** – reclaimed land
पोर्ट सिटी
- ▶ Debt-trap debate; **BRI** projects
ऋण जाल

5

India in Sri Lanka
भारत की उपस्थिति



- ▶ **West Container Terminal** (Adani), Colombo
WCT
- ▶ **Trincomalee** energy hub; oil tank farm
त्रिंकोमाली
- ▶ **\$4 bn** aid in 2022 crisis
\$4 अरब सहायता

6

2022 crisis recap
2022 संकट



Event घटना	Detail विवरण
Default चूक	First ever, Apr 2022
IMF IMF	\$2.9 bn bailout (2023)
Politics राजनीति	Aragalaya protests

China quits Sri Lanka port venture — in depth (2/2)

श्रीलंका बंदरगाह — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How a port PPP works | PPP कैसे



Port authority
बंदरगाह
प्राधिकरण

Owens land
भूमि



Competitive bid
बोली

Select operator
ऑपरेटर



Private builds
निजी निर्माण

Runs for years
संचालन



Hands back
वापसी

After concession
अवधि बाद

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► ~70% of Colombo's transshipment cargo is linked to **India**

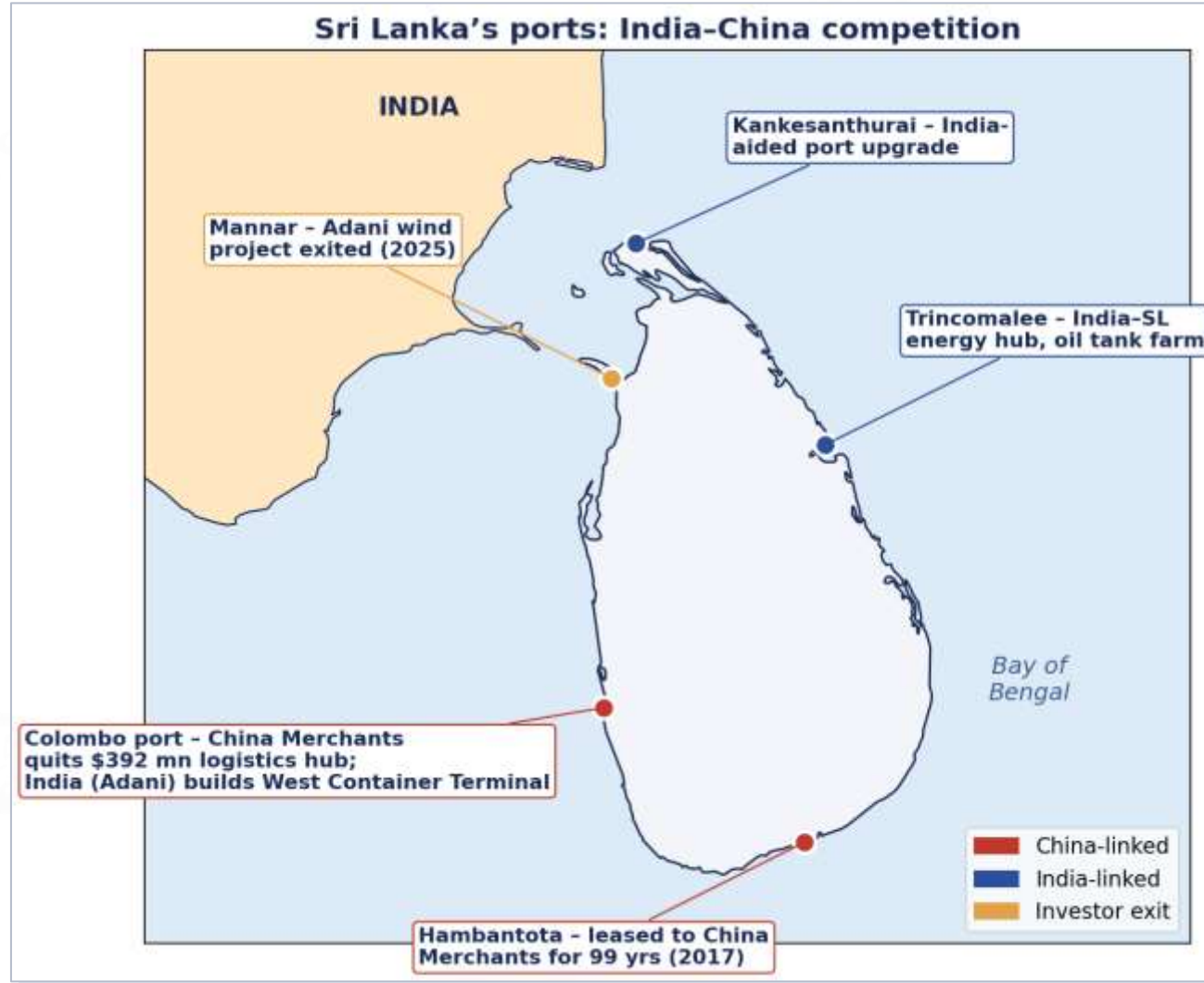
70% भारत से

► India–Sri Lanka **Palk Strait** is only ~30 km at its narrowest

पाक जलडमरूमध्य

China quits Sri Lanka port venture — Map & Diagram

श्रीलंका बंदरगाह — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual

चित्र को समझें

► **Colombo** – China Merchants exits \$392 mn hub

कोलंबो

► **Hambantota** – 99-year lease to China (2017)

हंबनटोटा

► **Trincomalee, Kankesanthurai** – India-linked

भारत

► **Mannar** – Adani exit (2025)

मन्नार

Syria's first DNA identifications

सीरिया में DNA पहचान

Syria's first DNA-based identifications offer hope for families of the missing

Reuters
DAMASCUS

DNA testing has helped identify the remains of missing people in at least three cases in Syria this year, the country's first such identification cases and a breakthrough in efforts to establish the fates of people missing after years of war.

Two of the cases were completed by Syria's National Commission for Missing Persons, while the third was the work of Syrian and international non-governmental organisations, which used genetic analysis to help identify the remains of a family killed in a suspected airstrike during the war to oust Islamic State from Syria's Raqqa in 2017.

The three cases, reported for the first time, offer a possible path towards

answers for families across Syria, where tens of thousands of people remain missing after decades of repression under Assad family rule and a nearly 14-year civil war.

Former President Bashar al-Assad's overthrow in late 2024 opened access to detention centres and burial sites long beyond the reach of independent investigators. But efforts to identify the missing have been complicated by constraints including a lack of access to sites during the war, logistical challenges to gathering DNA swabs from families and a shortage of forensic expertise and equipment.

The identification work for the Raqqa family was carried out by SJAC, the Syrian Missing Persons and Forensic Team – an independent humanitarian

group based in the city that investigates the fate of people who disappeared under Islamic State control – and the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG), a non-profit formed to investigate unresolved killings during internal conflict in the Central American country.

The result "raises the expectations of the families because it shows what's actually possible," SJAC's director Mohamedal-Abdullah said.

In the two other cases, the national commission confirmed identities through DNA matching and informed the families after experts from the International Committee of the Red Cross reviewed the findings, the commission said.

It did not provide details about the victims or the



Genetic clues: A forensic team member examines a bone at a lab in Raqqa, Syria. REUTERS

circumstances of their deaths.

Nine-year search

At the centre of the Raqqa investigation was the household of Manar Aliwi.

In August 2017, Aliwi and seven of her relatives were sheltering from airstrikes in a building in Raqqa, where U.S.-led airpow-



member examines a bone at a lab in Raqqa, Syria. REUTERS

er was helping a Kurdish-led Syrian fighting force battle Islamic State militants.

Aliwi's family outside Raqqa lost contact with her that month, according to testimony to SJAC. Satellite imagery showed the building she had been sheltering in reduced to a mound of rubble between

August 19 and 25, 2017, but the family spent years wondering if their relatives had died in there or fled and perished elsewhere.

In 2024, a demining organisation working in Raqqa at the same building discovered decomposing remains and Syrian forensic investigators recovered them later that year. Identity papers recovered in the building helped track down Aliwi's sister, who confirmed the family had been hiding there. Clothes found alongside the remains matched what members of the Aliwi family were wearing in an August 2017 photograph supplied by one of their relatives.

Investigators then collected genetic reference samples from relatives. After analysing the different DNA samples and relatives' accounts, FAFG confirmed

the remains belonged to Aliwi, her husband and their five children, including a 3-year-old. The surviving family members were informed in September 2026. The fate of Aliwi's father, the other member of the family who was in the building, is unclear.

For Mohamed Hama-dah, Aliwi's son and the only surviving member of her immediate family, the identifications have answered questions that long haunted him.

"Now we can bury them, have marked graves and visit them, and at least put our minds a little more at rest," he said. "For about nine years, we kept thinking: Did they get out? Did they go to another city? Did they reach Assad government-held areas?"

SJAC's Abdullah said he hoped the recent identi-

cations would demonstrate that partnerships between Syrian civil society and international experts could deliver results, and would encourage the national commission, set up after Assad's fall, to collaborate more with civil society.

The commission said it had collected around 96,000 files from Syrian Ministries and NGOs, around 2,000 samples from human remains recovered at suspected mass grave sites and 29 DNA samples from relatives in cases where evidence suggested a possible match. Two of those cases resulted in confirmed identifications.

"This is an important step but it is only the beginning of a long path", the commission said in a written statement.

Syria's First DNA-based Identifications Offer Hope for Families of the Missing

सीरिया में पहली बार DNA परीक्षण से युद्ध में लापता लोगों के अवशेषों की पहचान – रक़का में एक परिवार के 8 सदस्यों सहित तीन मामले; हज़ारों परिवारों को उम्मीद



Forensic
breakthrough
फ़ोरेंसिक सफलता

1

The breakthrough | सफलता



- ▶ 3 DNA identifications this year – Syria's first पहली बार
- ▶ 2 by National Commission for Missing Persons राष्ट्रीय आयोग
- ▶ 1 by NGOs – SJAC & FAFG (Guatemala) NGO

2

The Raqqa case रक़का मामला



- ▶ Manar Aliwi + 7 relatives, Aug 2017 8 लोग
- ▶ Building hit during war to oust Islamic State IS के खिलाफ़
- ▶ Remains found 2024; identified by DNA 2024

3

Hurdles | बाधाएँ



- ▶ No access during 14-yr civil war गृहयुद्ध
- ▶ Shortage of forensic labs & experts विशेषज्ञ कमी
- ▶ Tens of thousands still missing हज़ारों लापता

Syria's first DNA identifications — in depth (1/2)

सीरिया में DNA पहचान — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 Syria timeline | समय-रेखा



Year वर्ष	Event घटना
2011	Civil war begins गृहयुद्ध
2014–17	IS “caliphate”, Raqqa IS
Dec 2024	Assad regime falls असद पतन
2026	First DNA IDs DNA पहचान

5 DNA science | DNA विज्ञान



- ▶ **DNA fingerprinting** – Alec Jeffreys (UK, 1984)
एलेक जेफ्रीज़
- ▶ Uses **STR** markers unique to each person
STR
- ▶ **Mitochondrial DNA** – passes from mother
माइटोकॉन्ड्रियल

6 India link | भारत संबंध



- ▶ **CDFD Hyderabad** – India's DNA fingerprinting centre
CDFD
- ▶ Father of Indian DNA fingerprinting: **Lalji Singh**
लालजी सिंह
- ▶ **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022**
2022 अधिनियम

Syria's first DNA identifications — in depth (2/2)

सीरिया में DNA पहचान — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How remains are identified | पहचान की प्रक्रिया



**Recover
remains**
अवशेष

Bone, teeth
हड्डी, दाँत



Extract DNA
DNA निकालें

Lab
प्रयोगशाला



Family swabs
परिवार के नमूने

Reference
संदर्भ



Match
मिलान

Identity confirmed
पहचान

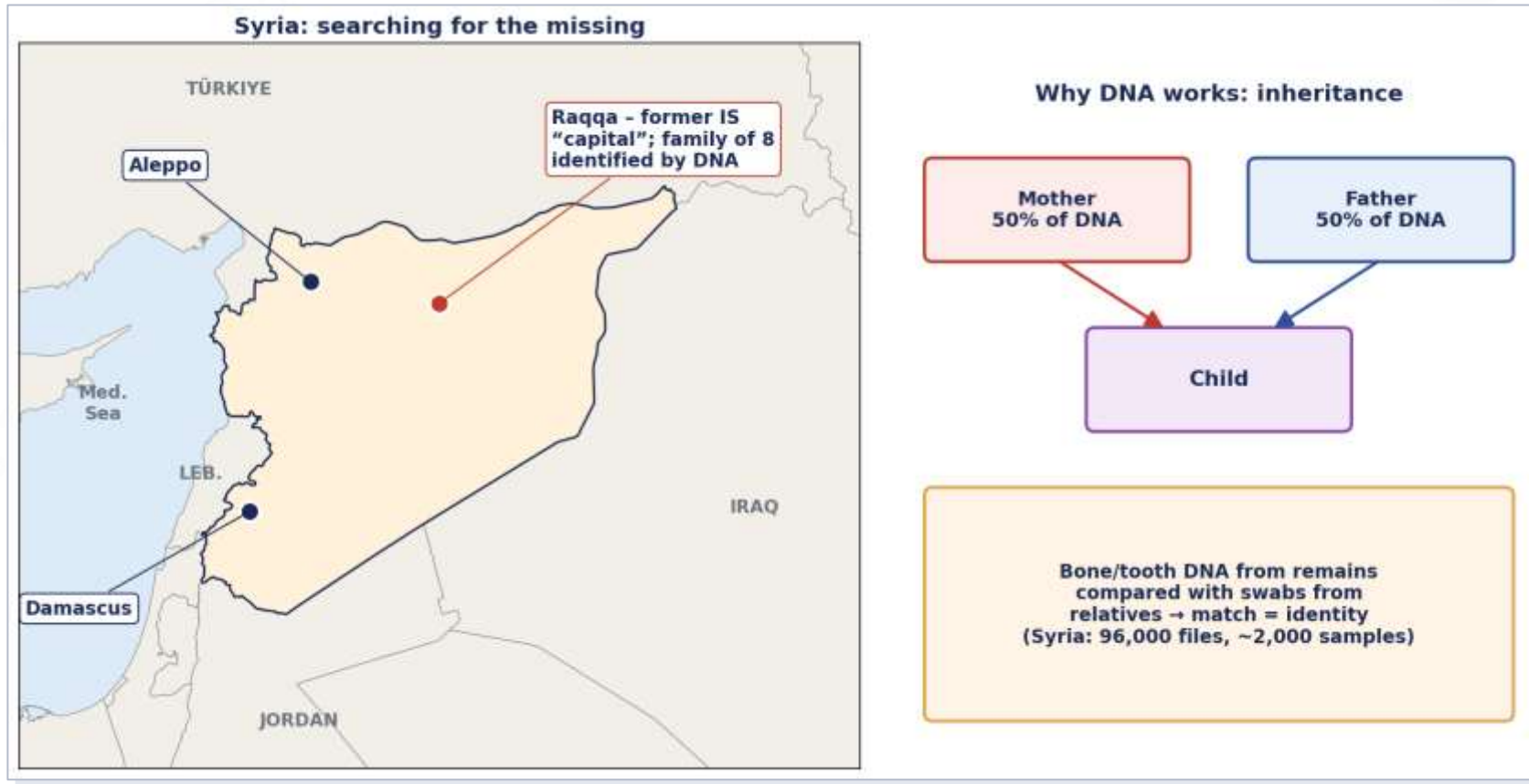
8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



- ▶ Humans share about **99.9%** of their DNA with each other
99.9% समान
- ▶ DNA's double-helix structure: **Watson & Crick (1953)**
1953

Syria's first DNA identifications — Map & Diagram

सीरिया में DNA पहचान — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual
चित्र को समझें

- **Raqqa** – family of 8 identified
रक्का
- Child gets **50% DNA** from each parent
50-50
- Remains matched to **relatives' swabs**
रिश्तेदारों से मिलान
- **96,000 files, ~2,000 samples** so far
नमूने

2

How Army treats adultery, despite decriminalisation

By Anand Singh/Mumbai

Despite the Supreme Court's decision to decriminalise adultery in 2018, the Indian Army continues to treat it as a crime. This is because the Army is governed by its own set of rules, which are not subject to the same legal scrutiny as civilian laws.

The Army's stance on adultery is rooted in its historical role as a disciplined force. It is seen as a way to maintain the integrity and morale of the troops.

The Army's stance on adultery is also a reflection of its unique position as a state within a state. It has its own laws, courts, and disciplinary mechanisms.

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1

The economic mess at the heart of France's protests



By [Name]

The economic situation in France is a complex one, with high unemployment, inflation, and a loss of confidence in the government. This has led to widespread protests and a sense of despair among the population.

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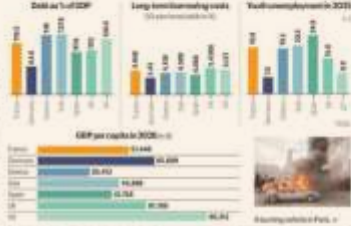
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KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS: HOW FRANCE MATCHES UP TO ITS PEERS



The chart shows that France's economic indicators are generally worse than its peers. It has a lower GDP per capita, a higher unemployment rate, and a higher inflation rate.

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Weak growth, high debt, joblessness and a welfare state that is not working out for the young. France's problems are many and solutions are not easy.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS • 21 OCT 2026

Page 11 • Explained

पृष्ठ 11 • व्याख्या

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

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France's economic mess | फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था

2

Army & adultery | सेना व व्यभिचार

3

Japan's Phobos mission | फ़ोबोस मिशन

Kullu's distinctive Dussehra: A congregation of deities that starts on Vijayadashami

By [Name]

The Dussehra festival in Kullu is a unique one, with a long history and a rich tradition. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion by the people of the region.

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The economic mess behind France's protests

फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था

• ECONOMICS

The economic mess at the heart of France's protests

Weak growth, high debt, joblessness and a welfare state that is not working out for the young: France's problems are many and solutions are not easy

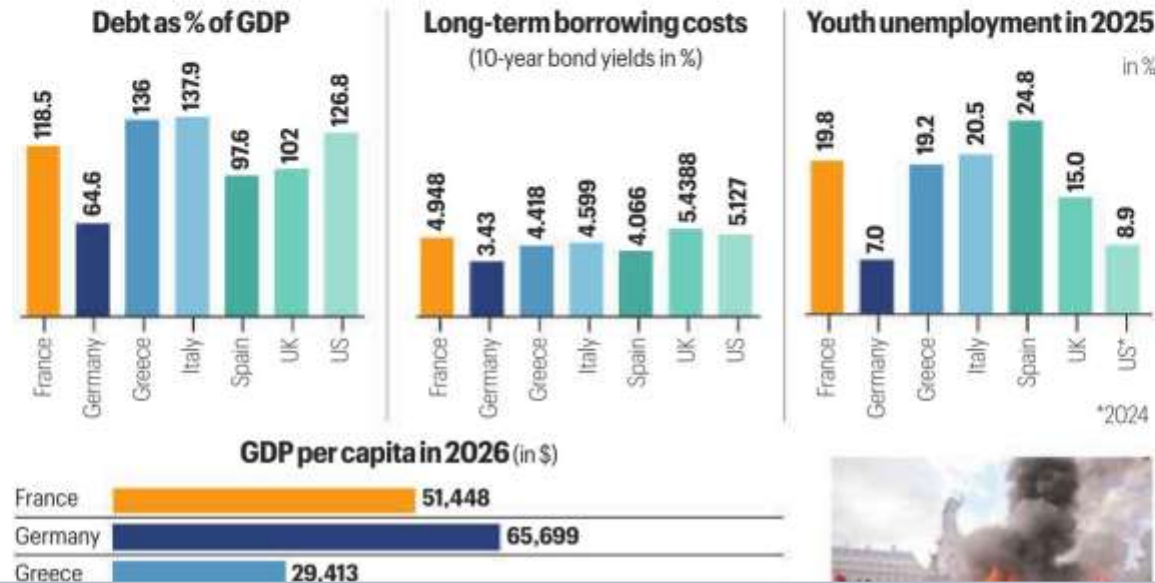


UDIT MISRA

FRANCE, EUROPE'S second largest economy and one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, is burning after violent protesters unleashed some of the worst episodes of vandalism in French history.

President Emmanuel Macron, who seemed to have been taken by surprise, condemned the violence, and urged calm and order. Official figures suggest that more than 5,00,00 mostly young demonstrators took to streets — unofficially estimates go up to 8,00,000 — with thousands arrested.

• KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS: HOW FRANCE MATCHES UP TO ITS PEERS



Greece and Italy that were until a decade ago, the real problem economies.

Now France, instead of being a large, stable economy in Europe, is fast heading towards a possible debt crisis of its own. That's because its borrowing costs are spiking just as its overall debt has reached uncomfortable levels. As a result, the government has to now shell out more and more money each year from its budget just to pay the interest on past loans.

It is also noteworthy that investors are taking into account the political instability in France (reflected in the rising bond yields). President Macron is becoming increasingly ineffective, and most future presidential candidates are deeply polarising figures. Political instability is a tell-tale sign that the reforms needed to course-correct may not happen in a hurry.

A difficult solution

The charred remains of town halls,



The economic mess behind France's protests

फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था

arrested.

The protests that started more than a month ago with students demanding better conditions in schools have morphed into bigger calls for better living conditions.

To be sure, street protests, often violent, happen regularly enough to be viewed more as a feature of the French Republic than a bug. It is noteworthy that this is the case even though France has one of the most centralised governments anywhere in the world, with the national government holding much of the power.

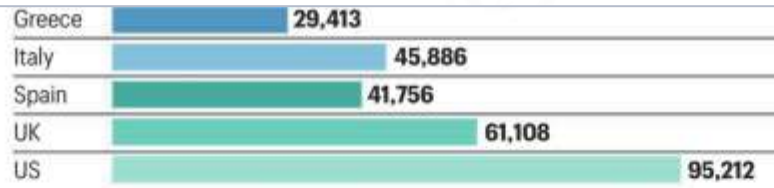
The scale of the violence, however, has left both policymakers and observers around the world stunned. What's more, with the next presidential elections just six months away, and a country that looks deeply divided between far-right and far-left political views, the apprehension is that these protests and violence may happen again.

There are two ways to look at this crisis in France.

The people's concerns

From the perspective of the protestors, there are concerns about the high cost of living, which is, in turn, a shorthand for the combined effect of high and persistent inflation, high unemployment, inadequate wage increase, and insufficient support from the government for the welfare state.

Data from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)



SOURCE: OECD, IMF, INVESTING.COM, INDIAN EXPRESS RESEARCH

shows that while inflation hasn't been as high in France as it has been among its peers — Germany, Spain, UK, Italy, Greece and the US — it is the weak economic growth and high unemployment that have been the real causes of worry.

The IMF just revised downwards the growth rates for 2026 and 2027 to as low as 0.4% and 0.7% respectively.

More broadly, France's growth rate completely faltered since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, and this has had its impact on per capita incomes. In 2008, for instance, France's per capita GDP was \$45,754. In 2026, it is \$51,448. That's an average annual increase in incomes of less than even 1% each year over the last 18 years. It is unsurprising that the public will grow restless and demand more state support.

The other side of weak growth is high unemployment. Overall unemployment is around 8% but among the youth it shoots up to almost 20%. The picture is even more bleak among migrants coming from Africa. Data on wages also paints a similar picture with France lagging behind its peers.

The central problem

Over the decades, the French have got used to an expansive welfare state.

But since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, France's growth has not kept pace with its ambitions of welfare.



A burning vehicle in Paris. AP

The government's concerns

From the perspective of the government, the picture is equally dire but the variables are different. The French government has been borrowing more and more each passing year — the fiscal deficit this year is pegged at 5.4% of the GDP — thus adding to a growing mountain of debt. Total debt as a percentage of GDP is now more than 118%.

Making matters worse is a stagnant economy. Thanks to a lack of growth, the French government does not have enough tax revenues to support the welfare demands of the public. That, in turn, forces it to borrow more. As things stand, the French government is already the overwhelming player in the French economy, accounting for about 57% of the GDP.

Unsurprisingly, investors are demanding a higher rate of return for lending money to the French government. The yields on 10-year bonds by the French government are now close to the 5% mark. Not only is this much higher than the recent past, it is also higher than many European peers such as

The charred remains of town halls, looted high-street shops and images of police cracking down may suggest an economy performing far worse than what the data shows. As things stand, France is still not where Greece or Italy were during the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis in the early 2010s. However, it will be there if it doesn't take corrective action.

The central problem is this: Over the decades, the French have got used to an expansive welfare state, but since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, France's growth has not kept pace with its ambitions of welfare.

Given its inability to grow fast, France needs a two-pronged approach. One, reform its economy to unleash a new wave of growth. A government-dominated economy is not delivering growth at the moment.

Two, cut down on excessive expenditure. For instance, thanks to the welfare guarantees on health and pensions as well as the demographic change (read ageing), France is looking at a scenario where a growing number of old will be dependent on the taxes levied on a relatively smaller number of young workers. Efforts to raise the retirement age — thus saving the outgo on pensions — have been thwarted.

In short, France has to figure out a way to grow fast to avoid a debt crisis, and while it tries to do that, it must control welfare expenses. Otherwise, it is set to receive more rude shocks.

The Economic Mess at the Heart of France's Protests

कमज़ोर वृद्धि, भारी कर्ज़, बेरोज़गारी और युवाओं के लिए काम न करने वाला कल्याणकारी राज्य – फ़्रांस के विरोध प्रदर्शनों की आर्थिक जड़ें



Explained
व्याख्या

1

Key numbers | प्रमुख
आँकड़े



>118%

Debt-to-GDP
कर्ज़/GDP

5.4%

Fiscal deficit
राजकोषीय घाटा

~20%

Youth
unemployment
युवा बेरोज़गारी

0.4%

IMF growth
2026
वृद्धि

2

People's concerns
जनता की चिंता



► High **cost of living**, weak
wage growth

महँगाई

► Per-capita income grew
<1%/yr for 18 yrs

आय वृद्धि

► Unemployment worst
among **migrants**

प्रवासी

3

Govt's concerns
सरकार की चिंता



► State = ~57% of GDP
57% GDP

► Bond yields near 5%
बॉन्ड यील्ड

► **Ageing** – pension
reform thwarted

वृद्ध आबादी

The economic mess behind France's protests — in depth (1/2)

फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 France vs peers | तुलना

Country देश	GDP per capita 2026
U.S. अमेरिका	\$95,212
Germany जर्मनी	\$65,699
UK ब्रिटेन	\$61,108
France फ्रांस	\$51,448

5 Key terms | शब्दावली

- ▶ **Welfare state** – govt-funded health, pension, jobless aid
कल्याणकारी राज्य
- ▶ **Bond yield** – return lenders demand
बॉन्ड प्रतिफल
- ▶ **Sovereign debt crisis** – Greece/Italy, early 2010s
संप्रभु ऋण संकट

6 Two-pronged fix | समाधान

- ▶ **Reform** to unleash growth
सुधार
- ▶ **Cut** excessive welfare spending
खर्च कटौती
- ▶ Hard with polls 6 months away
चुनाव निकट

The economic mess behind France's protests — in depth (2/2)

फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 EU fiscal rules | EU राजकोषीय नियम



Maastricht
1992
मास्ट्रिख्ट

Euro created
यूरो



Deficit $\leq$ 3%
घाटा

Of GDP
GDP का



Debt $\leq$ 60%
कर्ज़

Of GDP
GDP का



France
breaches
उल्लंघन

5.4% / 118%
दोनों

8

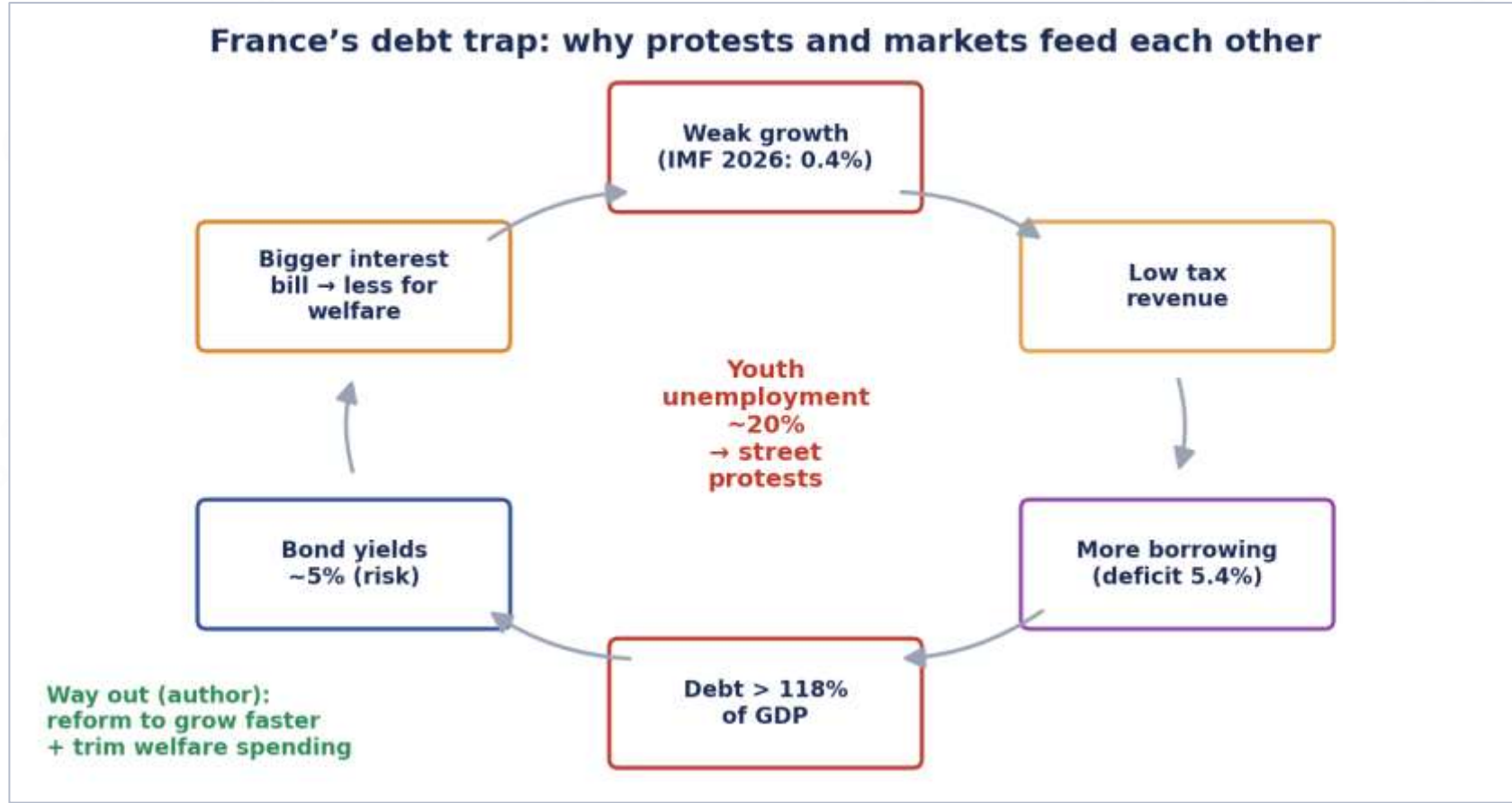
Did you know?
क्या आप जानते हैं?



- ▶ France is a **P5** member of the UN Security Council
P5
- ▶ 20 of 27 EU members use the **euro**
यूरोज़ोन

The economic mess behind France's protests — Map & Diagram

फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual
चित्र को समझें

- **Weak growth** → low tax → more borrowing
कमज़ोर वृद्धि
- Debt > **118%** of GDP; deficit **5.4%**
कर्ज़
- Yields ~**5%** → bigger interest bill
ब्याज
- Youth jobless ~**20%** → protests
युवा बेरोज़गारी

How the Army treats adultery

सेना और व्यभिचार

 @ieExplained
 #ExpressExplained
 If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

• LEGAL

How Army treats adultery, despite decriminalisation

Man Aman Singh Chhina
Chandigarh, October 20

AN ARMY Major was recently issued a show-cause notice for dismissal from service on grounds of extramarital affairs with multiple women. Though decriminalised by the Supreme Court, adultery remains a punishable offence in the Army.

What is the case?
An officer of the Armoured Corps approached the Principal Bench of the Armed Forces Tribunal, New Delhi, challenging a show-cause notice dated August 10, issued by the Chief of the Army, the notice asks why his services should not be terminated administratively on the ground that trial by court-martial is "inexpedient due to attendant circumstances."

The proceedings arise from allegations of extramarital affairs, including with the wives of two officers. The notice was issued under the Army Rules of 1954, which flow from the Army Act of 1950. Army Rule 19, read with Army Rule 14, governs the administrative termination of an Army officer over misconduct without a court-martial.

A court-martial is a formal military trial under the Army Act that can result in conviction and punishments such as dismissal, while administrative termination under Section 19 of the Army Act is a separate route. It can be used when the competent authority is satisfied that trial by court-martial is inexpedient and retaining the officer is undesirable, after giving a show-cause opportunity.

Commissioned in 2015, the officer got married in 2022. In 2023, his wife filed a complaint alleging adultery, substance abuse, neglect, and extramarital affairs with four women. The Army's Western Command convened a Court of Inquiry to examine allegations of "stealing affec-

Court of Inquiry to examine allegations of "stealing affection of brother officers' wives" and "misconduct/conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman."

A tentative charge sheet was framed under the Army Act, dealing with unbecoming conduct and violation of good order and military discipline. In 2026, the couple divorced and in the compromise memo, the woman withdrew the complaint, stating it was filed unintentionally due to matrimonial disputes and without undeniable grounds. Despite this, the termination notice was issued.

SEPARATE AFFAIRS

- In *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court struck down IPC Section 497, decriminalising adultery.
- In a 2023 clarification, a five-judge Constitution Bench held that the judgment does not affect the Armed Forces Acts.

Is adultery a crime in the Army?
Yes. In *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court struck down Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, decriminalising adultery. However, in a 2023 clarification, a five-judge Constitution Bench held that the judgment does not affect the Armed Forces Acts.

Under Article 33 of the Indian Constitution, members of the armed forces form a distinct class, and laws may restrict fundamental rights to preserve discipline. Sections 45 (conduct unbecoming of an officer and the character expected of him) and 63 (any act or omission prejudicial to good order and military discipline) of the Army Act and corresponding provisions in the Navy and Air Force Acts continue to apply to promiscuous or adulterous conduct that affects unit cohesion or discipline.

"Stealing the affection of a brother officer's wife" is the traditional military description of such misconduct and remains actionable under these provisions. The term now also includes 'spouse' for women officers.

Remedies available to officers include an appeal to the Armed Forces Tribunal under the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007. The tribunal can re-appreciate evidence and set aside findings that are legally unsustainable, involve a wrong decision on law, or result from material irregularity causing miscarriage of justice.

In the aforementioned case, the officer's defence rests on alleged procedural illegalities, non-compliance with mandatory Army Rules, and changed circumstances after the withdrawal of the complaint.

For administrative matters such as a show-cause notice, the original jurisdiction lies with the tribunal. Further appeal can be led from the AFT to the Supreme Court on a point of law of general public importance (with leave), or by special leave under Article 136 of the Constitution.

How Army Treats Adultery, despite Decriminalisation

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने 2018 में व्यभिचार को अपराध से बाहर किया, पर सेना में यह अब भी दंडनीय “अनुचित आचरण” – एक मेजर को बर्खास्तगी का कारण-बताओ नोटिस



Military discipline
सैन्य अनुशासन

1 The case | मामला

- ▶ Army **Major** issued show-cause notice
मेजर
- ▶ Allegations: affairs incl. **officers' wives**
आरोप
- ▶ Challenged before **Armed Forces Tribunal**
AFT

2 Two routes | दो रास्ते

Court-martial कोर्ट मार्शल	Administrative प्रशासनिक
Formal military trial मुक़दमा	Sec 19, Army Act धारा 19
Conviction, dismissal सज़ा	When trial “inexpedient” अनुचित
Army Act 1950 1950	Rules 14 & 19 (1954) नियम

3 Charges used | आरोप

- ▶ **Sec 45** – conduct unbecoming an officer
धारा 45
- ▶ **Sec 63** – prejudicial to good order
धारा 63
- ▶ “Stealing affection of brother officer’s **wife/spouse**”
परंपरागत

How the Army treats adultery — in depth (1/2)

सेना और व्यभिचार — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

Joseph Shine (2018)
जोसेफ़ शाइन



► 5-judge bench struck down **IPC Sec 497**
धारा 497

► Treated women as **husband's property** – violated **Art 14, 15, 21**
अनु. 14, 15, 21

► Adultery still a ground for **divorce**
तलाक़ का आधार

5

Article 33 | अनुच्छेद 33



► Parliament can **restrict/abrogate** FRs of forces

मौलिक अधिकार सीमित

► Covers armed forces, police, intelligence
सेना, पुलिस

► Aim: **discipline & duty**
अनुशासन

6

Remedies | उपचार



► **Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007**
AFT 2007

► Then **Supreme Court** – leave or Art 136 SLP
अनु. 136

► 2026: couple divorced; **complaint withdrawn**
शिकायत वापस

How the Army treats adultery — in depth (2/2)

सेना और व्यभिचार — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How the case has moved | मामले का क्रम



Wife's
complaint
2023

शिकायत
Adultery etc.
आरोप



Court of
Inquiry
जाँच

Western
Command
पश्चिमी कमान



Show-cause
नोटिस

Aug 10
10 अगस्त



AFT challenge
AFT

Procedural pleas
प्रक्रिया

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Adultery was a crime in India for **158 years** (1860–2018)

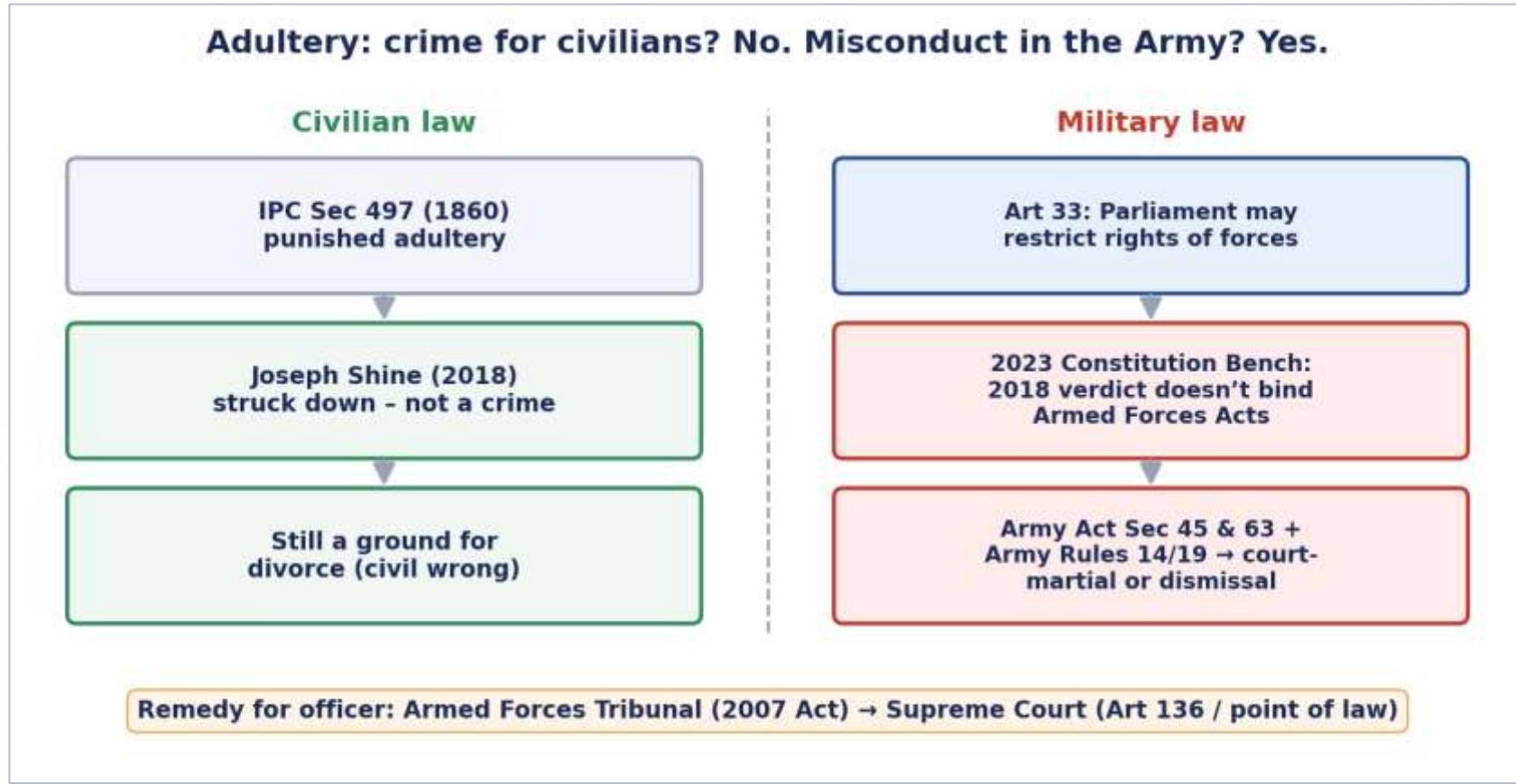
158 वर्ष

► The term now uses “**spouse**” to cover **women officers**

महिला अधिकारी

How the Army treats adultery — Map & Diagram

सेना और व्यभिचार — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual
चित्र को समझें

► **Joseph Shine (2018)** – adultery not a crime

जोसेफ़ शाइन

► **2023** – ruling doesn't bind **Armed Forces Acts**

2023 स्पष्टीकरण

► **Art 33** – rights of forces can be restricted

अनु. 33

► Remedy: **AFT** → **Supreme Court**

AFT

Japan's mission to Phobos

फ़ोबोस मिशन

• SCIENCE

A piece of Mars's moon: Why Japan has sent a mission to Phobos

Arav Shah

New Delhi, October 20

THE JAPAN Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on Tuesday launched a rocket towards Mars at 1:11 am IST.

The mission, termed Martian Moons Exploration (MMX), aims to study the origin of the Martian moons Phobos and Deimos — named after the sons of the Greek god of war, Ares, who is better recognised by his Roman name, Mars. The mission aims to retrieve at least 10 grams of physical samples from Phobos and return them to Earth by 2031. Should the mission be successful, Japan will be the first country to return samples from a moon of Mars. But why is the mission interested in exploring the moons instead of the red planet itself?

First, why do scientists want to study the moons of Mars?

Phobos and Deimos were first discovered by the American astronomer Asaph Hall in 1877. These two moons have held the interest of the scientific community because their origins are not yet discovered. There are, however, two theories, according to NASA.

The first explanation proposes that both moons are relics of asteroids that were cap-

tured by the gravitational pull of the planet. The irregular shapes of the two, combined with certain surface characteristics, make this theory a possibility. But capturing asteroids into stable orbit around a planet is no simple task. Scientists are also yet to establish whether it explains the movement of both moons and their other characteristics.

The other working theory states that both moons were formed due to a collision of a large celestial body or asteroid into Mars. As debris was ejected into the planet's orbit, it came together over time to form both moons. Should this explanation turn out to be correct, the composition of the moons may reveal clues about Mars itself.

Mars' gravity makes landing on the planet and returning samples a challenge. Phobos, however, has much weaker gravity.

How is the mission expected to proceed?

The spacecraft is scheduled to reach Mars around August 2027 and return in 2031. Following its arrival near Mars, it shall enter quasi-satellite orbit around Phobos. This will allow it to remain close to the moon while conducting observations of its topography and chemical composition. These details shall also help scientists determine a suitable landing spot.

Mission specs

- The MMX mission is carrying 13 scientific instruments, including cameras, spectrometers and devices to measure the surface and composition of the Martian moon Phobos.

- One of its key components is the IDEFIX rover, developed jointly by CNES (France) and the DLR (Germany). The main craft will deploy the rover on Phobos before it lands.



The Japanese rocket carrying the MMX mission takes off Tuesday. AP

The spacecraft is made up of three main modules — propulsion, exploration (a rover) and sample return — which will support the journey to Mars, surface operations and eventual return to Earth. The mission also plans to observe Deimos during a flyby. MMX will test technologies needed for future round-trip missions to the Martian system, including autonomous navigation and landing in extremely weak gravity.

Why does it matter?

The MMX mission comes at a time when major space powers are looking to develop

their capabilities for planetary exploration. Importantly, the mission shall help assess whether Phobos may be able to serve as a staging point for crewed missions to Mars. Its weak gravity means that landing and taking off from the moon requires a fraction of the fuel needed for a descent on Mars.

The MMX mission and its agenda are "essentially an exercise in leadership, technology autonomy and improving space cooperation between nations", Ashwin Prasad Rao, Staff Research Analyst at Takshashila Institution, told *The Indian Express*.

Although largely headed by JAXA, the mission also includes the European Space Agency, NASA, CNES (France), DLR (Germany), and the Australian Space Agency. The allows nations to share the cost of innovation while advancing shared goals. In fact, NASA's Mars sample-return mission — aimed at bringing back surface soil deposits from the planet — was scrapped earlier this year by US Congressional budget action which dictates federal spending.

Japan is, "climbing a ladder that helps position the nation as one of the leaders in planetary exploration," Rao said. "It (Japan) is already known for expertise in sample-return missions. It is now signalling that it is one of the scientific great powers which belongs at the proverbial table".

A Piece of Mars's Moon: Why Japan Has Sent a Mission to Phobos

जापानी अंतरिक्ष एजेंसी JAXA का MMX मिशन मंगल के चंद्रमा फ़ोबोस से नमूने लाएगा – सफल होने पर जापान ऐसा करने वाला पहला देश; 2031 में पृथ्वी पर वापसी



JAXA – MMX

1 The mission | मिशन

MMX

Martian Moons
eXploration
नाम

≥10 g

Phobos
samples
नमूने

2027

Reaches Mars
मंगल पहुँच

2031

Back on Earth
वापसी

2 Why Phobos | फ़ोबोस क्यों

- ▶ Origin of Mars's moons still **unknown**
अज्ञात उत्पत्ति
- ▶ **Weak gravity** → easier landing & take-off
कम गुरुत्व
- ▶ Could be a **staging point** for crewed Mars trips
मानव मिशन

3 Two theories | दो सिद्धांत

Theory सिद्धांत	Idea विचार
Captured asteroid क्षुद्रग्रह	Pulled in by Mars's gravity गुरुत्व
Giant impact टक्कर	Debris from a collision मलबा

Japan's mission to Phobos — in depth (1/2)

फ़ोबोस मिशन — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 Partners | साझेदार



- ▶ **JAXA** leads; **NASA**, **ESA** join
JAXA
- ▶ **IDEFIX** rover – CNES (France) + DLR (Germany)
IDEFIX
- ▶ **13** scientific instruments
13 उपकरण

5 Moons of Mars मंगल के चंद्रमा



- ▶ Found by **Asaph Hall**, **1877**
1877
- ▶ Named after sons of **Ares** – Fear & Dread
ग्रीक देवता
- ▶ Phobos is slowly **spiralling inward**
धीरे पास आ रहा

6 Sample-return race नमूना वापसी



- ▶ Japan: **Hayabusa**, **Hayabusa2** (asteroids)
हायाबुसा
- ▶ **NASA Mars Sample Return** – scrapped
रद्द
- ▶ India: **Mangalyaan** (**2013**) – first Asian nation to Mars orbit
मंगलयान

Japan's mission to Phobos — in depth (2/2)

फ़ोबोस मिशन — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 What a quasi-satellite orbit means | अर्ध-उपग्रह कक्षा



Arrive at Mars
मंगल पहुँच

Aug 2027
अगस्त 2027



Circle near Phobos
फ़ोबोस के पास

Not true orbit
अर्ध-कक्षा



Map surface
मानचित्रण

Choose landing
site
स्थल चयन



Grab sample
नमूना

Return 2031
वापसी

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



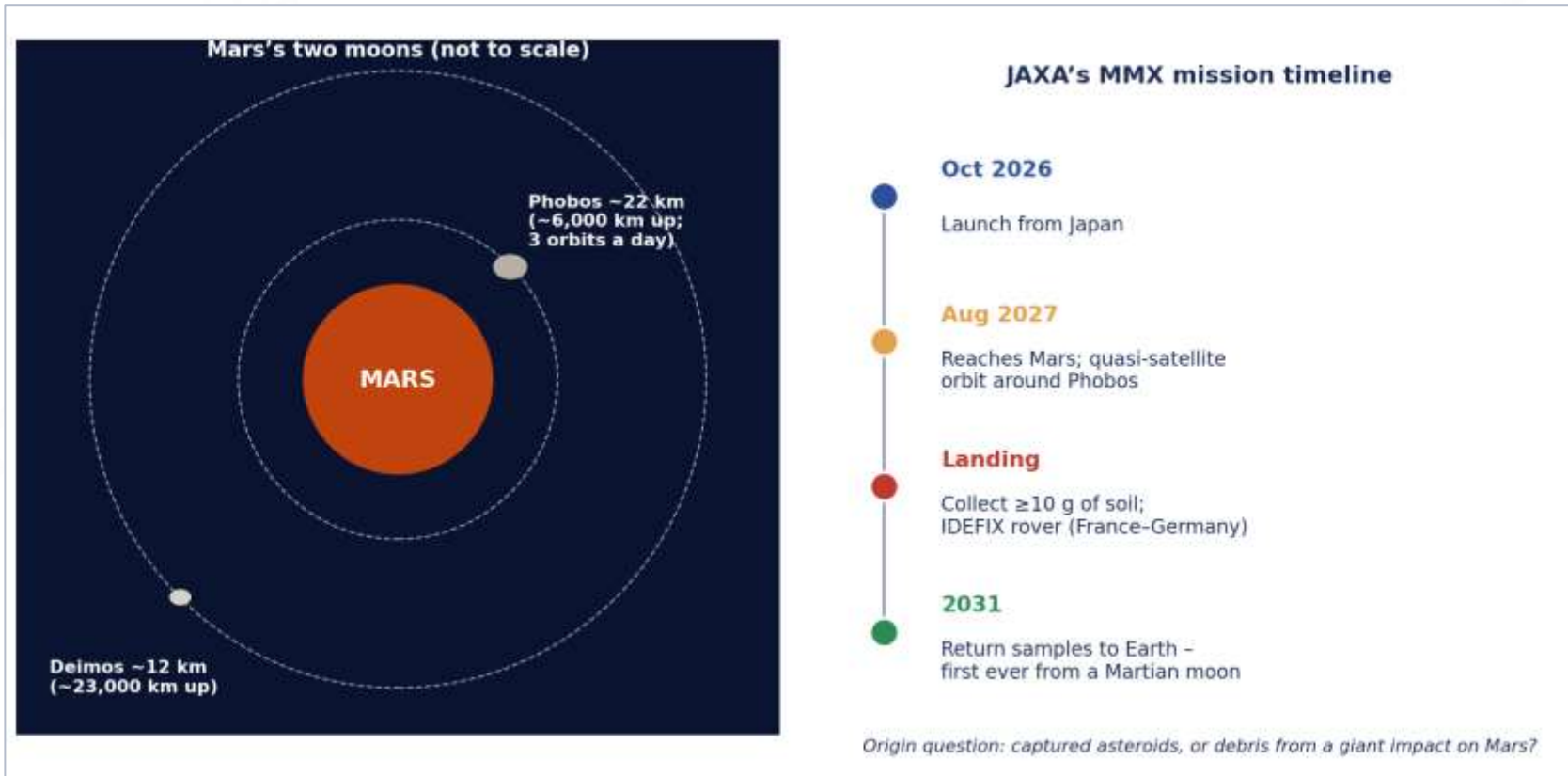
► Phobos orbits Mars **3 times a day** – faster than Mars spins

दिन में 3 बार

► Mars is called the “**Red Planet**” due to **iron oxide**
लौह ऑक्साइड

Japan's mission to Phobos — Map & Diagram

फ़ोबोस मिशन — मानचित्र व आरेख



Read the visual
चित्र को समझें

- **Phobos** (~22 km), **Deimos** (~12 km)
फ़ोबोस, डीमोस
- Launch **Oct 2026**; Mars **Aug 2027**
प्रक्षेपण
- Collect ≥ 10 g; return **2031**
2031 वापसी
- Origin: **captured asteroids** or **impact debris**?
उत्पत्ति

Asked in Exams — guess the answer! | पहले स्वयं उत्तर सोचें

RRB NTPC 2025 (UG) CBT-2

Exam date: 17 Sep 2026 (Shift 1) • Topic: Ladakh – Union Territory

When did Ladakh become a union territory of India?

- (a) 2020
- (b) 2019
- (c) 2021
- (d) 2017

SSC CHSL 2025 Tier 1

Exam date: 21 Nov 2025 (Shift 1) • Topic: Mars missions

The Mars Orbiter Mission of India was launched in ____.

- (a) 2006
- (b) 2009
- (c) 2013
- (d) 2019

Answers & Explanation | उत्तर व व्याख्या

RRB NTPC 2025 (UG) CBT-2

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- (a) 2020
- (b) 2019**
- (c) 2021
- (d) 2017

Answer: (b) J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 – from 31 Oct 2019.
2019I

SSC CHSL 2025 Tier 1

Exam date: 21 Nov 2025 (Shift 1) • Topic: Mars missions

The Mars Orbiter Mission of India was launched in

_____.

- (a) 2006
- (b) 2009
- (c) 2013**
- (d) 2019

Answer: (c) Launched 5 Nov 2013; reached Mars orbit 2014.
2013I

Test Yourself — Q1–4 | स्वयं को परखें

Q1

Which country is a founding member of OPEC and holds the world's largest proven oil reserves?

OPEC का संस्थापक सदस्य और सबसे बड़े सिद्ध तेल भंडार वाला देश:

- (a) Saudi Arabia
- (b) Venezuela
- (c) Iran
- (d) Nigeria

Q2

I2U2 grouping comprises India, the U.S. and:

I2U2 समूह में भारत, अमेरिका और:

- (a) Iran and UAE
- (b) Israel and UAE
- (c) Israel and Indonesia
- (d) Italy and UK

Q3

Under which Article does the President make regulations for certain Union Territories?

किस अनुच्छेद के तहत राष्ट्रपति कुछ UT के लिए विनियम बनाते हैं?

- (a) Article 239A
- (b) Article 240
- (c) Article 244
- (d) Article 371

Q4

The Sixth Schedule applies to tribal areas of:

छठी अनुसूची किन राज्यों के जनजातीय क्षेत्रों पर लागू?

- (a) Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram
- (b) All NE states
- (c) Jharkhand and Odisha
- (d) Ladakh and Sikkim

Test Yourself — Q5–8 | स्वयं को परखें

Q5 Hambantota port, leased to a Chinese firm for 99 years, is in:
हंबनटोटा बंदरगाह कहाँ है?

- (a) Myanmar
- (b) Pakistan
- (c) Sri Lanka
- (d) Bangladesh

Q6 DNA fingerprinting technique was developed by:
DNA फिंगरप्रिंटिंग तकनीक किसने विकसित की?

- (a) Watson and Crick
- (b) Alec Jeffreys
- (c) Kary Mullis
- (d) Lalji Singh

Q7 Under the Maastricht criteria, EU members' fiscal deficit should not exceed:
मास्ट्रिख्ट मानदंड में राजकोषीय घाटे की सीमा:

- (a) 1% of GDP
- (b) 3% of GDP
- (c) 5% of GDP
- (d) 60% of GDP

Q8 Which case decriminalised adultery by striking down IPC Section 497?
किस मामले में IPC धारा 497 रद्द हुई?

- (a) Navtej Johar
- (b) Joseph Shine
- (c) Shayara Bano
- (d) K.S. Puttaswamy

Test Yourself — Q9–10 | स्वयं को परखें

Q9

Article 33 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to:

अनुच्छेद 33 संसद को अधिकार देता है:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (a) Create new states | (b) Restrict fundamental rights of armed forces |
| (c) Impose President's Rule | (d) Amend the Constitution |

Q10

Phobos and Deimos are natural satellites of:

फ़ोबोस और डीमोस किसके उपग्रह हैं?

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| (a) Jupiter | (b) Mars |
| (c) Saturn | (d) Neptune |

Answer Key — Q1–5 | उत्तर व व्याख्या

1-b **Venezuela** — Venezuela; OPEC founded 1960.
वेनेजुएला।

2-b **Israel and UAE** — Formed 2021.
इज़राइल और UAE।

3-b **Article 240** — Art 240.
अनुच्छेद 240।

4-a **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram** — Art 244(2).
असम, मेघालय, त्रिपुरा, मिज़ोरम।

5-c **Sri Lanka** — Leased in 2017.
श्रीलंका।

Answer Key — Q6–10 | उत्तर व व्याख्या

6-b **Alec Jeffreys** — 1984, UK; Lalji Singh pioneered it in India.
एलेक जेफ्रीज़।

7-b **3% of GDP** — Debt limit 60%.
GDP का 3%।

8-b **Joseph Shine** — 2018.
जोसेफ़ शाइन।

9-b **Restrict fundamental rights of armed forces** — For discipline.
सशस्त्र बलों के मौलिक अधिकार सीमित करने का।

10-b **Mars** — Discovered 1877.
मंगल।

Myth Buster of the Day — Law | आज का मिथक



MYTH | मिथक

“If adultery is no longer a crime, it cannot be punished anywhere.”

व्यभिचार अपराध नहीं रहा, तो इसकी कहीं सज़ा नहीं हो सकती।



FACT | तथ्य

False. In Joseph Shine (2018) the Supreme Court only removed adultery from criminal law (IPC Sec 497) for civilians. It is still a valid ground for divorce. And in 2023 a Constitution Bench clarified that the ruling does not affect the Army, Navy and Air Force Acts – under Article 33, Parliament can restrict rights of the armed forces for discipline, so an officer can still face court-martial or dismissal.

ग़लत। जोसेफ़ शाइन (2018) में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने केवल नागरिकों के लिए व्यभिचार को आपराधिक क़ानून (IPC धारा 497) से हटाया। यह अब भी तलाक़ का वैध आधार है। 2023 में संविधान पीठ ने स्पष्ट किया कि यह फैसला सेना, नौसेना और वायुसेना अधिनियमों पर लागू नहीं – अनुच्छेद 33 के तहत संसद अनुशासन के लिए सशस्त्र बलों के अधिकार सीमित कर सकती है, इसलिए अधिकारी को कोर्ट-मार्शल या बर्खास्तगी का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।



Not a crime ≠ no consequences. अपराध नहीं ≠ कोई परिणाम नहीं।

BATCH B3

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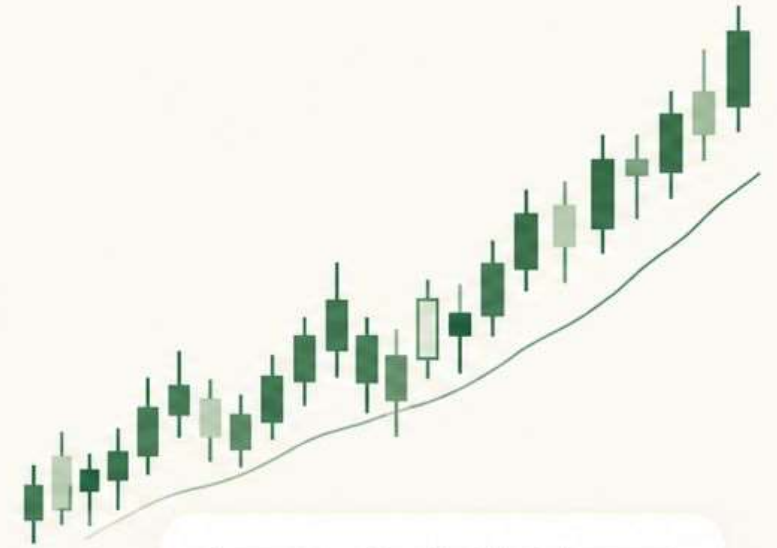
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Thank you ?

