



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Bactrian Camel

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In News: Two **Bactrian camels**, *Galwan* and *Nubra*, will feature in the **Republic Day Parade 2026** as part of the **Indian Army's Animal Contingent**, showcasing **Ladakh's cold-desert ecology and cultural heritage**.

Republic Day 2026 to Bactrian camels are found only at this location in India and have a 6,000-year link to Mongolia and
About Bactrian Camel

What is it?

- A **double-humped camel** adapted to **extreme cold and arid conditions** of **Central Asian cold deserts**.
- Unlike the single-humped dromedary camel, it is suited for **sub-zero temperatures**.

Distribution

India

- Found **only in Ladakh**, mainly in the **Nubra Valley**.
- Represents a **unique cold-desert livestock species** in India.

Global

- Mongolia, China, Kazakhstan, Other parts of Central Asia

Origin & History

1. Domesticated around **5,000–6,000 years ago** in **Central Asia**.
2. Named after **Bactria**, an ancient region covering parts of modern **Uzbekistan and West Kazakhstan**.
3. Historically crucial for **Silk Route trade**, transport, and survival in cold deserts.

Types & Conservation Status

Type

Scientific Name

IUCN Status

Wild Bactrian Camel

Camelus ferus

Critically Endangered

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Domestic Bactrian Camel

Camelus bactrianus

Not threatened

Key Adaptations & Characteristics

Physical Adaptations

1. **Two humps** store **fat (not water)** for energy during scarcity.
2. **Thick shaggy winter coat** protects against extreme cold; shed in summer.
3. **Broad, padded hooves** prevent sinking in sand and snow.

Physiological Adaptations

1. Can drink **up to ~35 gallons of water at once**.
2. Able to consume **saline water** unsafe for most animals.
3. Highly efficient metabolism conserves water and energy.

Feeding Adaptations

1. **Tough, leathery lips** allow feeding on:
 - Thorny shrubs
 - Bitter plants
 - Highly saline desert vegetation

Protection from Desert Conditions

1. Long eyelashes and a **third eyelid** protect eyes from sandstorms.
2. Closable nostrils prevent inhalation of sand and cold air.

Cultural & Strategic Importance (India)

1. Integral to **Ladakhi nomadic life and economy**.
2. Used historically and presently by the **Indian Army** for transport in high-altitude terrains.
3. Symbol of **cold-desert resilience and border heritage**.