

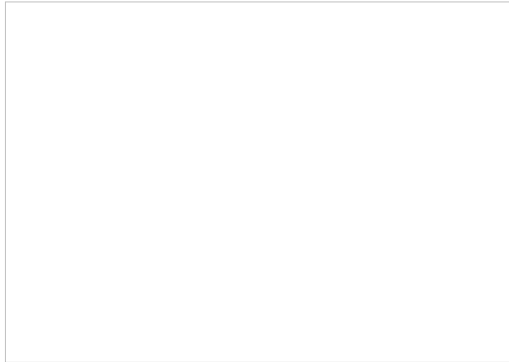


drishti

Underground Lake Found on Mars

 drishtias.com/printpdf/underground-lake-found-on-mars

Using a radar instrument on an orbiting spacecraft, scientists have spotted a sizable salt-laden lake under ice on the southern polar plain of Mars.



- It represents the first stable body of liquid water ever found on Mars.
- The body of water has been called a possible habitat for microbial life.
- The reservoir is roughly 20 km in diameter, shaped like a rounded triangle and located about 1.5 km beneath the ice surface.
- If confirmed, the buried pocket of water could answer a few questions about where Mars's ancient oceans went, as well as provide a resource for future human settlements.
- Moreover, such a feature may be an ideal habitat for extraterrestrial life-forms.
- However, the researchers have said, it could take years to verify whether something is actually living in this body of water that resembles a subglacial lake on Earth.

Note:

- The evidence comes from an instrument called MARSIS aboard the European Space Agency's Mars Express spacecraft in orbit around the Red Planet. MARSIS is a special kind of radar called ground-penetrating radar.
- Ground-penetrating radars use radio signals that are capable of penetrating into the ground and then get reflections from the material under the surface.
- Such radars are useful when searching for liquid water because water is a very strong radar reflector.