

Mexico's Presidential Elections

What is the issue?

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- Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), has been dominating the country's politics for almost a century.

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- But the upcoming presidential elections is likely to be an uphill battle for the party as defeat seems to be looming large.

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What is the political context in Mexico?

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- **Political Reality** - In recent years, Mexico has seen brisk economic growth, low inflation and a sharp fall in unemployment.

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- But despite these positive metrics, there has been a steady slide in the popularity of the corruption tainted government of President "Enrique Peña Nieto".

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- Opinion polls indicate massive support for radical left-wing opposition "National Regeneration Movement" led by "Andrés Manuel López Obrador".

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- **International Reasons** - The performance of Mexican Currency "Peso" (which has depreciated rapidly) is suspected to have aided the anti-incumbency wave.

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- Notably, President Nieto's rule saw heightened tensions of U.S. quitting the North American Free Trade Agreement due to President Trump's theatrics. \

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- **Domestic Reasons** - The fallout from the political mishandling of the mysterious disappearance of scores of children in 2014 has been severe.

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- Mr. Nieto's government has also been at the centre of a political storm

beginning with accusations that surfaced last year of illegal funding of his 2012 election.

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- The subsequent sacking of chief prosecutor involved in the investigations and denial of various alleged scams eroded the government's credibility.

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How is the current electoral battle proceeding?

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- **Defender** - Presidents are allowed just one term in Mexico.

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- Hence, the ruling PRI has designated José Antonio Meade (a minister in previous PRI governments) as its presidential candidate.

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- Notably, Mr. Meade is a technocrat who is independent of any party affiliations, a factor that could've propelled him into the race to circumvent anti-incumbency.

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- **Challenger** - The opposition presidential candidate "López Obrador" is a three-time contender for the presidency and former Mayor of Mexico City.

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- His rhetoric is low on substance, but it seems to be appealing to the masses, which at present seems largely disenchanted with the government.

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- In this context, the rising popularity of leftist forces has already started giving jitters to big corporate companies in the energy sector.

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- Irrespective of the outcome, if Mexico succeeds to make a political transition peacefully through the ballot, it will count as a big national achievement.

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Source: The Hindu

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