

# India sets November 5 for Mars mission launch

October 22 2013

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File pictures show scientists and engineers working on a Mars Orbiter vehicle at the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) satellite centre in Bangalore, southern India on September 11, 2013

Scientists on Tuesday set November 5 for the delayed launch of India's first mission to Mars, which was postponed due to problems in positioning a seaborne tracking system.

Blast-off for the unmanned Mars Orbiter Mission had to be rescheduled after the state-run Indian Space Agency Organisation (ISRO) said at the weekend that it would be unable to launch as expected on October 28.

Two Indian ships have been sent to Fiji in the Pacific Ocean to enable constant tracking of the rocket, but one of them has been late to arrive because of bad weather.

"The Mars Orbiter Mission has been rescheduled to November 5 and its spacecraft will be launched at 14:36 IST (Indian Standard Time) from Sriharikota spaceport," ISRO spokesman Deviprasad Karnik told AFP.

The 1.3-tonne Orbiter probe will be launched on a 350-tonne rocket from Sriharikota on the Bay of Bengal, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) northeast of Chennai.

The nine-month Mars mission was approved by the government and has a budget of 4.5 billion rupees (73 million dollars).

India says the [mission](#) will mark a significant step in its space programme, which has already placed a probe on the Moon and is a source of national pride in the country of 1.2 billion.

But the spending has also attracted criticism as the government struggles to tackle widespread poverty and massive infrastructure problems.

A host of countries have previously launched missions to Mars, including the United States, Russia, Japan and China.

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Citation: India sets November 5 for Mars mission launch (2013, October 22) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-india-november-mars-mission.html>

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