

India Mars mission back on track after engine glitch

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The PSLV-C25 rocket carrying the Mars Orbiter Spacecraft blasts off from the launch pad at Sriharikota on November 5, 2013

India's Mars spacecraft was "successfully" raised into a higher orbit around Earth early on Tuesday, after a brief engine failure during an earlier attempt, the space agency said.

The Mars Orbiter Mission, which blasted off on November 5 for a

11-month trip to the Red Planet, is being launched on its way via an unusual "slingshot" method for interplanetary journeys.

Lacking a large enough rocket to blast directly out of Earth's atmosphere and gravitational pull, the Indian spacecraft is orbiting Earth until the end of the month while building up enough velocity to break free.

On Tuesday, the spacecraft completed a fourth repositioning to take it 100,000 kilometres (62,000 miles) from Earth, after the thruster engines failed during an attempt on Monday, leading the auto-pilot to take over.

"Fourth supplementary orbit raising manoeuvre of Mars Orbiter Spacecraft... has been successfully completed," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement.

The first three manoeuvres, which involve firing additional fuel into the rocket's engine, were successfully performed last week.

The ISRO said the brief [engine failure](#) on Monday was not a setback to the ambitious low-cost mission.

India has never before attempted interplanetary travel and more than half of all missions to Mars have ended in failure, including China's in 2011 and Japan's in 2003.

The cost of the project, at 4.5 billion rupees (\$73 million), is less than a sixth of the \$455 million earmarked for a Mars probe by NASA which will launch later this month.

ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan has called the mission a "turning point" for India's space ambitions and one which would go on to prove its capabilities in rocket technology.

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