

# India counts down to launch of mission to Mars

November 5 2013, by Katy Daigle

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In this Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2013 photo, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel walk near the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV – C25) at the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota, in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. India is aiming to join the world's deep-space pioneers with a journey to Mars that it hopes will showcase its technological ability to explore the solar system while seeking solutions for everyday problems on Earth. (AP Photo/Arun Sankar K.)

India is counting down to the launch of its first journey to Mars, a

complex mission that it hopes will demonstrate and advance technologies for space travel.

Mangalyaan, which means "Mars craft" in Hindi, will ride a powerful rocket first into an [elliptical orbit](#) around Earth. There, it will perform a series of technical maneuvers and short burns to raise its orbit before it slingshots toward Mars.

The 1,350-kilogram (3,000-pound) orbiter must travel some 780 million kilometers (485 million miles) over 300 days to reach the red planet next September.

India is aiming to follow the Soviet Union, United States and Europe in having a successful visit to Mars.

"The biggest challenge will be precisely navigating the space craft to Mars," said K. Radhakrishnan, chairman of the Indian Space and Research Organization. The space agency will host a live Web cast of Tuesday's launch from the east-coast island of Shriharikota.

Radhakrishnan and his wife offered prayers Tuesday morning at a 200-year-old shrine to the Hindu god Vishnu, asking for success in the launch.



In this Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013 photo, Chairman of the Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO) K. Radhakrishnan speaks during an interview at his office in New Delhi, India. India is aiming to join the world's deep-space pioneers with a journey to Mars that it hopes will showcase its technological ability to travel our solar system while seeking solutions for everyday problems on Earth. (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

India defends its \$1 billion space program against naysayers who argue the money would be better spent stamping out widespread poverty and hunger by noting its importance in providing high-tech jobs for scientists and engineers and practical applications for solving problems on Earth.



In this Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2013 photo, Indian technicians inspect the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV – C25) at the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota, in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. India is aiming to join the world's deep-space pioneers with a journey to Mars that it hopes will showcase its technological ability to explore the solar system while seeking solutions for everyday problems on Earth. (AP Photo/Arun Sankar K.)

Space research over decades has allowed India to develop satellite, communications and [remote sensing technologies](#) that are helping to solve everyday problems, from forecasting where fish can be caught to

predicting cataclysmic storms and floods.

**More information:** Indian Space and Research Organization:  
[www.isro.org/](http://www.isro.org/)

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