

India plans mission to Mars in 2013

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

India has a well-established space programme, which began in 1963, that is a source of national pride. But the programme has also attracted criticism as the government struggles to tackle widespread poverty and massive infrastructure problems.

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ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C14 launches from The Satish Dhawan Space Centre in 2009. India says it will send a \$70 mn space mission to Mars this year to study the red planet's atmosphere.

India said on Thursday it will send a \$70 million space mission to Mars this year to study the red planet's atmosphere.

The unmanned [Mars orbiter](#) mission, to be launched in October by the [Indian Space Research Organisation](#), will undertake a 300-day journey to the planet to collect data about its climate and geology.

"The space programme epitomises India's scientific achievements and benefits the country in a number of areas," President Pranab Mukherjee told lawmakers in a speech opening a new session of parliament in New Delhi.

"Several space missions are planned for 2013, including India's first mission to Mars" and the launch of its first navigational satellite, he said.

India says the Mars mission will mark a significant step in its space programme, which has already placed a probe on the moon and envisages its first manned mission in 2016.

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