

India to become 4th country to Mars in new mission

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Indian space exploration hit a milestone on Sunday, November 3 when the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched its first mission to the Red Planet (Mars) in an attempt to become the fourth nation after the United States, the former Soviet Union, and Europe, and the first Asian country, to reach the fourth planet from the sun.

The project is named "Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)", informally called Mangalyaan, which in Hindi means "Mars-orbiter." It has been built at a cost of \$73 million and in just fifteen months, and yet it is capable of demonstrating advanced technologies for space travel.

This considerably cheap Mars project has drawn much attention and mixed reactions from across the globe. Dr. James Clay Moltz, a professor at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

was interviewed by CNN, where he said, "I believe India's leadership sees China's recent accomplishments in space science as a threat to its status in Asia, and feels the need to respond." The Wall Street Journal reported, "India's Mars mission, with a budget of \$73 million, is far cheaper than comparable missions including NASA's \$671 million Maven satellite that is expected to set off for Mars later in November."

Similarly, David Alexander, Director of the Rice Space Institute, reported on National

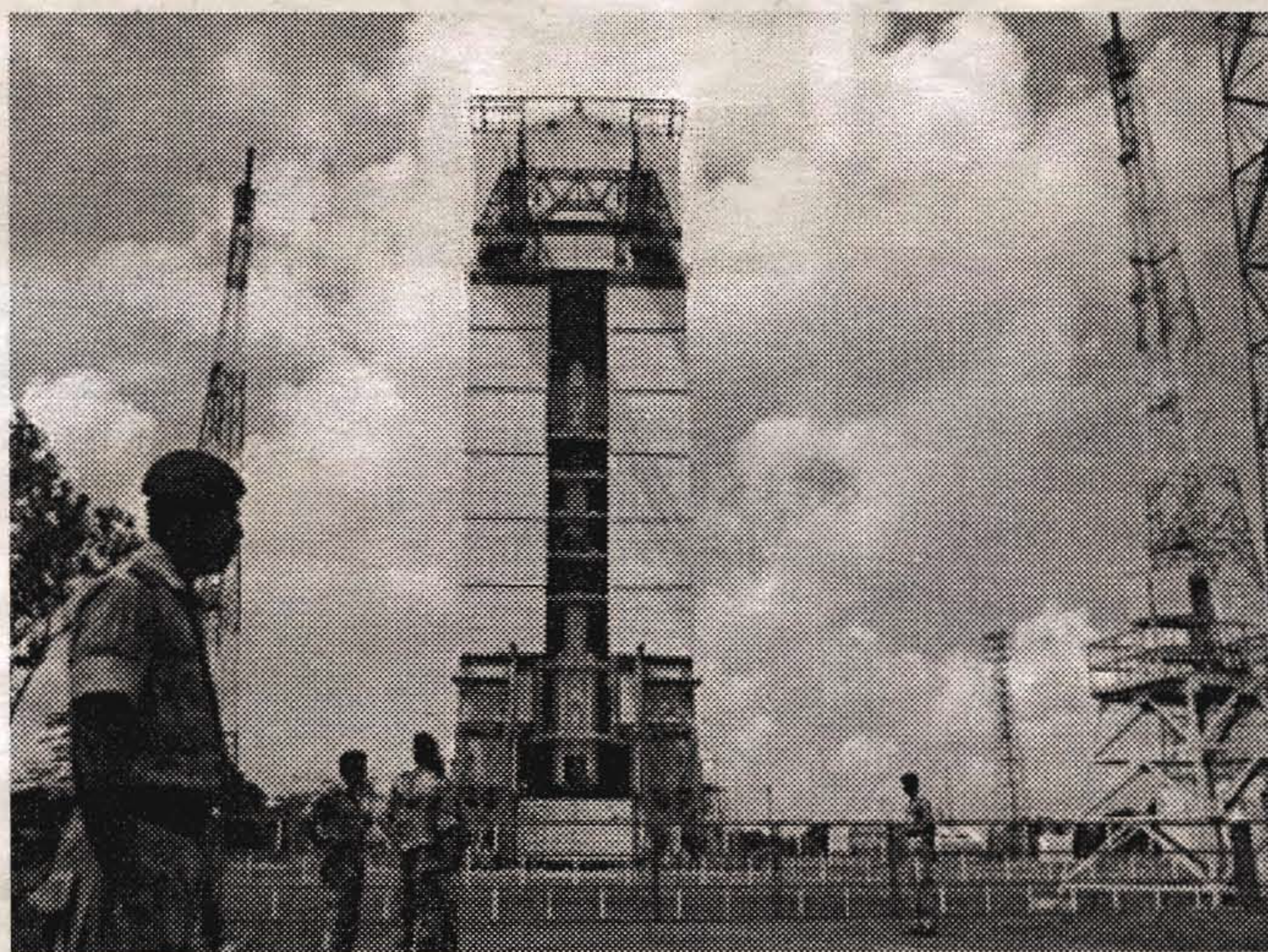


Photo courtesy of washingtonpost.com

Public Radio (NPR), "I think labor is the biggest factor, as well as the complexity of the mission. It takes a whole team of engineers.

Those engineers cost much less in India than they do in the U.S." Comparing the pay scale of Aeronautical and Electronic Engineers in the U.S. and India, he stated that an Indian engineer is paid almost one-tenth of what an American engineer is paid, thus supporting the fact that India's Mars mission is nearly one-tenth of America's.

It has been said that the first attempt by the country to reach Mars has never been a success, considering the cases of Japan and China. On a positive note about India's emergence as one of the top Asian countries in space programs, Reuters reported, "A successful Indian mission will have the effect of positioning the emerging Asian giant as a budget player in the latest global space race."

Talking about the mixed reactions world-wide, ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan said that they will know if they have passed the examination on September 24, 2014, when the spacecraft is scheduled to reach the Red Planet's orbit.

Retro Review:

'Before Sunset' develops characters 10 years after first film

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Ten years after the release of "Before Sunrise," Richard Linklater released the next stage in the story of Jesse and Celine. "Before Sunset," whether by the artistic design of Linklater, or by the vicissitudes of Hollywood funding, picks up ten years after the first film, this time in Paris at a bookstore where the two lovers meet (by chance?)

In ten years, Jesse has become a best-selling novelist, a husband, and father of two children; in the same time, Celine has, likewise,

advanced her professional career, though with the absence of a significant other. These are the facts exchanged between them at their meeting; however, like "Before Sunrise," much of the profundity of their encounter lies in the subtlety and physicality of their interactions.

In this way, again, Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy beautifully bring to life the characters through their evasive responses and awkward physical interactions. It's immediately clear, however, that while Jesse still appears to be quite fond of Celine, Celine is more reluctant and keeps Jesse at a distance with her ambiguous answers and remarks.

Praise must yet again be given to Linklater (and Delpy and Hawke, who also co-wrote the script) for conveying so much of the growth and emotion of the characters through dialogue that seems more or less the superficial "catching-up" of fallen-away lovers.

Another unique feature of this film is that it is filmed close to "real time," meaning the time in the film is nearly the time of the film. The effect is, at first, unnoticeable; that is, until the viewer is met with the credits and nearly falls from his seat in disbelief: the time has passed too quickly and one feels like all the movement, or resolutions, of the characters

has taken place internally—out of sight or fleetingly.

Essentially, the new introduction in Jesse and Celine's relationship in this second film of the trilogy is that of conflict, a plot device that was noticeably absent from the first film.

But to go into the nature of the conflict reveals too much of the plot. Thus, a conundrum mounts, whose resolution can only be that you watch the first two movies by next week, when I will review the last of the trilogy, "Before Midnight."

World's oldest animated film, 'Prince Achmed,' astounds with stunning artwork, details

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A flickering yellow backdrop is set, and the story begins with an evil magician presenting a magic horse to the Caliph. After a brief demonstration of the horse's abilities, the magician violently shakes his head as he tells the Caliph he will not part with the horse for any amount of gold, consequently tricking the Caliph into giving away his only daughter. After wrenching his sister away from the Caliph, Prince Achmed, the Caliph's son, is coaxed into trying to ride the magic horse but he is not shown how to bring the flying horse back down

to earth.

So begins the oldest surviving feature animated film Prince Achmed, or Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed, which Lotte Reiniger and Carl Koch created in 1926. This film, which took three years to create, features several stories from 1001 Arabian Nights. The characters are all cutouts handmade by Lotte Reiniger; they are silhouetted against a pane of lit glass, which was tinted post-production.

Given the age of this film, a viewer might expect to find it necessary to make large allowances for antiquated gender roles, racism, or a subject matter that has since become trite. Certainly it is the case that many of this film's female characters have little agency in their own

lives, this is true to the myths that are the basis of this movie.

But readers be warned: if you dismiss this movie for showing women faint into the arms of men when the going gets tough, you are depriving yourself of a true work of art.

As the short historical video found on the DVD will tell you, this movie was a labor of love that required the filming crew to kneel for hours on end on a stone floor. Every time a character needed to move, Reiniger would have to reposition the arm or head or eye that needed to move and filming would begin again.

Reiniger and her husband Koch left Germany in 1933, seven years after completing Prince Achmed, due to their involvement

with left-wing politics and its consequential antagonism with the Nazi party.

In spite of being forced to leave Germany, Koch and Reiniger continued to make movies from other countries. This work, which is incredible not only because it is the first animated film, but also because it was created during a time in which women were able to procure very few roles outside the home. All in all I have such an intense love for this movie and for Reiniger's story that it needs to be accepted that I am only on criticism lite for this piece.

Prince Achmed is available for free on YouTube without subtitles and can be rented from Netflix.

Tech[nology]News:

OUYA gaming console stiff competition for big-name systems

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The gaming industry is currently centered on the Big Three; Nintendo, Microsoft, and Sony. They will be in for a big surprise this holiday season as their flagship consoles will now, for the first time, be competing against their smaller cousins, the microconsoles. The eighth generation will see not only be a war between XBOX One, PlayStation 4, and Wii U, but also the microconsoles battling it out to fill in the gaps.

OUYA was the first in this new wave of living room gaming. OUYA is a \$99 Android based console featuring a nVidia Tegra 3 Quad-Core chip, 1GB RAM, 8GB Internal Flash Storage, WiFi, USB, Ethernet, and HDMI ports, all packed into a 3 inch cube. The console is so small and light that weights are needed to prevent it from being pulled

around by cables connecting to it. OUYA started, as many great new projects are these days, via the crowdfunding site Kickstarter. After receiving overwhelming support of \$8.5 million, well beyond the original \$950,000 goal, the open source console entered development and shipped June 25.

The founder of OUYA, Julie Uhrman, upset by the move of game designers from the TV to mobile and web based platforms started this project with the intent of disrupting the establishment. Targeted at casual and social gamers, OUYA games are, "Free to try, Free to love," sporting 506 of them specifically designed for OUYA. Well-known games publishers, such as Square Enix (Final Fantasy) and Mojang (Minecraft) have promised titles for OUYA.

OUYA is not only friendly to gamers, but also a developer's dream. Consoles today are very closed, expensive, and difficult to design for. The OUYA development kit has

been available since the beginning to anyone who wants to get involved. OUYA has also introduced their "Free The Game Fund", \$1 million set aside for visionary developers to pursue their ideas. Unlike other consoles, hardware modding and rooting are actually encouraged. The whole device is held together by a few standard screws and disassembles easily. Rounded out with a modified version of Android 4.1 Jelly Bean, OUYA lends itself to software hackers for root and complete customization.

OUYA has received luke-warm reviews since it was released, but the team uses this feedback to update their product. Many reviewers note a lack of strong titles exclusive to the OUYA, but this will be solved with time, and is always a problem with new consoles, even the Big Three's. From hands-on experience, the OUYA is comfortable and fun. All games have a free to play element and the free titles lack the gimmicky feel that "lite" apps

have on the Google Play Store. More remains to be seen from the community and its only hope is that they remain strong. Unfortunately, without more adopters this holiday season, OUYA may disappear in a similar fashion to the HP Touchpad and WebOS.

OUYA will also be facing stiff competition in this new microconsole space. PC peripheral design company Mad Catz has its own Android console known as MOJO which promises PC streaming and is shipping December 10. nVidia's Project SHEILD also seeks to cut in on the action by allowing PC gamers to play their games with complete portability. Lastly, there is yet another successful Kickstarter project, GameStick, which just shipped November 6. This USB-sized HDMI stick promises an experience similar to OUYA with a much smaller form factor. Watch this space for more hands on reviews, including one of the GameStick next week.