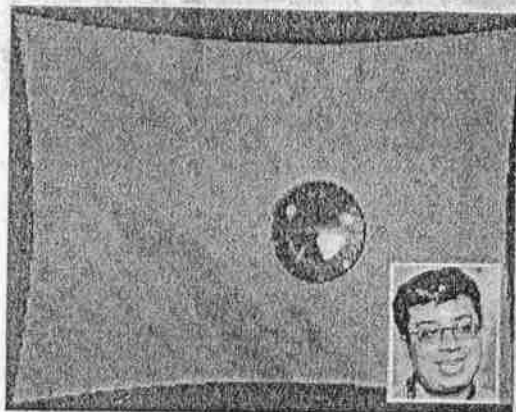


# Nasa scientist says Mars rover could find 'organic compounds'

## Key member of Mars rover team says Curiosity will open up numerous new avenues of research



### STRAIGHT FROM MARS:

This image released by NASA on Tuesday shows a color thumbnail image obtained by NASA's Curiosity rover during its descent to the surface of Mars on August 5. The image was obtained by the Mars Descent Imager instrument known as MARDI and shows the 15-foot (4.5-meter) diameter heat shield when it was about 50 feet (16 meters) from the spacecraft. (Inset) Dr Amitabha Ghosh

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**Mumbai:** A day after Nasa's rover Curiosity landed on Mars, Dr Amitabha Ghosh, a planetary geologist working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), said that it throws up multiple avenues of research, including the crucial question, whether the red planet supports life.

Dr Ghosh, an Indian-origin scientist, who is Chair, Science Operations Working Group, Mission Operations, NASA Mars Exploration Rover Mission, said that what awaits them is exciting research in the months ahead. "The previous missions have indicated that there is water on Mars and this mission takes the research a step further and will probe whether Mars supports life," Dr Ghosh told Sakal Times over telephone from

Washington DC on Tuesday.

Dr Ghosh, an alumni of IIT-Kharagpur, works on tactical rover operations including rover driving and science experiments.

"When man first landed on Moon, Neil Armstrong brought rocks from the surface of the Moon so that we could do experiment here in labs, but today, the scene has undergone a complete change, we have sent an advanced lab (to Mars), more advanced than several labs across the globe, to a planet... So space science too has undergone a major change," he said.

"I feel that Curiosity will herald an era of effective as well as inexpensive method of exploring other planets using rovers and other robotic vehicles. From the science standpoint, it is possible that Curiosity would be able to find organic compounds on Mars," he said.