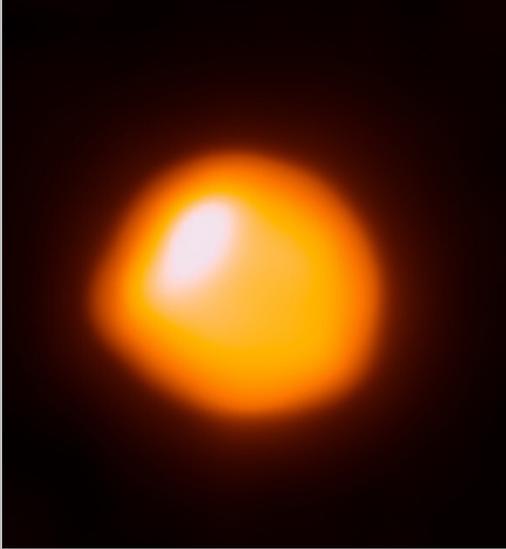


# DUBAI ASTRONOMY GROUP

*Newsletter*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### HOW FAR IS BETELGEUSE?

Recent speculation that Betelgeuse might be on the verge of going supernova prompted many to ask: how far away is it? But getting a distance measurement for this star has been no easy task.

[Read more](#)

### THESE ARE THE UNIVERSE'S FIVE STRANGEST STARS

Staggeringly huge, surprisingly small, and blisteringly fast — stars come in many sizes and flavors. Here are some of the strangest.

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### THE SKY THIS WEEK FROM JANUARY 24 TO FEBRUARY 2

Brilliant Venus passes closer to distant Neptune than it has in 36 years, highlighting a week that features several outstanding celestial sights.

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### THE 11 BIGGEST UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT DARK MATTER

Researchers have confirmed that this mysterious material can be found throughout the cosmos, and that it is six times more abundant than the normal matter that makes up ordinary things like stars and people. Here are the 11 biggest unanswered questions about dark matter.

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# ASTRONOMY PICTURE OF THE WEEK



**Hills, Ridges, and Tracks on Mars**  
Image Credit: NASA, JPL-Caltech, MSSS; Processing & Copyright: Thomas Appere

Explanation: Sometimes, even rovers on Mars stop to admire the scenery. Just late last November the Curiosity rover on Mars paused to photograph its impressive surroundings. One thing to admire, straight ahead, was Central Butte, an unusual flat hill studied by Curiosity just a few days before this image was taken. To its right was distant Mount Sharp, the five-kilometer central peak of entire Gale crater, the interior of which Curiosity is exploring. Mount Sharp, covered in sulfates, appears quite bright in this colorized, red-filtered image. To the far left, shrouded in a very dark shadow, was the south slope of Vera Rubin ridge, an elevation explored previously by Curiosity. Between the ridge and butte were tracks left by Curiosity's wheels as they rolled forward, out of the scene. In the image foreground is, of course, humanity's current eyes on Mars: the complex robotic rover Curiosity itself. Later this year, if all goes well, NASA will have another rover -- and more eyes -- on Mars.

## UPCOMING CELESTIAL EVENTS

### February 9 - Full Moon, Supermoon

The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 07:34 UTC. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Snow Moon because the heaviest snows usually fell during this time of the year. Since hunting is difficult, this moon has also been known by some tribes as the Full Hunger Moon, since the harsh weather made hunting difficult. This is also the first of four supermoons for 2020. The Moon will be at its closest approach to the Earth and may look slightly larger and brighter than usual.



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