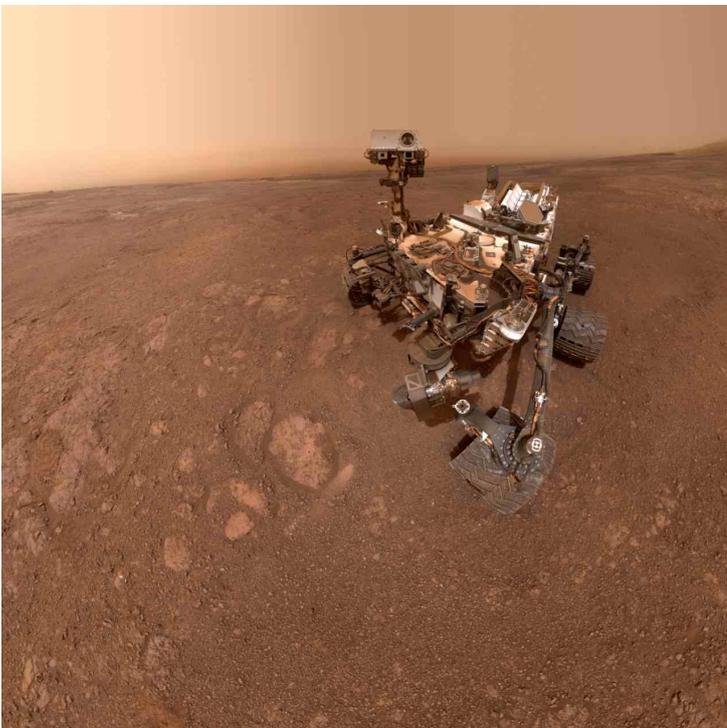


NASA Curiosity sends last selfie from Mars' Vera Rubin ridge



NASA's Martian rover Curiosity took its final selfie on the Vera Rubin ridge, which has been its home since over a year, before crawling down to Mount Sharp for new exploration.

Curiosity rover landed on Mars in 2012 with a mission to have a deep look into Mars' environment and topology to find whether it has ever been habitable. In search of habitability of the red planet, Curiosity was placed on the Vera Rubin Ridge (VRR), also known as the Hematite Ridge in Gale crater since 2017. After over a year of exploration, Curiosity used its Mars Hand Lens Imager (MAHLI) camera on the end of its robotic arm to take a series of 57 pictures featuring a spot on the ridge called Rock Hall, which the rover drilled on December 15, 2018.



A selfie taken by NASA's Curiosity rover on Mars Sol 2291 (15 January) at the "Rock Hall" drill site on Vera Rubin Ridge (Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech)

The images were sent on January 15th and when stitched together, they formed Curiosity's final selfie from the Vera Rubin ridge - which has been its home since a year and collected 19 different drill samples. The ridge has provided scientists with new samples and new questions to puzzle over, meanwhile, Curiosity is heading towards its next destination on Mars, into the "clay-bearing unit", which sits in a trough just south of the ridge. As the rover slowly crawls down the hill, into the clay-bearing lands, NASA expects to find more clues about the ancient Martian lakes in the lower levels of Mount Sharp.

Using drilling tools, the NASA rover will now collect samples to study about the past and present environmental conditions of the red planet, and also see if the weather conditions are favourable for future colonisation of humans ? and hence, serve the curiosity of finding a second home for the worldly beings residing on Earth.