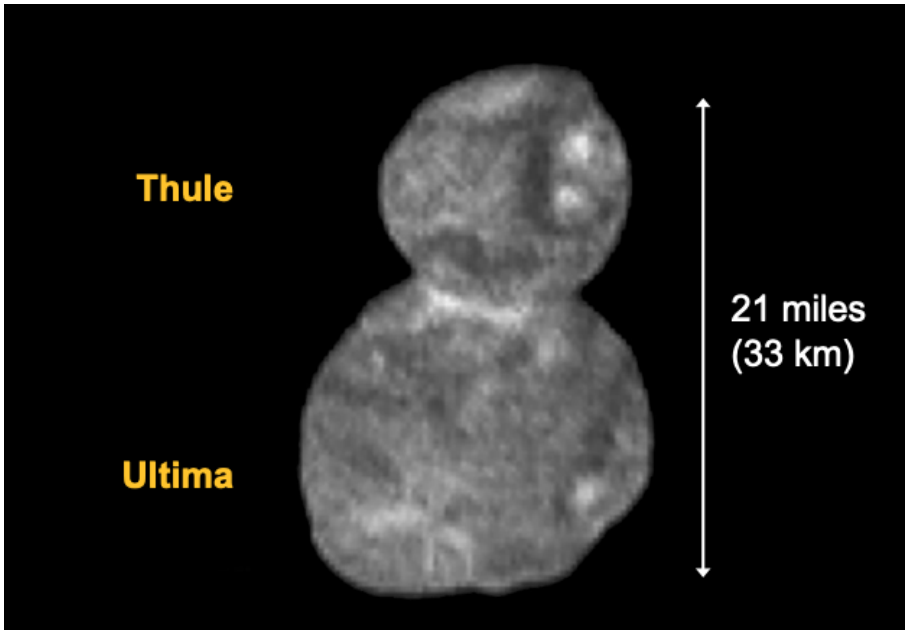
Prelim Bits 14-11-2019

Doctrine of Essentiality

- The doctrine of "essentiality" was invented by a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in the 'Shirur Mutt' case in 1954.
- The court held that the term "religion" will cover all rituals and practices "integral" to a religion, and took upon itself the responsibility of determining the essential and non-essential practices of a religion.
- Five-judge Constitution Bench judgment in 'Dr M Ismail Faruqui and Ors vs Union Of India and Ors' (October 24, 1994), ruled that "A mosque is not an essential part of the practice of the religion of Islam and namaz (prayer) by Muslims can be offered anywhere, even in open."
- In some cases Supreme Court have relied on religious texts to determine essentiality, in others on the empirical behavior of followers, and in yet others, based on whether the practice existed at the time the religion originated.

Arrokoth

- Ultima Thule, the farthest cosmic body ever visited by a spacecraft, has been renamed Arrokoth, or "sky" in the Native American language.
- Arrokoth is icy rock, which orbits in the dark and frigid Kuiper Belt about a billion miles beyond Pluto.
- Arrokoth is an example of a "cold classical object" which has remained undisturbed since the solar system formed some 4.5 billion years ago.
- It was surveyed by the NASA spaceship New Horizons in January 2019, with images showing it consisted of two spheres stuck together in the shape of a snowman.
- The new official name, which was chosen by the New Horizons team and ratified by the International Astronomical Union.



New Horizons Spacecraft

- New Horizons is an interplanetary space probe that was launched in 2006, as a part of NASA's New Frontiers program.
- The primary mission of the spacecraft is to study the Pluto system in 2015, and a secondary mission to study one or more other Kuiper belt (It is similar to the asteroid belt, which extends from Neptune) objects (KBOs) in the decade to follow.
- It is the fifth space probe to achieve the escape velocity needed to leave the Solar System.
- The other four space probes are

    1. Pioneer 10 - 1972
    2. Pioneer 11 - 1973
    3. Voyager 1 - 1977
    4. Voyager 2 - 1977

International Astronomical Union

- The International Astronomical Union is an international association of professional astronomers, active in professional research and education in astronomy.
- Among other activities, it acts as the internationally recognized authority for assigning designations and names to celestial bodies (stars, planets, asteroids, etc.) and any surface features on them.
- The IAU is a member of the International Science Council (ISC).
- The IAU maintains friendly relations with organizations that include amateur astronomers in their membership.

World Gold Council

- The World Gold Council is the market development organization for the gold industry.
- Headquartered in London, United Kingdom, they have offices in India, China, Singapore and the United States.
- It works across all parts of the industry, from gold mining to investment, and their aim is to stimulate and sustain demand for gold.
- They frequently publish research that demonstrates gold's strength as a preserver of wealth both for investors and countries.
- They have also launched various products such as SPDR GLD and gold accumulation plans in India and China.
- WGC also helps to support its members to mine in a responsible way and developed the Conflict Free Gold Standard.
- WGC recently released Gold Demand Trends Report, which highlights that Gold is the third most consistently bought investment, 46% of global retail investors have chosen gold products, behind savings accounts (78%) and life insurance (54%).

North East Convention Centre

- North East Convention Centre is being setup by North Eastern Council (NEC) in Delhi.
- This Centre will act as a cultural and convention/information hub of the North Eastern Region in Delhi.
- It will have a library-cum-reading room with material on North Eastern Region, an art gallery displaying the North East.
- It is part of union government's plan to promote the rich culture of North East region.

Source: The Hindu, PIB, Indian Express

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