

Get ready for the Blue Moon, Super Moon and Blood Moon

Lunar Eclipse seen at India Gate, in New Delhi on April 04, 2015. | Photo Credit: [Sushil Kumar Verma](#)

Get ready for a rare lunar event that has kept the Internet abuzz from the beginning of the year. A Super Moon, Blue Moon and a total lunar eclipse can be seen on the evening of January 31.

Dr. Debiprosad Duari, Director, M. P. Birla Planetarium, Kolkata, explains more about the rare event in an e-mail interview with *The Hindu*.

A lunar eclipse is a spectacular celestial show, during which the bright, pearly-white disc of the full Moon turns dark, and sometimes takes on the colour of dark copper, or even dried blood. A lunar eclipse occurs when the Sun, the Earth and the Moon are so aligned that for a period of time, the full Moon passes through the shadow of Earth in space (called Earth's Umbra).

During a total lunar eclipse, though the Moon gets shadowed by the Earth, sunlight passing through the Earth's atmosphere, break down in its constituent colours and the red part gets scattered by the atmosphere and falls on the Moon's surface, thereby making it take on a reddish copper hue. For this reason since antiquity, a totally eclipsed Moon is called a "Blood Moon". It has no other special relevance other than the fact that the colour of the Moon looks blackish-red.

This full Moon occurs twice in a calendar month, the last one being on January 2. The next one, on January 31, is termed a "Blue Moon". The Moon does not turn blue but historically the second full Moon of an English calendar month is termed as a Blue Moon. Hence the oft-quoted phrase of a rare occurrence of any event as "once in a Blue Moon".

The coming lunar eclipse will be more spectacular because during the eclipse, the Moon will be near its perigee (the Moon reaches its perigee on January 30 at around 15:28 hrs. IST) and hence it will look larger than an average full Moon, and is termed a Super Moon.

[Learn more about Super Moon here.](#)

In India, the eclipse will start around 17:18 IST. It will be total at 18:21 hours and remain totally eclipsed till 19:37.

Then after, the total eclipse will end and the Moon will slowly come out of the shadow of the Earth, the partial eclipse ending around 20:41 hrs. The totality of the eclipse will last for about 1 hour and 16 minutes.

Many pages on the Net say that it is happening after 152 years and the last time it happened was in 1866. But this was for the Americas, not for everywhere on the globe.

In Asia, the last Blue Moon and total lunar eclipse happened on December 30, 1982. So, it is happening after 35 years for sky enthusiasts in India.

Not at all. It can be seen through the naked eye.

The next total lunar eclipse will be visible in India on July 27, 2018 but it will not be a Blue Moon or a Super Moon.

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Just what exactly needed such special protection and secrecy is still unknown.

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