

Tamil Nadu's First Dark Sky Park

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Why in News?

Recently, Tamil Nadu Forests Minister launched the State's first Dark Sky Park at a cost of Rs 1 crore.

Dark Sky Park

- A protected area with **minimal artificial light pollution**.
- Enables clear observation of celestial phenomena such as the stars, planets, the moon, milky way galaxy.
- **Ideal Conditions** - Locations with **naturally dark skies, dry weather, and clear, cloudless nights** for observatories and stargazing.
- **Benefits** - Protects nocturnal wildlife from disruption.
- Preserves the natural and cultural heritage of star-filled skies.
- Encourages responsible tourism and astronomy education.

TN's First Dark Sky Park

- **Location** - **Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, Kolli Hills, Namakkal district**.
- **Terrain** - Kolli Hills chosen for elevated terrain, dense forest, and low light pollution.
- **Operation** - The site has a clear sky view for nearly 6 months of the year.
- Hence, it will **operate from January 15 to June 15** and remain closed during the monsoon season.
- The facility will operate during the day to promote astronomy awareness and scientific learning among students, researchers, and the public.
- **Light-Free Zone** - 1.5 km radius around Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest **remains free from artificial light**.
- **Equipment** - Equipped with three advanced telescopes for structured sky-watching sessions.

- Solar panels installed for sustainable power.

The Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra is India's first Dark Sky Park and is the 5th in Asia.



Types of International Dark Sky Places (IDSPs)

The **International Dark-Sky Association** recognizes different categories IDSPs

- **International Dark Sky Parks** - Public or private protected areas with strict lighting policies and public access.
 - **Examples** - Pench (Maharashtra) and Kolli Hills.
- **Dark Sky Reserve (Ladakh)** - Consists of a "core" area meeting minimum sky quality and a "buffer" where communities agree to protect the dark sky.
 - **Example** - Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR), centred around the Indian Astronomical Observatory.
- **International Dark Sky Sanctuaries** - These are the most remote (and often darkest) places in the world whose conservation state is fragile.

References

1. [TH | Dark Sky Park](#)
2. [New IE | Dark Sky Park](#)