

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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](#)