



Night Sky Sanctuary in Ladakh

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The **Government of India**, recently announced the **upcoming establishment of South East Asia's first [Night Sky Sanctuary in Ladakh](#)**.

What are the Key Points Related to Night Sky Sanctuary in Ladakh?

- It will be located at **Hanle village in Eastern Ladakh** as a part of **Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- It is being set up with the help of **Indian Institute of Astrophysics Bengaluru**, which is affiliated to the **Department of Science & Technology, Govt of India**.
 - Spread over **1,073 square kilometers**, it is adjacent to the **Indian Astronomical Observatory**, the second-highest optical telescope in the world.
- It will boost **Astro-tourism in India** and will be one of the **world's highest-located sites for optical, infra-red, and gamma-ray telescopes**.

What are the Major Types of Dark Sky Places?

- The **International Dark Sky Association**, a U.S.-based non-profit, designates places as International Dark Sky Places, Parks, Sanctuaries and Reserves, depending on the criteria they meet:
 - **Dark Sky Parks:** These are **conservation areas, publicly or privately owned**, that implement effective outdoor lighting practices and offer programs centered around experiencing dark skies.
 - **Dark Sky Sanctuaries:** These are **extremely remote and often the darkest places on Earth**. They require stringent conservation measures due to their fragile state.
 - **Dark Sky Reserves:** These reserves have a **defined dark "core" zone surrounded by populated areas**. Policies are implemented to safeguard the darkness of the core zone while accommodating nearby communities.
 - **Urban Night Sky Places:** These **urban sites strive to provide an authentic night time experience** despite significant artificial light. Here focus is on creating environments where people can still appreciate the night sky.
 - **Dark Sky Communities:** **Cities and towns recognized for their quality outdoor lighting ordinances** and efforts to educate residents about the significance of preserving dark skies.

What Makes Ladakh a Suitable Site for Night Sky Sanctuary?

- Ladakh's high elevation, cold desert terrain, and sparse population, situated at approximately 3,000 meters above sea level, create an ideal environment for astronomical observatories.
 - Also, the **absence of extensive urban areas** preserve the natural darkness in Ladakh and contributes to minimal **Light Pollution**, fostering ideal conditions for Night Sky Sanctuary.

DARK SKY RESERVES AROUND THE WORLD

Country	Name	Year, area (sq kms)
 France	Alpes Azur Mercantour Cévennes National Park Pic du Midi Regional Natural Park of Millevaches in Limousin	2019, 2,250 2018, 3,600 2013, 3,112 2021, 3,350
 United Kingdom	Cranborne Chase Exmoor National Park Moore's Reserve North York Moors National Park Yorkshire Dales National Park	2019, 981 2011, 181 2016, 1,627 2020, 1,440 2020, 2,180
 Wales	Brecon Beacons National Park Snowdonia National Park	2013, 1,347 2015, 2,132
 Australia	River Murray	2019, 3,200
 New Zealand	Aoraki Mackenzie	2012, 4,367
 Germany	Rhön Westhavelland	2014, 1,720 2014, 1,529
 US / Mexico	Greater Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve	2022, 38,850
 US	Central Idaho	2017, 3,668
 Canada	Mont-Mégantic	2007, 5,300
 Ireland	Kerry	2014, 700
 Namibia	NabimRand Nature Reserve	2010, 2,022



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