

# Night Sky Sanctuary

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**In news-** In a unique and first-of-its-kind initiative, the Department of Science & Technology, Govt of India, has undertaken to set up India's first-ever "Night Sky Sanctuary(Dark Sky Reserve)" in Ladakh.

## **About the sanctuary/reserve-**

- **The proposed Dark Sky Reserve will be located at Hanle in Ladakh** as a part of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **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.**
- In this regard a tripartite agreement was signed between officials of Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) , the Ladakh Union Territory administration and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.
- Once declared as the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR), it will be **an area spanning 22 km in radius** centred around the Hanle observatory.
- It may be noted that **Hanle is best suited for the project as it is located in Ladakh's cold desert region,** away from any form of human disturbance and clear sky conditions and dry weather conditions exist throughout the year,
- **At a height of 4,500 metres, Hanle is already home to an optical, a gamma ray and an infrared telescope** at the Indian Astronomical Observatory complex operated by the IIA.
- These telescopes have been used to study stars, galaxies, exoplanets and the evolution of our Universe.