



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# Martian Landforms

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The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has approved names for several Martian features proposed by two Kerala-based researchers.

## **Names Approved for Martian Landforms**

- **Major Feature:** Krishnan Crater, A large, ancient crater in the Xanthe Terra region of Mars, is now named 'Krishnan' to honour M.S. Krishnan, the first Indian Director of the Geological Survey of India.
- **Associated Minor Features:**
- Valiamala: home to IIST (Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology).
- Thumba: birthplace of India's space programme (TERLS, 1960s).
- Bekal: named for the historic Bekal Fort in Kasaragod.
- Varkala: known for its unique coastal cliffs.
- Periyar Vallis: named after Kerala's longest river; now a Martian valley.
- Krishnan Palus: name given to the plain inside the Krishnan crater.

## **IAU Naming Rules for Planetary Features**

- **Large Craters:** It must be named after deceased scientists, scholars, or explorers with foundational contributions. Names should be internationally recognisable and culturally neutral.
- **Small Craters:** It may be named after towns or villages with populations under 1,00,000.
- **Vallis (Valleys) and Channels:** It is named after rivers or classical geographical names on Earth.
- **No Living Persons:** The names of living individuals are never permitted.

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