



# 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.