

STARRY DESIGNATION



Narit to push for 'dark sky certification' of Doi Inthanon

The National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand (Narit) is planning to push for the certification of Doi Inthanon as a place dark enough for star observation to the international standard.

Suparirk Kharuehanon, chief of astronomical academic service at the institute, said yesterday that the Doi Inthanon mountaintop in Chiang Mai province had been dark enough for observing the Milky Way this past Saturday.

With a few more tweaks in cooperation from the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) and other allied organisations, Doi Inthanon could receive "dark sky certification" from the International Dark-Sky Association, he said.

With the association's certification, Doi Inthanon's tourism value would be increased, he added.

To prove the dark environment at the top of Thailand's highest peak, Suparirk released photos of the Milky Way captured over Doi Inthanon at 5am on Saturday.

He said that although the moon was shining brightly, the lack of light pollution allowed the Milky Way to be seen clearly over the mountain.

Narit will work with Egat to further reduce light pollution over the flower plantation on the mountaintop, by changing the types of lamp used and controlling their lights so as not to reflect emitted light to the sky, he explained.

Suparirk added that the Milky Way should be visible in the southeastern sky from 4.30am throughout this month.