

Asia's biggest telescope handed over

WALCHANDNAGAR, July 9.— A 230 cm optical telescope — the largest in Asia — was Sunday handed over to the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) by Maharashtra Chief Minister Vasant Rao Patil here.

The telescope, 15.7 metres in length, 8.7 metres in width and 11.7 metres in height, would be installed at the institute's observatory being set up at Kavalur between Bangalore and Madras under a Rs. six crore programme of research.

Prof. M.G. Menon, Chairman of the Governing Council of the IIA, who took delivery, explained to newsmen later that the telescope would help scan the southern skies, not covered so far because major telescope facilities were, so far, located only in the northern hemisphere.

The telescope, weighing 115 tonnes, was designed by the renowned Indian astronomer, the late Dr. N.K. Vainu Bappu, who was the President of International Astronomical Union when he died in 1982.

The telescope would enable studies of faint sources of even 22 magnitude, Institute Director J.C. Bhattacharya said. "It will help see a star, which appears the faintest to the naked eyes, million times more clear."

Prof. Menon and Mr. Patil in their speeches said the country was proud to have the scientists and industries which could accomplish such technological feats.

Industrialist Lalchand Hirachand, Chairman of the Walchandnagar group of industries which manufactured and shop-assembled the telescope, urged the Government to repose more confidence in the industry in the country which work wonders. — UNI.