

Thursday, July 16, 2009

Solar eclipse on July 22

It will be of the longest duration in 21st century, offering a visual treat

BANGALORE: It is billed as the solar eclipse of the century: On Wednesday, July 22, a solar eclipse, in which the totality will be of the longest duration for the 21st century will occur, offering a visual treat to the common man.

Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Professor Siraj Hasan said the total solar eclipse, which will last for 6 minutes and 39 seconds, will be visible across South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. "It will have the longest totality period for any solar eclipse between 1991 and 2132. The next eclipse that will surpass it in duration will be on June 13, 2132," he said.

The path of the total eclipse starts from the Gujarat coast, passes over Northern India, Northern Bangladesh, Eastern

Nepal, Bhutan, northern tip of Myanmar, Central China and the Pacific Ocean. The Indian cities through which the path of totality passes over are Bhavnagar, Surat, Ujjain, Indore, Bhopal, Sagar, Jabalpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Gaya, Patna, Bhagalpur, Jalpaigudi, Guwahati and Dibrugarh. Varanasi and Patna offer the best view in India.

"The eclipse offers a rare chance to view the structure of the corona (the circle of light around the sun) with the naked eye when the moon blocks the sun for a short period," the Director said.

An average of 230 eclipses take place in a century and the previous longest duration for a total solar eclipse was registered in 1955, when it occurred for 7 minutes and 31 seconds.

DH News Service