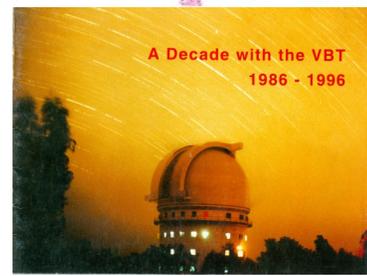


Asia's biggest telescope

VELLORE, December 24 (PTI): The Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, will inaugurate Asia's biggest telescope at Kavalur, 95 km from here, on January 6, according to the North Arcot district collector, Mr E.S. Daniel Gunanidhi.

Telescope named after Vainu Bappu

Express News Service
Naming the observatory at Kavalur in North Arcot and the 94-inch, Rs. 6.5 crore optical telescope in the observatory after Vainu Bappu, Mr. Gandhi said the observatory should rise to great heights and bring astronomy and astrophysics to the forefront of knowledge as it was a 100 years ago. The telescope, when operational, will be the biggest in Asia.

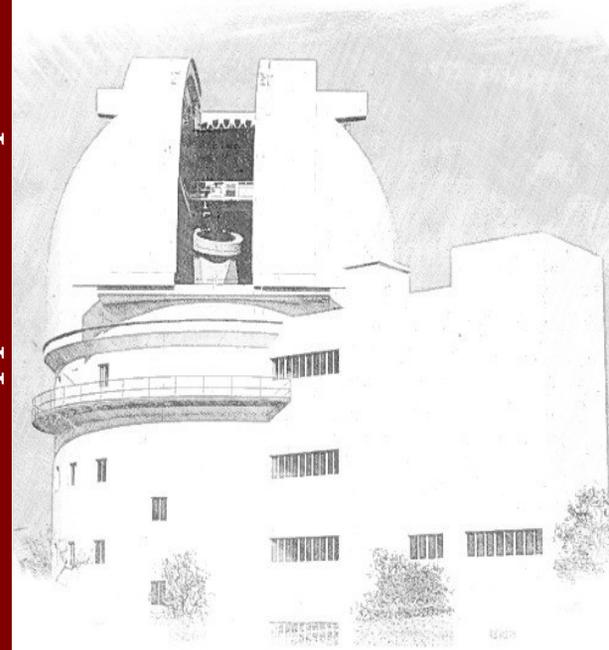


Commemoration



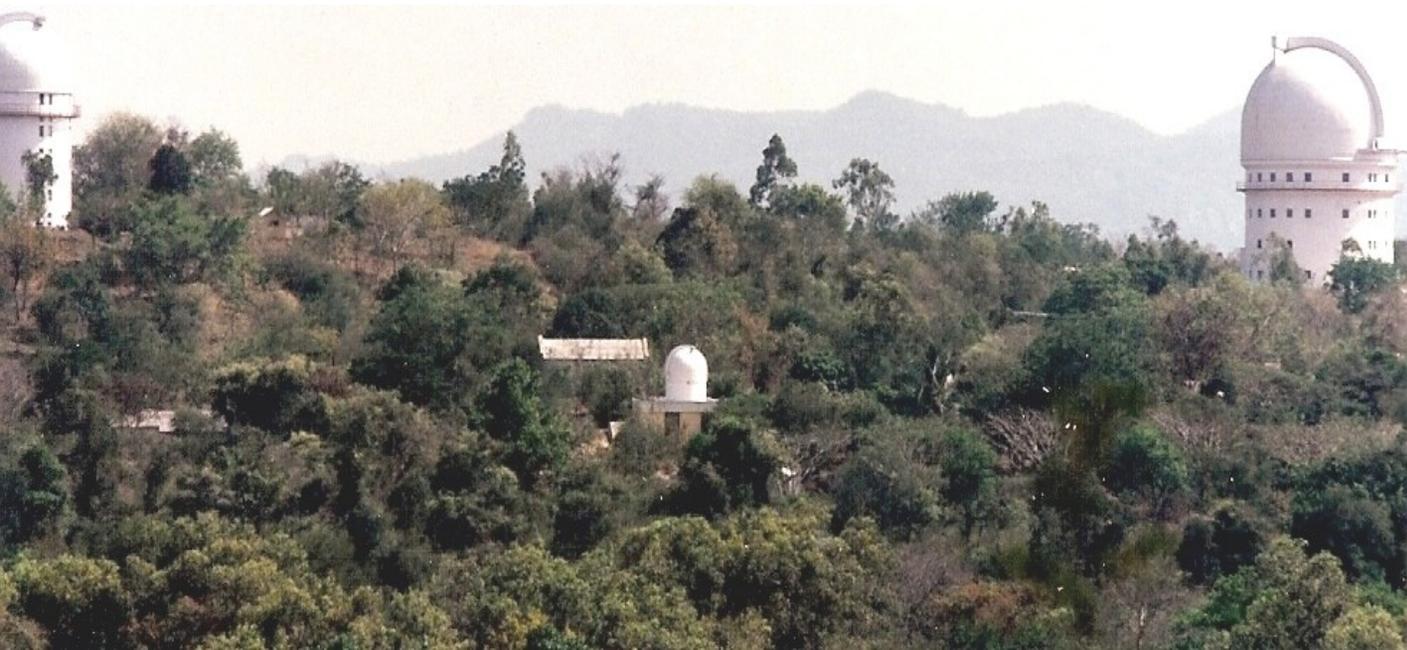
Astronomy tableau in the Republic Day Parade, New Delhi, January 26, 2009

Commemorating 25 years of the Vainu Bappu Telescope



And in a year or two Kavalur will have another major facility that will help its astronomers probe farther into the Universe.

M K Vainu Bappu



A glimpse of the exhibits on display at the Library, IIA, Bangalore on the commemoration of VBT 25 years, August, 10-12, 2011



Library
Indian Institute of Astrophysics
Bangalore

Kavalur—the ideal site for 90 inch....



Bappu with forest guard at Kavalur (1962)

The survey for possible sites indicates clearly that Kavalur is a site where top class astronomical research can be carried out. It has superb seeing, many hours of cloud free observing and with a reach to southern declinations including the large cloud. It is already a well developed site with the type of infrastructure available that will give a large instrument a high degree of operational efficiency.

I recommend, therefore, that the 2.36 M telescope be located at kavalur.

M K Vainu Bappu



Kavalur hut getting ready (1968)

90 inch building under construction

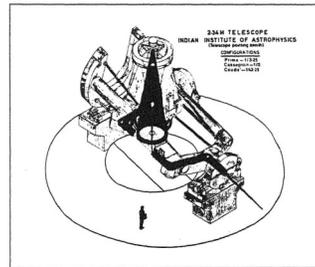


Mirror getting ready at Bangalore



2.34 M Telescope - Chronicle

- 1971 Indian Institute of Astrophysics came into existence.
- 1973 Professor M. K. V. Bappu got the go ahead from the Governing Council for an indigenous 90-inch optical telescope.
- 1974 The primary mirror blank received from SCHOTT and stored in Kavalur (Bangalore campus was not yet ready).
Messrs Tata, Dilworth, Secord, Meagher & Associates (TDSMA), retained for developing a conceptual design for building, dome, mechanical mount and auxiliaries.
- 1976 July TDSMA was assigned the design and engineering of mirror grinding machine.
Nov Concept design accepted.
- 1977 Building construction started by Civil Engineering Division, Department of Space.
- 1978 Mar Order for dome to Vikhroli Metal Fabricators.
Dec Building completed.
- 1979 May Mirror grinding machine installed at Bangalore.
Sept Mirror blank loaded on machine.
Oct Order for mechanical mount to Walchandnagar Industries Limited.



IIA Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1986, p.3

Council support

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 Yashwantrao 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 Latchand 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. — UPI.

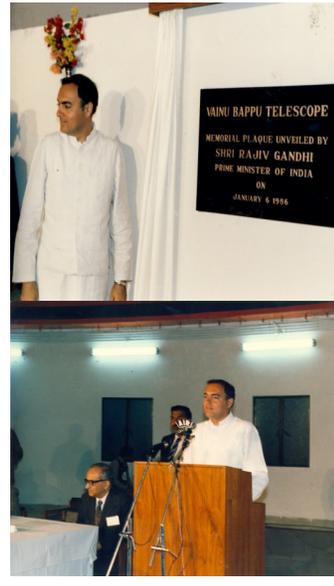


90 inch Telescope



90 inch Telescope Inauguration by Shri Rajiv Gandhi

The Prime Minister, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated the 90 inch telescope at Kavalur on 6th Jan 1986.



Mr. Gandhi on the request of the IIA governing council named the Kavalur Observatory and the 90 inch telescope after Vainu Bappu.