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# Narendra Modi launches India's largest optical telescope

The 3.6 meter optical telescope will be used by scientists to study areas such as magnetic field structures of stars, chemical evolution of Milky Way and search for extra solar planets

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Newsletter

**Nikita Mehta**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that through this telescope, Belgian and Indian scientists will find success in their work objectives and that additionally, it will also help in knowledge enhancement of humanity. Photo: Bloomberg

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel remotely activated India's largest telescope, located at Devasthal in Uttarakhand, on Wednesday from Brussels. The 3.6 meter optical telescope will be used by scientists to study areas such as magnetic field structures of stars, chemical evolution of Milky Way and search for extra solar planets.

Modi, in a press statement, said that through this telescope, Belgian and Indian scientists will find success in their work objectives and that additionally, it will also help in knowledge enhancement of humanity.

"This product of Indo-Belgian collaboration is an inspiring example of what our partnership can achieve," said Modi. "At a height of 2,500 metres, situated near Nainital, Devasthal is a unique site for such scientific observations which scientists selected after much search," the Prime Minister added. The site was selected by scientists after a survey of the Central Himalayas between 1980 and 2001.

The new telescope is expected to fulfil the need for world class observation facilities for ground-based optical astronomy.

"This is a great achievement for astronomers in India and will be a significant

contribution for cutting edge research,” said Wahab Uddin, acting director of ARIES, an autonomous research institute under the department of science and technology. “This will be a big jump for the study of extra galactic objects,” he added. To fulfill the scientific objectives, the telescope contains a high resolution spectrograph, low resolution spectroscopic camera and a near infrared imaging camera.

India has collaborated with a Belgian company called AMOS to produce this infrared steerable optical telescope. In 2007, a contract for design, manufacture, integration, testing, supply and installation of the telescope was entered between ARIES and AMOS at an estimated cost of production of Rs 120 crores. While ARIES took the lead on the project, Indian Institute of Astrophysics and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research also collaborated on the project.

**Nikita Mehta**

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