

China building telescope with dish size of 30 football fields

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Beijing: Supercomputer Skyeye-1, capable of a quadrillion computing operations per second, will support space exploration by the world's largest radio telescope whose dish size will be equivalent to 30 football fields.

Assembly of the telescope, with a dish the size of 30 football fields and located deep in the mountains of Guizhou province, has got underway, reported Xinhua citing Dawning Information Industry Co., which is taking part in its construction.

When it is completed in 2016, the five hundred meter aperture spherical telescope (FAST) will be the world's largest, overtaking Puerto Rico's Arecibo Observatory, which is only 300 meters in diameter.

A radio signal as far as tens of billions of light years away could possibly be caught by the telescope, which will extend China's space tracking scope from moon's orbit to the outside edge of the solar system upon its completion next year.

As FAST needs a strong computing system to support massive data storage and processing, the Institute of Computing Technology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CASICT), Dawning Information Industry Co. and China (Guizhou) Skyeye Group signed an agreement last November to jointly build a Qiannan Super Computing Center in Guizhou.

Skyeye-1, with its quadrillion computing operations per second and high-speed network of 100 gigabytes per second, can easily meet the demands of the telescope, said Ren Jingyang, vice president of Dawning Information Industry Co.

The construction of the telescope began in March 2011 in a natural, bowl-shaped valley in the southern part of Guizhou.

- IANS