

China to launch solar telescope

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China has announced completion of its first two space telescopes: a space solar telescope and a hard X-ray modulation telescope.

A decision as to which telescope will be launched first is expected next month, Project Director Jin Shengzhen told Xinhua, China's main government-run news agency.

The solar telescope will be slightly more than 3 feet in diameter, making it one of the largest of its kind in the world. It is to be positioned in a sun-synchronous orbit about 450 miles from Earth.

The \$73 million solar telescope's resolution capability will be 10 times that of the U.S.-made solar telescope, SOHO, Jin said.

Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom are jointly developing their own solar telescope, SOLAR-B. With a diameter of 1 1/2 feet, Jin said SOLAR-B will have only half the optical resolution of the China-made telescope.

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