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NEWS

PHOTOGRAPHING HALLEY'S COMET

The staff of the new observatory in the Tiens Shan mountains, Kazakhstan, have photographed Halley's comet.

The scientific world lives in anticipation of the encounter of the Soviet space stations, Vega-1 and Vega-2, with the comet, expected in the spring of the next year. Kazakhstan astronomers working within the frame of the international project are in charge of coordination of the studies of processes occurring in the zone of the nucleus of Halley's comet. Its "head" is one of the most interesting and difficult objects of observation. It is in that zone that the most explosive, dynamic changes occur when the comet approaches the Sun.

While the comet is far away from the Sun, nothing in particular happens in it under the star's influence. That is why it is essential to obtain some early photographs of the nucleus, so that in future scientists could register and analyse the series of changes occurring in the nucleus zone.

The photographs are also of great practical value, as they will enable scientists to correct the progress of the interplanetary stations on their way to the space "rendezvous".

Kazakhstan scientists are preparing for extensive studies aimed at determining the temperature and density of the comet's substance and its chemical composition.

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