

Bappu's statue unveiled in City

BANGALORE, Aug. 10. — The internationally-known Indian astronomer late Dr. M.K. Vainu Bappu who was responsible for "building up a solid base" for Indian astronomy was today honoured by the scientific community with the unveiling of a life-size bust at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, which he once headed.

The bust was unveiled by Dr. Bappu's widow, Mrs. Yemuna Bappu, in the presence of distinguished Indian scientists including Prof. Satish Dhawan, Senior Advisor, Department of Space and Prof. S. Ramaseshan, President of the Indian Academy of Sciences.

Paying rich tributes to Dr. Bappu, the Institute Director, Dr. J.C. Bhattacharya, said the bust would not only remind "us of that great personality but also remind posterity of the near-miracles which he achieved by dedicated efforts".

Dr. Bhattacharyya said Dr. Bappu had changed the face of astronomy in India. In the mid-forties the research scenario in astronomy was, something of a paradox. While India produced several top class theoretical scientists, observational facilities were almost non-existent.

This state of affairs had drastically changed within 30 years and a pivotal role was played by Dr. Bappu, who built observatories, formed active societies, started international journals, thereby opening up a totally new chapter in national scientific endeavours.

Dr. Bhattacharyya said Dr. Bappu's entire life was decided to the study of the mysteries of the deep, dark skies



and his dream was to build and do astronomy in India. He pointed out that it was difficult to realise the extreme efforts which were needed to pull Indian astronomy out of the morass of inactivity and pessimism which had plagued the intervening period of two centuries. But Dr. Bappu overcame it. The crowning glory of his career was his election as President of the International Astronomy Union, the supreme body of the world astronomical community. He was a great astronomer who ended the hiatus in Indian astronomy after olden scientists in the field such as Aryabhata and Bhaskara.

Mrs. Dhawan, gave away mementoes to L.N. Sonawadekar of Bombay, who had sculpted the statue, and Jagdish Hiremath who had built the pedestal. The task of installing the bust was borne by a group of Dr. Bappu's students and colleagues.