

Telescope named after Vainu Bappu

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Vellore, Jan. 6: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Monday called on Indian scientists settled abroad to emulate the example of Mr. Vainu Bappu, founder-director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, who returned to India after a stint abroad to serve the country.

Naming the observatory at Kavalur in North Arcot and the 94-inch, Rs. 6.5 crore optical telescope in the observatory after Vainu Bappu, Mr. Gandhi said the observatory should rise to great heights and bring astronomy and astrophysics to the forefront of knowledge as it was a 100 years ago. The telescope, when operational, will be the biggest in Asia.

Mr. M.G.K. Menon, member, governing council of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics and member, Planning Commission, said it was the wish of the governing council to name the telescope after Vainu Bappu. Vainu Bappu was the president of the International Astronomical Union from 1979 to 1982 and the 19th general assembly of the IAU had named an asteroid in his honour.

Earlier Mr. J. C. Bhattacharya, Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, said the new telescope had been manufactured indigenously.