

Prof. C V Vishveshwara (6th March 1938 – 16th January 2017)



Prof. C. V. Vishveshwara and Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium staff bidding farewell to the old Planetarium projector in March 2016

Prof. C V Vishveshwara (6th March 1938 – 16th January 2017) was the Founder Director of this Planetarium and had been playing a very active role in all the activities from the day of inception. He was the Vice-Chairman of BASE.

He was well known in the academic circles for his contribution to the fields of GTR and black hole physics. His 40 year old research was in limelight last year in the context of the detection of gravitational waves. His talents were recognized almost 30 years ago by the team headed by Prof. Satish Dhavan and Prof. U R Rao. His skill on communication of a scientific topic laced with very apt visual, music, humour and anecdotes made the programs of this planetarium unique. He launched a new and most effective way of communicating science. He identified local talent

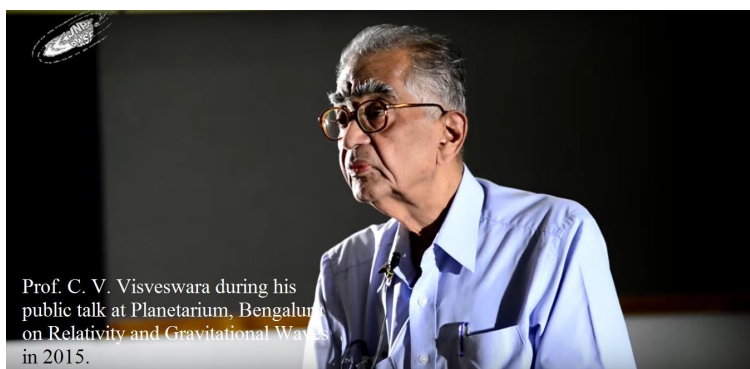
for all these skills. He taught us these skills which we have been able to digest only partially.

He was very keen in developing a science centre here and today you see that it has become a role model for other science centres. He created several opportunities to our students to interact with many great minds in science including Nobel Laureate Prof. S Chandrashekhar. He wanted to build an antigravity cottage 25 years ago. It is a reality today.

He also dreamt of breathtaking visuals of the celestial events which is also becoming a reality today.

We pay our tribute to the departed soul.

Shylaja B S



Prof. C. V. Visveswara during his public talk at Planetarium, Bengaluru on Relativity and Gravitational Waves in 2015.

Vishu as he is known to many of his friends, colleagues and students, was the first to explore the stability of black holes and their characteristic signature. These characteristic waves are technically termed *quasi-normal modes*, which is why Vishu, a scientist with a great sense of humour and wit, calls himself "*Quasimodo of black holes*". They are not unlike the dying tones of a bell struck with a hammer and are often called the ringdown radiation. Vishu's work is fundamental to our understanding of black holes and began a new chapter in how to study them. When the GW discovery by LIGO was announced last year, Vishu was elated.. I have never seen him so high, thrilled by the possibility that soon there would be events where the QNMs would be even more strong.

The first relativity meeting I went to was the Einstein Centenary symposium at Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad in 1979. Though I have many wonderful memories of the symposium the most memorable one was Vishu's lecture entitled 'Black Holes for Bedtime'. To me it was a magical experience; an exotic cocktail of science, art, humour and caricature. Equations were not necessarily abstract and unspeakable and could well be translated in the best literary tradition if you were Vishu! Over the years, Vishu's cartoons in the ICGC proceedings were always awaited.. The series of cartoons on GW in those proceedings deserves special mention. Alas they are incomplete since he could not make one after the discovery.

It was always a pleasure working with Vishu. There is no pressure, no generation gap, a natural possibility to grow and contribute

your best, an easy personal rapport, a refreshing sense of humour, an unassuming erudition and most importantly a warm and wonderful human being. It did not take time for families of those who worked with him to come closer with Vishu becoming the elder of an extended family as happened in my own case.

The JNP where we all have assembled is a wonderful example of Vishu's vision and showcases his multi-faceted personality. Whether it was the colors of the fabric or the fabric texture, the chairs or the high quality astronomy posters, the script or the narration, the music or the literary quotes.. Think of it and Vishu was involved deeply in it. By example he set up high standards for all the JNP personnel and what we are about to inaugurate today is their tribute to Vishu and their determination to keep up the excellence. But JNP was not to be just a theatre. It had to play a role in science education in the city. Thus Vishu set up BASE where we mentor students from school, high school and colleges for a career in science. Vishu was inventive with acronyms.. We have SEED, SOW and REAP programs. REAP Physics being a physics study circle over the weekends to prepare undergraduate students for a research career in physics.

We will miss you Vishu even as we try very hard to follow your lines from Antonio Machado

*Traveller there is no path
Paths are made by walking*

Bala Iyer,
JNP, 17 Jan 2017