

# Ramanna cremated in Mumbai

BY OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**Mumbai, Sept. 24:** The architect of India's atomic bomb, Dr Raja Ramanna, was cremated at the Shivaji Park electric crematorium on Friday afternoon. His body was taken from his son's residence at Worli. Dr Ramanna passed away at 3.15 am at the Bombay Hospital on Friday.

The hospital authorities said that he was suffering from intestinal problems and died due to internal bleeding in the stomach. The 79-year-old physicist is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son. On Thursday night, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who was in Aurangabad, visited the hospital to see his ailing friend.

Besides Dr Ramanna's family members, his friends and scientists, including the former chairpersons of the Atomic Energy Commission

or AEC, Dr H.N. Sethna and Dr P.K. Iyengar, the chairman of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited, Mr S.K. Jain, the chairman of the Heavy Water Board, Mr S.C. Hiremat and filmmaker Shyam Benegal. Several scientists and staff from the Department of Atomic Energy or DAE and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre or BARC. Dr Ramanna has been bestowed with awards like the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Memorial Award, the Nehru Award, the R.D. Birla Memorial Award and the Meghnad Saha Medal. He was conferred the honorary degree of D.Litt. by the Visva Bharati university and D.Sc. by several universities.

The eminent physicist, besides leaving his mark as the pioneer of a nuclear India, was also an exponent of music. He started learning the piano at the age of six and also played the viola.



**HUGE LOSS:** Relatives of Raja Ramanna carry his body to the crematorium in Mumbai on Friday. Dr Ramanna, who was the brain behind India's first atomic test in 1974, died after a prolonged illness on Friday morning. A photograph by Rahul Surve

## Raja put India on world nuclear map

The man behind India's first nuclear test, Raja Ramanna was a multi-faceted personality who was at ease playing the piano as well as he was at discussing nuclear physics.

Hand-picked by Homi Bhabha, the founder of India's nuclear programme, Ramanna put the country on the world nuclear map with the 1974 nuclear explosion at Pokhran. During his distinguished career, he headed the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and secretary, department of atomic energy.

He was also the scientific adviser to the defence minister and was minister of state

for defence in the V.P. Singh government. A recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, Ramanna was a member of the Rajya Sabha till last year. He also founded the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore.

Born in 1925 at Tumkur in Karnataka, Ramanna did his graduation from the Madras University and completed his PhD in London.

After returning to India, he joined Bhabha, who was then at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

Ramanna also wrote a book on music called *The Structure of Music in Raga and Western Systems*.

Perhaps a better tribute cannot be paid to the scientist

### OBITUARY/ RAJA RAMANNA

than the fact that President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his condolence message described him as "his mentor guide and teacher." Dr Kalam said his death was a "deep personal loss" and felt the scientific community had lost a source of inspiration.

In his tribute, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is in New York, said India had lost one of its most outstanding nuclear scientists.

That Ramanna's death is bound to leave a vacuum in scientific circles is evident. The scientific community

paid glowing tributes to him.

Top space scientists, Dr K. Kasturirangan and Dr U.R. Rao, described his passing away as an irreparable loss to the country in general and the scientific community in particular. Dr Kasturirangan, who was former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, recalled that Ramanna was an outstanding scientist in the field of nuclear physics, who was instrumental in making India a nuclear power way back in 1974, and added, "I knew him since 1980 and he was very keen to achieve synergy of space science and atomic science." To Dr U.R. Rao, another former chairman of Isro, Ramanna was,

"Extremely warm, honest and transparent to the core, besides being a man of wide and varied interests."

Dr Rao recalled that during one of their visits to the Karnataka Raj Bhavan, Ramanna told the then governor Rama Devi: "I am pained by the piano which is lying unused. Why don't you give it to me?" He then played the piano for a few minutes and explained to the governor the differences and similarities between Carnatic and Western classical music, Dr Rao recalled.

This perhaps best describes the spirit of the man, who lived simply a very great life.

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