

## Raman son dead

(The Telegraph, Calcutta Wednesday , May 16 , 2012)

**New Delhi, March 3:** Venkatraman Radhakrishnan, a celebrated Indian astrophysicist who squeezed time away from his pursuits in radio astronomy for hang gliding and sailing on a catamaran he had designed by himself, died in Bangalore today. He was 82.

Radhakrishnan, a distinguished emeritus professor at the Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, was the son of the 20th century Indian physicist and Nobel laureate C.V. Raman. Radhakrishnan is survived by his wife and a son, a former colleague said.

The astronomical community has labelled Radhakrishnan a pioneer in the astronomy of pulsars, the spinning and shrunken remnants of dead stars that have exhausted all their nuclear fuel and are packed with neutrons.

But, the colleague said, Radhakrishnan also spent time sailing across the oceans — once sailing from Southampton in the UK to Sydney harbour in Australia where incredulous immigration control officers refused to believe him.

“He was all set to head out on another six-month voyage,” said Roddam Narasimha, an aerospace scientist and former director of the National Aerospace Laboratories, Bangalore, who had collaborated with him during the 1980s in one of his design projects.

“Most of us study aerodynamics forces through equations. But Radhakrishnan liked to actually build things, fly hang gliders and sail — and gain experience of the aerodynamics forces first hand,” Narasimha said.

About seven years ago, Radhakrishnan designed a unique wing-sailed catamaran in the Raman Research Institute, about 400km from the nearest coast, supported in part by the institute and India’s Defence Research Development Organisation.

When it was done, it was transported to Kochi for another of his sailing journeys.

Radhakrishnan had spent time at the California Institute of Technology and in Australia before returning to India where he was the founder-director of the Raman Research Institute from 1972 through 1994.