Meghnad Saha Encyclopedia Article

Meghnad Saha

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1893-1956

Indian astrophysicist who gave birth to the development of accelerators in India when he developed a 37-in (94-cm) cyclotron in 1940. Before Saha's interest in research with particle accelerators peaked in the 1930s, he studied the thermal ionization that occurs in the extremely hot atmosphere of stars. Saha demonstrated that elements in stars are ionized in proportion to their temperature, as defined by the equation that now bears his name. In 1938 he was appointed professor of physics at Calcutta, where he established the first Indian Institute of Nuclear Physics.