

Science Reporter



THE GREAT DEBATE

The article **From the Red Fort to the Red Planet** by Kamalakanta Jena which appeared in the May issue was interesting. Though Schiaparelli proposed the idea of canals or channels, which was later misunderstood as canals, on Mars, he seems to be unsure of his assertion otherwise why should he say, "Their singular aspect has led to see in them the work of intelligent beings. I am careful not to combat this suggestion which contains nothing impossible." It seems he felt he was on the threshold of a major discovery and did not want to lose the credit.

Percival Lowell, on the other hand, was supremely confident that the canals existed and were built by intelligent Martians. In his book *Mars as the Abode of Life* he concluded with great conviction, "A sadder interest attaches to such existence: that is, cosmically speaking soon to pass away... The drying-up of the planet is certain to proceed until the surface can support no life at all. When the last ember is thus extinguished the planet will roll a dead world through space, its evolutionary career forever ended."

Later on, another astronomer Antoniadi acknowledged the canal theory when he wrote, "No-one has ever seen a true canal on Mars. The rectilinear canals of Schiaparelli, single or double, do not exist..." This debate continued for decades but now we know for sure that Schiaparelli and Lowell were both wrong.

Dr. S.K. Gurtu Jaipur

HARMING HUMANS

Honour the Oceans in the June 2013 issue was really an awakening article. It has given detailed information about how we are recklessly polluting



oceans thus leaving marine lives in great jeopardy. Each one of us must be aware that while polluting oceans, we are not only endangering marine lives but eventually causing harm to the terrestrial animals including us. We, human beings, have greater intelligence, so it is to be used to make our world fit for survival of every living being.

Tem Reagmi, Kalimpong, W. Bengal

STORY BEHIND REFINED OILS

The article **Oil Spoil** by Gargi Bagchi and S.M. Paul Khurana in the May 2013 issue was educative and informative. In this era of health consciousness, refined oils are used widely. But the authors explained



elaborately the story behind 'refined oils'. We are often puzzled how to select the most suitable cooking oil. This article makes it clear that it is best to use a combination of cooking oils.

Ranjan Saha West Bengal

HONOUR OCEANS

The Cover Story of the June 2013 issue entitled **Honour the Oceans** should be treated as an eye opener by each and every socially conscious human being as it rightly sums up all the atrocities we have been inflicting mercilessly on the oceans for our own luxuries and warns that human beings, however more technologically advanced, are vulnerable if Nature chooses to backfire. The information about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch christened 'the deadly plastic soup' by the author has made me shiver as has the plight of the birds and denizens of the ocean so miserably dripping in oil from spills in oceans all because of man's boundless demands of affluence and totally callous attitude.

We must contribute our bit in saving the oceans for the greater good of mankind before it is too late.

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BENEFICIAL INFORMATION

In the May edition of SR, the article **Oil Spoil** was highly informative as far as our health is concerned. The article has beautifully described the types of fats and the level of cholesterol they contain. It is worthy to mention that the details cited regarding the pros and cons of taking different types of fats would be very much beneficial to each and every reader.

Imran Hussain, Markaz Academy
Hojai Nagaon, Assam

GLOOMY PROSPECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING

In the June 2013 issue of SR the cover story **Honour the Oceans** by Malvika Dekhane was interesting. The fact that the oceanic world is under

threat of pollution, oil spills, harmful fishing practices, etc. has been explained superbly. The problem of global warming was also dealt with briefly.

It may be added that this phenomenon is posing a serious threat to the shores. A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that the world's sea level could rise by as much as one metre in 80 years. Since three quarters of the earth's mega cities are situated by the sea and 40% of the world's population lives within 60 km of a coast the rise in sea level would



affect an estimated one billion people along the coastline. In India, the scene would be very disturbing. About 600,000 ha would be submerged, driving about seven million people from their homes. Low lying Maldives would be seriously imperiled. Bangladesh would be gravely threatened.

Shashi, Indore

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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