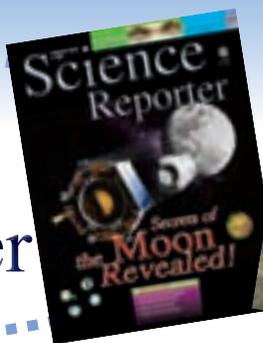


Science Reporter



RIGHT TO TOILET

This refers to the cover to the Cover Story article, Sanitation through Toilets, by Bindeshwar Pathak (November 2013). Despite the fact that we observe World Toilet Day every year on 19th November, people in one third of the world do not have access to basic sanitation. In India we still find open garbage, untreated sewage dumps, clogged drains and households with inadequate or no access to sanitation. It is shameful that the obnoxious practice of manual scavenging is still continuing in spite of the fact that we have advanced technology.

The right to toilets is so intimately linked with the right to housing, shelter and privacy that these human rights cannot meaningfully exist in the absence of easy access to a toilet. Therefore, the right to toilet is indisputably a basic and universal human right.

Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak has put in remarkable efforts in the development of Sulabh Effluent Treatment Technology. He deserves all appreciation. Dr. S.K. Aggarwal
Dean Academic Affairs
Amritsar College of Engineering & Technology, Amritsar

SANITATION FOR ALL

Thanks a lot for highlighting one of the most crucial issues in public health in the Indian subcontinent through your thought-provoking editorial (Lack of Sanitation Highly Uneconomical, November 2013) as well as the

expert article of Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (Sanitation Through Toilets), who launched a crusade and a silent revolution against the mismanagement of sanitation facilities.

In your editorial, you have very rightly pointed out with suitable facts and figures that lack of sanitation is highly uneconomical and at the same time a grave danger to global peace. So far, the priority of governments and politicians has been increase in GDP without looking into the problems at the grassroots level for a large section of the population. But, with the Sulabh international movement of Dr. Pathak, it is hoped that the government will pay heed to the problems of the common man.

Dr. Sheojee Singh
Sr. Asstt. Professor of Physics
Govt. College of Education,
Chandigarh

WEED OUT SUPERSTITIONS

The October 2013 editorial (On the Path of Reason) caught my attention because it refers to promotion of Scientific Temper and abatement of superstitions and blind faiths in India. It is indeed hard to believe, that in a developing country like India people prefer believing in these baseless superstitions rather than looking towards science for solutions.

Nissim Ezekiel's poem "The Night of the Scorpion" tells of such a story where a village woman is stung by a scorpion. The villagers who had come to see her, instead of trying to cure her or help her, unanimously come to the conclusion that she is

suffering for all the sins she has committed and believe that her pain will purify her sins.

However, it is surprising to know that these superstitions are not confined to just villages but prevail in the urban areas also. For instance, if a family is just about to depart for an outing and one of the family members suddenly sneezes, the outing is either cancelled or postponed because the sneezing is supposed to bring bad luck.

These superstitions do nothing except instill fear in the minds and hearts of the people. These blind faiths need to be wrenched out of the minds of the people so that we can together form a better, greater and Scientific India.
Nandini Acharjee
West Bengal

CLEARING THE COBWEBS

Meet Mr. Budhiya, a comic-based educational article regarding nuclear power plants by Amritesh Srivastava in the November edition is indeed a fruitful effort. The presentation style was unique bearing well-explained text easily understandable to even a child. The message through the conversation of villagers and Sameer uncovered all the superstitious thoughts that exist commonly. The series has managed to clear the misconceptions regarding nuclear power plants.



Pankaj Kumar Samal
Odisha

RADAR AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

The fact that during WW-II aircraB equipped with radar were extensively used against German submarines has been mentioned in Ingenious Inventions (November 2013).

The confrontation of aircraB and U-boats is an engrossing saga of that turbulent period. In early 1942 the Allied aircraB equipped with 1.5 metre radar attempted to detect it, when it surfaced to recharge its batteries, and destroy it with the help of depth charges. To facilitate early detection of the enemy aircraB and take timely evasive measures against the airborne menace the German High Command had their Unterseebooten fitted with metre radar listening set. The Allied Command responded with the more powerful 10 cm radar almost crippling the destructive potential of the undersea lurking adversary, which was playing havoc with its merchant vessels.

It may be recalled that in the anti-submarine campaigns the achievements of a small group of scientists headed by Professor Blacke8 (known as Blacke8's Circus) was particularly noteworthy. Their activity came to be known in UK as Operational Research, because the first studies were concerned with the operational use of the radar though later on it branched to other equipments and areas. Subsequently Operations Research or OR developed into a full-fledged branch of mathematics.
Dr. S.K. Gurtu
Mansarovar, Jaipur

HAVE YOUR SAY

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