

geophysics of the Indian Ocean, I am forced to believe that, not mentioning about the previous reference on the subject is not a simple omission, but a deliberate attempt by the authors in claiming the credit for the discovery and first report on the occurrence of YTT in WCMI. During the above-cited symposium, I had a fruitful discussion with the first author (J. N. Pattan) of the present paper on the AST, the details of which were presented in the poster session of the symposium.

Subsequent to this, in 1998, a paper entitled 'Characterization of Late Pleistocene Tephra in deep sea sediments of the Arabian Sea' by A. R. Nambiar and

P. V. Sukumaran was submitted to *Current Science* for publication. We had also followed the same methodology as that of the present authors and correlated the AST with the YTT. But to our dismay, the paper was rejected in the light of the comments – correlation with Toba eruption is too tenuous and oxygen isotope stratigraphy to be established for firm correlation – made by the referee.

Was it fair on the part of *Current Science* to deny the publication of important geological information on the basis of one referee's remarks and to later publish similar data from the same area after a period of three years?

May I take this opportunity to request the editor, *Current Science* to get the manuscripts reviewed by at least two referees/experts in the field before any paper is rejected, so that no valuable information is lost without finding a place for print.

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## Pan masala: Adverse ecological consequences

Nigam *et al.* (*Curr. Sci.*, 2001, **80**, 1306–1309) have established carcinogenic potential of pan masala. Apart from this, the widespread use of this product has other serious repercussions on the environment, as one of the ingredients is catechol (Katha) obtained from

the tree *Acacia catechu*. Illicit felling of these trees from the forests in the catchment areas of the feeder lakes of Mumbai, in course of time, would affect the water supply to the metropolis as deforestation accelerates siltation.

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## NEWS

### Rajagopala Chidambaram takes over as Chairman of TIFAC

Rajagopala Chidambaram, who helped to establish research groups in the area of high-pressure physics and neutron crystallography at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai and who is known as the 'architect of Pokhran-II', now assumes charge of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), New Delhi, as its Chairman. Chidambaram, former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Science, Banga-

lore, who later went on to become the Director of BARC in 1990.

Chidambaram, on taking over the mantle of Chairmanship, had an opportunity to discuss and review TIFAC's activities and meet the team at TIFAC. He appreciated the efforts of TIFAC in the three successful missions – sugar technology, fly ash and advanced composites, commending the Home-Grown Technology Programme, the Patent Facilitating Centre, Techno Market Survey Reports and the Vision 2020.

Chidambaram replaces A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, who served as the Chairman of

TIFAC during 1993–2001, being instrumental in preparing the Technology Vision 2020 reports. TIFAC now embarks on a major initiative to realize the Vision 2020 into action and would foray into projects concerning textile machinery, road construction machinery, agriculture and alternative energy technologies.

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