

Seminar

Institute for Plasma Research

Title : Is there a Life on Mars ???

Speaker : Dr. S. M. Ahmed

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Date : 18th August 2017 (Friday)

Time : 03.30 PM

Venue : Seminar Hall, IPR

Abstract :



The human quest to look beyond earth lead to the discovery of telescope by Galileo. The next best place to look for life is Planet Mars, while the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli's observations of "Canali" on Mars were misinterpreted as watery canals in the English speaking countries, hunt for locating life beyond earth has taken humans to the doorstep of Mars. History is a mute spectator to more than half of the failed attempts to reach mars (21-successful out of 51 attempts) ; one of the major achievements by NASA recently is to land a one ton rover called **CURIOSITY** on Mars spending Rs.12,000 crores. The sole purpose of *curiosity* is to hunt down life on planet Mars. Right from 1976, NASA has been trying to look for life on mars by landing two probes called **Vikings**. Though these probes have not conclusively found any traces of life on the red planet; they could not rule out the possibility either.

After the grand success of reaching out to Moon by landing a **messenger** (Dr. Kalam's words) on the southern pole of the moon called **Moon Impact Probe**, India became the first country ever to reach mars in its first attempt. After completing a 100% coverage of the land mapping on Mars and sending nearly half a dozen rovers to perform on-site scientific studies; scientists have found one indirect method of looking for life on mars by looking at the presence of **methane**. The ground based telescopic measurements and confirmation by remote sensing tools of presence of methane on mars along with the recent discovery of water on this planet has placed us on the best possible position to nab the elusive methane. The Indian probe **Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)** also called Mangalyaan, carried a dedicated instrument to look for methane. The discussion revolves around the measurement aspects of methane which may throw some light on finding life, no matter in what form it is, on Mars.
