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NEWS

DESIGNING SINGLE-MINDED CATALYSTS

. . ."Today a new way of making catalysts is emerging, thanks to better understanding of the reactions involved, new instruments that allow tantalizing peeks into the processes that catalysts initiate, and the increased power of computers. The process is called molecular engineering, and it's helping researchers reach their long-sought goal of making catalysts that work as deftly as enzymes do. . . . One of the most ambitious efforts in catalyst design is aimed at exploiting natural gas as a future source of gasoline, other fuels, and chemicals. Many of the petroleum industry's long-range strategists expect oil prices to start rising again eventually. They believe that any company that successfully devises a catalytic means of converting methane (the principal ingredient of natural gas) into methanol, or methyl alcohol, in a single step at the well site, will hit a gusher of revenue. Exotic catalysts already can take the next step, turning methanol into high-octane gasoline. The first commercial plant using them for that purpose will start production in New Zealand this fall."

[(Gene Bylinsky in *Fortune* 27 May 85, p. 82–4, 88 [pd 3001j]*). Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 30, July 29, 1985. p. 11. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]

SAVING THE DYING GANGA

. . ."Thanks to the free flow of bio-non-degradable industrial effluents into [the Ganga river in India], the increasing pollution of its tributaries and the construction of dams on them, the river has lost its regenerative capacities. It will be impossible to resuscitate it unless a series of parallel measures are taken to relocate industries or to make total effluent treatment mandatory, to provide sanitation facilities in towns and villages, to regulate the use of pesticides and toxic agro-chemicals and simultaneously, to cleanse the tributaries. Difficult as it is, the task is urgent. And not only for the Ganga. Most Indian rivers need to be cleaned up. The danger is that, like cleansing the Thames in Britain, depolluting the Ganga will become a spectacular project whose success has no bearing upon other, equally relevant, aspects of pollution of the environment. Fortunately, effluent treatment is not an unattractive economic proposition. Several million tons of soil nutrients and large quantities of bio-gas and water are its by-products."

[(In *Times of India* 1 May 85, p. 8 [pd 3007j]). Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 30, July 29, 1985, p. 12. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]