

# *Simply Difficult*

Breakfast presents as many challenges to scientists as the Higgs boson quest

**W**hile landmark scientific quests such as the search for the Higgs boson or 'God Particle' undoubtedly deserve accolades and funding, most human beings would be equally grateful if attention is paid to solving more common conundrums and problems. They would be far cheaper to accomplish but would have a similarly universal effect. The heated butter knife is one such recent revolutionary and life-altering achievement that can improve the lives of people far beyond the delivery area of the British baking brand that is about to launch it. In India, bread is constantly battered by solidified chunks of butter as the dairy item simply must be kept in the refrigerator to prevent it from turning rancid. A heated knife will not only regulate the quantity and spread of butter better, but also save the mangling of countless slices of bread. The benefits of extending the heating principle – or installing a variable thermostat – in other cutlery and kitchen stuff are also obvious.

The breakfast table has plenty of other problems that can keep geeks and whiz kids more gainfully occupied than solving the recently-unveiled 'world's most-difficult sudoku'. Everyone would appreciate an intelligent toaster, for instance, that can adjust the done-ness of bread according to the person, like high-end vehicles adjust internal specifications according to each driver. Then there is the seemingly impossible task of creating a truly dripless teapot and milkpot, for those who have not succumbed to the easier option of switching to tea bags. Even a biscuit that will soften but not shear off into a cup of hot tea would be a seminal contribution by the scientific community to the life of the ordinary Indian, albeit not in the same league as the venerable Satyendra Nath Bose's quantum discovery.