

# Life on Mars found; destroyed by mistake

**London:** Bungling NASA scientists are believed to have found tiny live microbes on Mars — but mistakenly killed them by boiling them alive, a media report said Saturday.

Two spacecraft that landed on the Red Planet in 1976 are now thought to have detected microbes in Martian soil. But scientists at the time failed to spot the signs of life - and cooked the bugs at 160 degrees Centigrade during experiments, The Sun reported.

Now an international team has used modern techniques to re-examine data collected by the two unmanned Viking probes.

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## HOW A LITTLE HEAT DESTROYED ET MICROBES



Biologist Joseph Miller, of the University of Southern California, said: "I'm 99 percent sure there's life there. To paraphrase an old saying, if it looks like a microbe and acts like a microbe - then it probably is a microbe." During the 1976 mission, nutrients were added to the Martian soil. It would have a similar effect to putting plant food on a garden. The soil gave off a gas, believed to be mainly carbon dioxide. Experts dismissed the possibility that the gas came from bugs. But new tests indicate it did. Unfortunately, the soil was heated in the original tests, killing any microbes.

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dioxide. Experts dismissed the possibility that the gas came from bugs. But new tests indicate it did. Unfortunately, the soil was heated in the original tests, killing any microbes, the newspaper added. IANS