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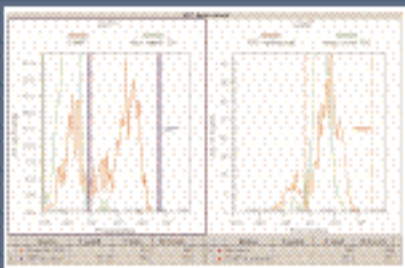
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The quickest and easiest path to finding fluorescent proteins, antibody binding and apoptotic cells begins with the cell fluorescence LabChip kit, based on Caliper Technologies Corporation's LabChip approach. When used in combination with the Agilent 2100 bioanalyzer and cell assay extension, they create an advanced method of research engineered to provide exceptional results. The cell fluorescence LabChip kit automates simple flow cytometric analysis, leading to clear and definite detection of apoptosis, Green Fluorescence Protein (GFP) and antibodies, all with a relatively low sample volume. It's a smarter approach to fluorescent cell analysis.

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news in brief

Genomics projects hint at Europe's future priorities

Brussels The European Commission this month unveiled three genomics research projects, giving researchers a good indication of the direction European funding for their field will take in coming years.

Like many of the initiatives under the commission's 2.2-billion-euro (US\$1.9-billion) human genomics programme, the projects will involve large networks of scientists from public institutions and private companies across the continent.

One consortium will conduct structural studies of 600 human proteins that are thought to be medically important. Another will do epidemiological research into twins as a way of studying the genes responsible for common diseases. The third project centres on mouse genomics. Peter Gruss, director of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany, says that this is the first time the commission has funded a systematic study of the mouse genome. Funding for the three projects will total 40 million euros.

Attempt to uproot refugees from lab ends in violence

Moscow A laboratory and library at the Botanical Institute in Tbilisi, Georgia, have been destroyed after police tried to evict refugees occupying a building on the institute's grounds.

The refugees took over the building in the past few weeks after fleeing a conflict in the

republic of Abkhazia, a mountainous region with a population of 120,000, which declared independence from Georgia in 1993. News agencies reported that the refugees had rebuffed repeated requests by the institute's director, Georgy Nakhutsrishvili, for them to leave. Local police and special forces from the Ministry of Justice attempted to remove the refugees on 20 March, prompting a riot in which laboratory property was smashed and rare library books were burned.

Shields to make light work of city pollution

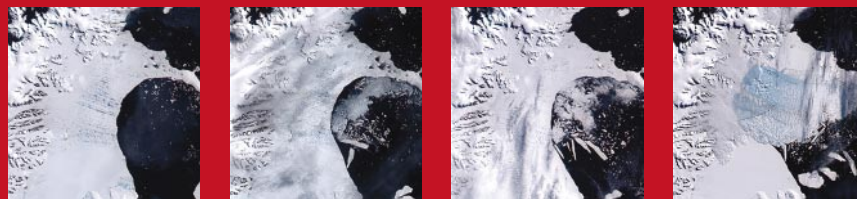
Prague The Czech Republic has become the first country in the world to legislate against light pollution, a serious problem for astronomers working near towns and cities.

Czech city administrations have only two months to adapt their street lights, the main source of light pollution, to meet the new regulations. The task is a mammoth one. "In Prague the whole street-lighting system needs to be equipped with fully shielded light fixtures," says Jenik Hollan, an astronomer at the Nicholas Copernicus Observatory and Planetarium in Brno, who was involved in preparing the legislation.

Astronomy-friendly lights are rare elsewhere. Tucson, Arizona is one of only a few cities to have converted its street lights so that they do not emit light upwards.

Bushmeat could be bridge to humans for HIV's cousins

Paris More than one-fifth of the monkey meat sold in the West African nation of Cameroon is infected with HIV's ancestor, the simian



Satellite snaps a shortened shelf life

Boulder The dramatic disintegration of an Antarctic ice shelf, believed to be about 12,000 years old, has been captured by one of NASA's Earth-observation satellites.

Researchers working with data from the Terra satellite were already aware that the Larsen B ice shelf was gradually breaking up. But this sequence of pictures, taken over the course of five weeks, reveals a rapid acceleration in the process, with over 3,000 square kilometres of the 200-metre thick shelf breaking free since January.

Climate change is the most likely cause. Polar researchers say that Antarctica has warmed by over 2 °C in the past 50 years, creating countless pools of meltwater on the ice sheets. These seep into cracks in the sheet, eventually leading to the breakup of the shelf.

Researchers are now trying to learn more about the breakup by studying other ice shelves. They hope that climate models will clarify the processes behind the rise in Antarctic temperatures. "Global climate modellers now have to determine what forcing on the climate resulted in this warming," says Theodore Scambos, a geologist at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

J. DISCLOSURES/MODIS/NASA

immunodeficiency virus, scientists from the Research Institute for Development in Montpellier, France, have found. The findings highlight the risk of new HIV-like viruses infecting humans who eat bushmeat, the researchers say.

The team screened blood samples from 16 species of monkey and ape, revealing 21 types of the simian virus, four of them new to science (M. Peeters *et al. Emerg. Infect. Dis.* 8, in the press). The range of strains found is worrying, as the chances of infection are thought to increase if a person is exposed to a greater number of strains.

The Montpellier researchers are now sequencing the genomes of the strains they have collected, and aim to develop tests for the viruses. They then hope to screen people who prepare or eat bushmeat to see which, if any, strains they are carrying.

♦ www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid

Women find it's still a man's world at MIT

Boston A large increase in the number of female members of faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has failed to prevent women at the institute from feeling marginalized, a new report has found.

The institute first began investigating the issue of gender bias in 1994, since when the number of women in teaching positions has leapt by 40%. But its latest study, a follow-up to a 1999 report that revealed a systematic pattern of gender discrimination within some departments (see *Nature* 398, 361; 1999), admits that a bias continues to exist.

Relatively few women hold positions of power at the institute and, although salaries for female faculty members have increased in some departments, many female staff continue to feel that they wield less influence than their male counterparts, the authors say. There is a pervasive feeling, writes provost Robert Brown in the report's introduction, "that MIT is a 'man's world'. This must change".

♦ web.mit.edu/faculty/reports

The heady world of soccer nets a clean bill of health

Washington Worried parents can relax — playing soccer might not cause the cognitive impairments suggested by the results of recent studies.

The American Academy of Pediatrics said in March 2000 that the potential risks of heading a soccer ball, or of clashing heads with other players, were not known. As a result, the academy called on youth soccer organizers to minimize heading.

But a new study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in which



On the ball: there are no penalties for footballers who tackle their job head-on.

researchers studied the cognitive abilities of soccer players and other athletes at the university, found no evidence of reduced performance on standard cognitive tests (K. M. Guskiewicz, S. W. Marshall, S. P. Broglio, R. C. Cantu and D. T. Kirkendall *Am. J. Sports Med.* 30, 157–162; 2002).

But the researchers did discover that soccer players suffer more concussions than other athletes, and critics warn that the university's entrance requirements may have weeded out soccer players who have already suffered brain damage.

Oil drilling sends cod into sexual decline

Bergen The North Sea's dwindling cod stocks could be facing a new threat. Researchers in Norway have found that chemicals released by oil drilling can disrupt the ability of the fish to reproduce.

In laboratory experiments, male cod took on female characteristics and female fish spawned later and produced smaller eggs when exposed to alkylated phenols, which occur naturally in underground oil reservoirs.

Scientists from the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research announced their findings last week at a conference on the North Sea, held in Bergen in Norway, and are now carrying out field trials around drilling platforms.

A separate report from the same conference warned that the common skate is on the verge of extinction in the North Sea because of overfishing. A ban on sea-bed trawling in certain regions is the only way to protect bottom-dwelling species such as skate and rays, the report's authors say.



New Time Zone

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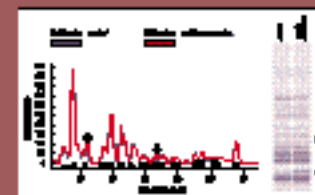
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Agilent Technologies introduces a new way to save time. The Protein 200 Plus LabChip kit, featuring Caliper's LabChip approach, is a fast and reliable assay capable of analyzing a multitude of different protein samples including cell lysates, column fractions, antibodies and purified proteins.

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