

German research council warns of poor career prospects

Munich. Wolfgang Frühwald, president of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG), Germany's research council, told the annual meeting of the council in Leipzig last week that limited funding has forced the DFG to reduce by almost a half the number of fellowships it can offer in future.

Frühwald said that the move would be particularly hard on young scientists, as the number of research positions in industry has also fallen considerably over the past four years. Germany was in danger of losing a generation of researchers, he said, if students turn away from natural sciences because of poor job prospects.

At the meeting, the DFG approved the setting-up, in cooperation with the National Natural Science Foundation of China, of a research coordination office in Beijing, despite Germany's diplomatic differences with China over human rights in Tibet. □

Scientists 'support Yeltsin'

St. Petersburg. The Scientists' Union of St. Petersburg has published a letter in the local press stating that its members will vote almost unanimously for President Boris Yeltsin in the second round of the presidential elections this week. "If Yeltsin is elected, we will be able not only to strengthen the [academic] freedom we have already obtained, but also increase the influence of scientists' over the destiny of the Russian science," they wrote.

But some Russian politicians take a more cynical view. Galina Starovoytova, a member of the Duma, the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament, has suggested that many Russian intellectuals do not intend to vote at all, as they do not consider any of the candidates an ideal president, and feel that their votes will make

little impact. "As a result the Russian president will emerge without their will or efforts," she said. □

Princeton helps Korean tokamak

Washington. The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory in New Jersey is to support a US effort to assist South Korea in the design of a major tokamak facility, which, the Koreans say, will be operational by 2002 at the town of Taejeon. Korea will pay \$540,000 this year for the US assistance, which will also involve researchers at other magnetic fusion facilities in the United States, with additional awards expected to follow.

The tokamak will cost between \$200 and \$300 million, and will use similar technology to the \$750-million Tokamak Physics Experiment (TPX), which was planned for Princeton but cancelled by the US Congress last year. □

Biotechnology grants available

London. The British government is inviting bids for a number of grants of £50,000 (US\$75,000) available to manufacturing and service industry companies that employ up to 500 employees and can devise projects that involve the "innovative use of biotechnology".

The initiative, part of the Department of Trade and Industry's Biotechnology Means Business scheme, is sponsored by *Chemistry and Industry* magazine, with backing from the BioIndustry Association. The closing date for applications is 31 October 1996. Winners will be announced early next year. □

Newsletter for BSE surveillance

Paris. Addressing an issue highlighted by the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis, a group of European researchers will this month launch a publication aimed at improving European



Even Carl von Linné
would have difficulty
classifying us