

official added that Algeria has no ambitions to generate nuclear power or build nuclear weapons. Concerns about the latter have eased since Algeria decided last year to adhere to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. □

\$47 million for nuclear clean-up

Washington. A programme of basic research to support the clean-up of the sites where the United States made its nuclear weapons is to receive its first round of grants from the US Department of Energy (see *Nature* 379, 664; 1996). The department is to award 138 grants worth \$47 million to 52 universities and 11 DOE laboratories. The funds are intended to nurture scientific interest in areas such as glass chemistry and bioremediation, which will eventually be applied to the clean-up programme.

The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Washington state did best in the competition, winning ten awards. □

Feds to investigate crop sabotage

Munich. Germany's research minister, Jürgen Rüttgers, has asked the Ministry of the Interior to call in the federal police agency, the Bundeskriminalamt, to locate and prosecute militant activists who destroyed a transgenic crop field experiment earlier this month.

The trial was being carried out by the Max Planck Institute for Breeding Research in Cologne. The aim was to assess possible environmental risks associated with genetically manipulated potatoes. It is the 13th field trial to be destroyed in Germany since January. □

Slap on wrist for NIH

Washington. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been fined \$2,500 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for failing to adequately secure radioactive materials at its research

laboratories in Bethesda, Maryland. The materials were found in unlocked refrigerators last summer, when NRC inspectors went to NIH to investigate an incident in which researchers had ingested radioactive phosphorus-32.

The NRC said it was "particularly concerned" at the number of violations and the fact that similar ones had been discovered earlier in 1995 and the year before. NIH's budget this year is \$12 billion. □

Scientists condemn church raid

Paris. The main trade union representing French researchers, Syndicat National des Chercheurs Scientifiques, protested at the "brutal eviction" from a Paris church of 300 illegal African immigrants. The illegal immigrants, ten of whom were in the 50th day of a hunger strike, were removed by teargas canister-throwing police.

In a letter to Jacques Chirac, the French president, the union said the scientific community was "honoured" to include foreign researchers in its ranks. It said it deplored the way in which new immigration laws were being applied. In many cases, people who have lived legally in France for years have become aliens overnight. □

Mandela names new minister

Cape Town. President Nelson Mandela has appointed Lionel Mtshali, 60, education spokesperson of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), as Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. He succeeds fellow-IFP MP Ben Ngubane, who party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi has transferred elsewhere. Mtshali is a former history teacher who was education minister in the Kwazulu homeland from 1990 to 1994. □

We apologize to Anthony Hewish and to Jocelyn Bell Burnell for inadvertently rewriting her role in the pulsar story and for misspelling her name (*Nature* 382, 664; 1996).
Editor, *Nature*.

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