



Hot on the trail: heat-detecting machinery installed at New Tokyo International Airport.

## Asian airports use thermal imaging to hunt down SARS

**Tokyo** A military-designed thermal-imaging system is being used to scan airline passengers entering and leaving Singapore. Similar systems are being introduced in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Beijing. Authorities hope that the technology will spot those with a high temperature brought on by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

In Singapore, for example, all passengers leaving the country since mid-April, and some entering, have been scanned with the infrared device. Those showing red on the monitor — meaning that their temperature is above 37.5 °C — are escorted to a nurses' station for a check with a thermometer. Anyone with a temperature above 38 °C is then taken to a hospital wing dedicated to treating SARS patients.

A high fever is one of the trademark signs of the disease, which had killed 21 people and infected 198 in Singapore by 26 April.

Critics of the imaging system have argued that it will pick up fevers associated with the common cold, whereas people who are infected with SARS but are not yet showing symptoms will pass through undetected.

## Rocket-engine defect delays observatory launch

**Washington** The launch of the last of NASA's 'great observatories' — four telescopes covering different parts of the electromagnetic spectrum — has been delayed until August.

The Space Infrared Telescope Facility (SIRTF) had been due to launch on a Delta rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on 18 April. But NASA announced on launch day

that engineers had discovered a defect in the material surrounding the exit nozzle on one of the rocket's nine engines.

The first of the agency's two Mars probes is scheduled for lift-off in early June, and officials have decided that SIRTF cannot be fixed before then. The telescope will now be launched no earlier than mid-August.

## Royal Society to give prince nanotech news

**London** Prince Charles has asked the Royal Society to supply the names of scientists who could advise him on nanotechnology. The move comes after the ETC group, a Canadian environmental organization, published a report highlighting what it sees as the potential dangers of nanotechnology. The heir to the British throne has spoken out on other environmental issues, such as genetically modified crops.

The ETC report, published this January, claimed that nanotechnology — the manipulation of matter at the atomic level — may have unpredictable consequences and could be used to develop weapons of mass destruction. The report was greeted with scepticism by many researchers, but attracted media attention.

On 11 June the ETC group will run a seminar in Brussels, aimed at policy-makers, on the risk and promises of nanotechnology, and how it should be regulated.

## Telescope loses space to Native American site

**San Francisco** A long-running wrangle over the construction of a telescope array near a site valued by Native Americans took another turn last week.

Construction of the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System (VERITAS) appeared to have been given the

all-clear in January (see *Nature* 421, 466; 2003). The plans had generated opposition because the proposed site near Mount Hopkins in Arizona was close to a site used by Native Americans.

On 23 April Lucia Turner, deputy regional forester in Albuquerque, New Mexico, overturned the earlier decision on the grounds that VERITAS would be an eyesore. Officials working on the telescope, which would use seven 10–12-metre dishes to observe  $\gamma$ -ray bursts, say that they will appeal.

The Forest Service is now considering whether it should ask the telescope's backers to complete a potentially lengthy environmental impact survey.

## Raelian cloners 'have two staff and no lab'

**Washington** Clonaid, the company that announced last December that it had cloned a human (see *Nature* 421, 3; 2003), seems to have no lab space and only two employees, according to court documents obtained by the *Boston Globe*.

Clonaid was founded by a religious sect known as the Raelians, who believe that the human race was cloned from aliens. The company's managing director, Raelian bishop Brigitte Boisselier, has said that so far a dozen clients have each paid \$25,000 or more for the group's cloning services.

The documents, which stem from a case in which a Florida lawyer tried to get a legal guardian appointed for the company's first purported clone, seem to show that the company is little more than a website, according to the newspaper.

Clonaid admits that its US operation is more or less just a trademarked name, but insists that research is being conducted at facilities overseas, which, it says, operate under different company names in order to preserve anonymity.

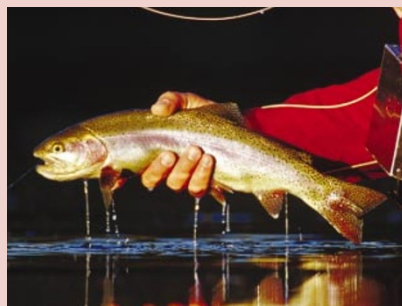
## Anglers face the painful truth

**London** Does a rainbow trout on a hook feel pain? Yes, say researchers at the University of Edinburgh and the nearby Roslin Institute. The results could shatter the long-held belief that fish do not experience pain in the same way that higher vertebrates and humans do.

A team led by Roslin marine biologist Lynne Sneddon has found that rainbow trout have nociceptors — pain receptors on skin that report stimuli to the brain and cause reflex reactions when an animal's tissue is being damaged.

The group has also found that the animals react to painful stimuli in a way that cannot be explained as a reflex response, such as by producing rocking motions, a typical pain reaction in mammals.

"These are significant findings," says Michael Pietrock, a fisheries scientist at the Institute of



Inland Fisheries in Potsdam, Germany. The discovery is also likely to fuel arguments between animal-protection groups and anglers, he adds. Anti-angling campaigners have long believed that fish feel pain and cite this as the main argument against the sport.