

Crashed polar satellite earns reincarnation

An Earth-observation satellite that failed just minutes after its launch last October is to be replaced, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced on 24 February.

The €140-million (US\$165-million) CryoSat, which was designed to monitor Earth's shrinking ice caps, fell into the Arctic Ocean north of Greenland when the second stage of its launch rocket malfunctioned (see *Nature* 437, 1078; 2005). Mission scientists subsequently lobbied ESA and pushed for a rebuild, a request that has now been granted. The space agency says that a second CryoSat can be built for €106 million using infrastructure already in place for other missions.

CryoSat's second incarnation should be ready for launch in 2009.

Argentine fossils seized at Arizona gem show

US authorities have raided a major gem and mineral show in Arizona, marking the first crackdown on the widespread sale of international fossils there. Such sales have long been the scourge of palaeontologists.

On 10 February, federal agents seized about 6 tonnes of Argentinian fossils, including at least three dinosaur eggs valued at more than US\$4,000 each. For two weeks each winter, hotels and vacant parking lots in Tucson are turned into geological marketplaces for the show (see *Nature* 403, 690; 2000).

Acting on a complaint from the international police organization Interpol, agents confiscated the fossils, which were being sold by the Buenos Aires-based firm Rhodo Co. Rhodo officials could not be reached for comment.

A criminal investigation has been opened

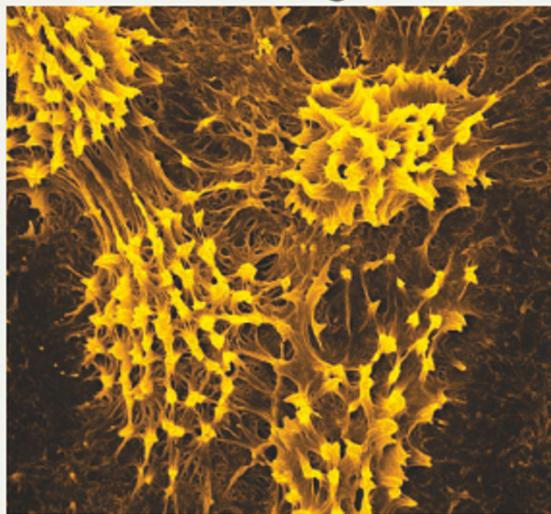


Precious cache: illicit fossils, including dinosaur eggs, were found among minerals at a US show.

Prizewinning stem cells take Australian grand tour

Both beauty and scientific merit are lauded in this image — the winner of an Australian photography competition focused on stem cells. The photo shows human embryonic stem cells developing into epithelial precursor cells.

A collection of 35 photos, intended to engage public interest in stem-cell research, is being displayed around the country. Currently in Sydney, the exhibit has been on show in parliament buildings, business offices, hospitals and universities. The competition was organized by the Australian Stem Cell Centre in Melbourne.



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to determine whether US or Argentinian laws were violated when the fossils were shipped to Tucson for sale.

'Shadow' debate on climate looks beyond Kyoto

Politicians, business and development leaders have launched their own dialogue for tackling climate change after the initial phase of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012.

Frustrated by the slow pace of government action, the group plans to shadow the formal United Nations negotiations on a successor to the Kyoto agreement, which limits greenhouse-gas emissions. They will explore ways in which developing countries can cooperate to reduce emissions.

The group includes lawmakers from the G8 industrial nations, as well as India, China, Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Australia and South Africa. No representative of the US Congress was present at the 24 February launch, although the effort's organizers say they hope to have significant US participation.

Margaret Beckett, the UK environment minister, said she hoped the discussions would "encourage more free thinking" than formal negotiations. The group's work will culminate in a report to be presented at the Japanese G8 summit in 2008.

Fake data did not harm nuclear-waste study result

The inclusion of false data in documents relating to a proposed nuclear-waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, has not altered conclusions about the site's scientific worthiness, says a report from the

US Department of Energy. But the department recommends that much of the work should be redone anyway.

The 17 February report comes almost a year after revelations that scientists at the US Geological Survey faked the times and dates of geological samples used to study how water seeped through the mountain (see *Nature* 434, 427; 2005). Such data are crucial because they indicate how long it might take for nuclear waste to enter the water supply if the containers were to leak.

Independent data support the water-seepage estimates, the report concludes.

Licensing thumbs-down for drug from GM goats

The European Medicines Agency last week turned down a company's request to market a drug made in the milk of genetically modified (GM) goats. The decision means that, despite more than a decade of using GM animals to produce drugs, no products have yet been approved for use.

GTC Biotherapeutics of Framingham, Massachusetts, developed a herd of GM goats that produce milk containing a human anticoagulant called antithrombin. The company planned to market the drug, under the name ATryn, for people with a genetic defect that makes their blood prone to clotting.

But the medicines agency turned down the request on 23 February, saying the product had not been tested thoroughly enough.

Attention now turns to a Dutch company, Leiden-based Pharming, which has an application pending with the US Food and Drug Administration to market an antibacterial agent produced in the milk of GM cows.