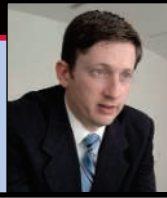


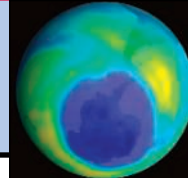
**1314**  
Ecologists  
branch out



**1319**  
A patent  
'Robin Hood'



**1320**  
Ancient Earth  
systems



human and animal isolates from the Sichuan outbreak with those collected previously within China and in other countries. Xu says discussions on international collaborations are underway. "I think China will be very open about sharing samples, but you need to go through the proper procedures."

WHO's Gilbert hopes that additional human epidemiological and clinical information is included in a paper China's CDC is reportedly now readying for an international

journal. He applauds the Ministry of Health for keeping the international community informed of human cases but says the Ministry of Agriculture has not been as forthcoming. Specifically, he says it has failed to clarify such basic epidemiological features as how many pigs have died or been culled and the nature of the affected livestock operations. He adds that surveillance of pig farms may be needed to restore consumer confidence in the safety of pork products.

Meanwhile, officials in China's southern Guangdong Province recently reported four isolated human cases, including one death; all of the patients may have been exposed to infected meat. And experts are awaiting further details on the suspected infection of two butchers who died in early August in Jiangsu Province. Hong Kong also recently confirmed its tenth case this year, although it is not clear if there is a connection to the Sichuan outbreak.

—DENNIS NORMILE

## SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

# Kashmir Workshop Aims to Break the Ice

Jack Shroder and Michael Bishop know that one scientific workshop next spring won't erase a half-century of rancor between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. But the two University of Nebraska geoscientists, just back from their latest expedition to the Himalayan region, believe that examining the scientific processes taking place at the rooftop of the world could not only ease tensions between these two bitter enemies but also advance science and benefit the people of South Asia. Thanks to \$125,000 from two U.S. agencies and a private foundation, the two are preparing to take the first step toward turning the Karakoram mountain range and the nearby Siachen Glacier into a scientific peace park.

"It makes no sense to have troops there at 20,000 feet," says Shroder about the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield, where the harsh environment has claimed more lives than bullets have over 2 decades of sporadic warfare between the two countries. "If this could be turned into a peace park, then the military could leave and the scientists and mountain community could play." Adds Pervez Hoodbhoy, a physicist at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan, "Bitter hatreds are giving way to a grudging acceptance of the other's existence. Suddenly everything has become possible."

The idea of turning the war-torn region into a peace park has been around for several

years. But the concept began to gel 2 years ago after Harry Barnes, a former U.S. ambassador to India, contacted Shroder about organizing a workshop. Shroder used his 25-year scientific ties to the region to sign up Syed Hamidullah, director of the Centre of Excellence in Geology at the University of Peshawar in Pakistan, and Syed Iqbal Hasnain, vice chancellor of Calicut University in India.

This month, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded a \$70,000 grant to what Shroder and Bishop have labeled the Karakoram Science Project. Combined with \$30,000 from the Office

of Naval Research and \$25,000 from the Lounsbery Foundation, the money will enable some 30 to 40 scientists from the United States, India, Pakistan, China, and elsewhere to meet next May in Lahore, Pakistan, to discuss an array of geological, climactic, and environmental questions. "NSF was particularly interested in including younger scientists," says Shroder. "It's the first time they've ever given me more money than I've asked for."

In June, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made an unprecedented visit to the site and proclaimed his support for making Siachen, the largest midlatitude glacier in the

world, a mountain of peace. "The NSF grant is a step in the right direction," says Hasnain, "in building bridges that might lead to the ultimate demilitarization" of the glacier. Hoodbhoy believes that the workshop, if it leads to a peace park, is "proof that enmities are not forever."

Bishop and Shroder plan to concentrate on the science and leave the peacemaking to others. But they readily acknowledge that the workshop could be the start of something much bigger. "If we can get people to work together, there's no telling what could come of it," says Bishop. "We just want to get the ball rolling."

—JEFFREY MERVIS

With reporting by Pallava Bagla in New Delhi, India.



**High hopes.** Jack Shroder (left) and Mike Bishop envision the Karakoram mountains as a magnet for scientists.