

also rises with germination. During early germination (i.e. imbibition), *s*-RNA decreased probably because of a pre-existing ribonuclease which has been found to show reduction in activity as germination proceeds.

The nucleotide composition of *r*-RNA and *s*-RNA (mostly *t*-RNA) is found to change with the hours of germination in the embryonic axis but not in the cotyledons. Since different purine:pyrimidine ratios are also observed in *s*-RNA (*t*-RNA) as well as *r*-RNA in the tissue, it appears that different RNA species may be associated with the characteristic differentiation processes in the embryonic axis.

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NEWS

MEETING OF THE UN'S ENVIRONMENTAL WATCHDOG

Air, water and food constitute the three very basic ingredients for the wellbeing of humankind. How clean and safe are they? A straightforward question which gets these days a highly-complicated answer. Tens of thousands of new synthetic chemical compounds and pesticides are allowed to roam freely in the environment, with one thousand new ones added every year; reported and undisclosed oil and chemical spillovers endanger aquatic

life and drinking water quality; acid rains and heavy metals carried by the wind kill off forests and fresh-water lakes in neighbouring countries; heavy smog days in big cities throughout the world send inhabitants in their thousands on sick leave—and that is only the very tip of the global environmental iceberg.

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