

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### Deepwater report

The full catalogue of failures that led to the destruction of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig and the subsequent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico last year have been laid out in the final US government report, released on 14 September. Investigators from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement and the US Coast Guard conclude that rig-owners Transocean, contracting company Halliburton and “designated operator” BP all violated a number of federal regulations. See [go.nature.com/gxp9i4](http://go.nature.com/gxp9i4) for more.

### TB in Europe

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a programme to slash soaring rates of drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) in Europe. Just one-third of an estimated 80,000 drug-resistant TB infections are reported to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the WHO in Europe each year. The WHO programme aims to raise this to 85% by 2015, and to treat three-quarters of those cases. The US\$5 billion needed will come from industry, non-profit organizations and the 53 member states in the WHO European region. See [go.nature.com/rczftm](http://go.nature.com/rczftm) for more.

### Israel joins CERN

Israel has become the first non-European country to join CERN, Europe's high-energy physics research centre near Geneva, Switzerland. The country, which is the centre's 21st member, will get voting rights on CERN's council and will have to contribute to the centre's budget. Its membership was officially



## Hope for space telescope

A US Senate subcommittee voted on 14 September to continue funding the James Webb Space Telescope (pictured), the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope. Its climbing price tag, now estimated at US\$8.7 billion, is devouring NASA's astrophysics budget, and a subcommittee in the House of Representatives had voted to cancel the project. The Senate subcommittee, led by Barbara Mikulski (Democrat, Maryland), wants the telescope to get \$530 million in 2012 — much more than the \$374 million in the president's budget request. See [go.nature.com/ei3ije](http://go.nature.com/ei3ije) for more.

confirmed on 16 September, after Israel's cabinet voted to join the lab in April (see *Nature* 472, 265; 2011).

### Stem-cell lawsuit

Two researchers seeking to block US government funding of research using human embryonic stem cells are still battling to continue their lawsuit. On 19 September, James Sherley and Theresa Deisher appealed against a 27 July decision in which a federal judge ruled against

their case (*Nature* 476, 14–15; 2011). See [go.nature.com/dkrlwj](http://go.nature.com/dkrlwj) for more.

### Biofuels error

Countries that encourage increased use of energy from biomass may be overestimating the savings in greenhouse-gas emissions. In an Opinion report published on 15 September, the 19-strong scientific committee of the European Environment Agency has criticized what it calls a “serious accounting

error” if policies incorrectly assume that the combustion of biomass is carbon-neutral. That is not always the case: the biomass may replace forest that would otherwise store carbon, or replace food crops that must then be planted and harvested on other land that was once forest. Emissions resulting from such changes in land use are not correctly accounted for in, for example, the European Union's Renewable Energy Directive, the committee said.

### Global Fund review

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria needs a major overhaul, according to a report released on 19 September. The fund, based in Geneva, Switzerland, had commissioned the review after it discovered corruption and fraud affecting some US\$39 million of its grants (see *Nature* 470, 6; 2011). The report says that the fund should shift its focus away from getting money out as quickly as possible: the group needs better auditing and management of grants, and should measure its success in terms of its impact on health, not how much it spends. The fund welcomed the report. See [go.nature.com/w87mnc](http://go.nature.com/w87mnc) for more.

## RESEARCH

### NASA's mega-rocket

NASA revealed its latest designs for a heavy-launch vehicle on 14 September. The Space Launch System is set to be more than 10 metres taller than the Saturn V launcher, and would be the most powerful rocket ever to lift people into space, with configurations for both 70 and 130 tonnes of thrust. NASA officials say that they're aiming for a late-2017 crewless test flight, in advance of a 2021 manned test.

C. GUNN/NASA

The programme would cost US\$3 billion a year to get to the test launch — less than the agency spent annually on the shuttle programme. See [go.nature.com/3393u5](http://go.nature.com/3393u5) for more.

## Body on a chip

Even though US politicians have not yet authorized its creation, a proposed new translational-medicine centre at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is already getting busy. On 16 September, the NIH and the US military together proposed a US\$140-million five-year effort to develop a chip inlaid with human cells for testing new drugs. The NIH's share of this effort would be administered through the proposed new National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. The centre is also advertising for a director. See [go.nature.com/9ahvkb](http://go.nature.com/9ahvkb) for more.

## Radio-array rivals

Australia and South Africa submitted their final bids to host the Square Kilometre Array of radio telescopes on 15 September. Australia is proposing to build the array in the mostly empty interior of Western Australia, with outstations as far away as New Zealand. South Africa would build its version in the Karoo Desert, with parts extending into eight neighbouring

countries, including islands in the Indian Ocean. A group of external experts will scrutinize the bids, with a decision by the project's board of directors expected early next year. Construction of the €1.5-billion (US\$2.1-billion) array is set to begin in 2016.

### EVENTS



## Mountain quake

A 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck the sparsely populated Himalayan state of Sikkim, northeastern India, on 18 September. As *Nature* went to press, the quake had killed 81 people, including some in nearby West Bengal, Bihar, Nepal and Tibet, and rain and mudslides were hampering rescue efforts (**pictured**).

### BUSINESS

## Nuclear exit

German engineering firm Siemens is pulling out of nuclear power for good. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* on 18 September, chief executive

Peter Löscher announced that the Munich-based company would no longer build or finance nuclear power plants in Germany or elsewhere. Löscher said that the decision was largely due to the nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi in Japan and the German government's decision to shut down its existing nuclear plants by 2022. See [go.nature.com/zay8ra](http://go.nature.com/zay8ra) for more.

### PEOPLE

## Innovation boss

Alexander von Gabain took over as head of the European Union's European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) on 15 September, replacing founding chairman Martin Schuurmans. Von Gabain, a microbiologist at the Max Perutz Laboratories in Vienna and a co-founder of the Austrian biotechnology company Intercell, plans to get the EIT more involved in biomedical science.

## Schön loses PhD

The University of Konstanz in Germany was correct to withdraw the doctoral degree of disgraced physicist Jan Hendrik Schön, a court in the state of Baden-Württemberg has ruled. Schön, formerly a staff physicist at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, New Jersey — the development arm of Lucent Technologies

## COMING UP

### 26–30 SEPTEMBER

The World Conference on Marine Biodiversity takes place in Aberdeen, UK, discussing research priorities. [www.marine-biodiversity.org](http://www.marine-biodiversity.org)

### 27–30 SEPTEMBER

The International Council for Science holds its triennial general assembly in Rome. The agenda includes reshaping global programmes for environmental research. [go.nature.com/egukv6](http://go.nature.com/egukv6)

### 30 SEPTEMBER

The Tevatron, Fermilab's particle accelerator in Batavia, Illinois, shuts down. See page 379 for more.

— is notorious for a string of high-profile fabrications in the fields of organic and molecular electronics. Last year, Schön successfully sued his alma mater for its 2004 decision to revoke his 1997 PhD thesis (for which there is no suspicion of data fabrication). But in a 14 September judgement, the state court agreed with Konstanz that later misconduct also showed 'unworthiness' to hold the doctorate. The court added that the judgement could not be appealed.

## Global-health head

Trevor Mundel, currently head of development at Swiss drug firm Novartis, will be the new president of the Global Health Programme at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington, the foundation announced on 13 September. Mundel, taking over from 1 December, replaces Tachi Yamada, who retired in June after five years as president.

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## TREND WATCH

Insufficient progress is being made to drive down global infant mortality, a report from the United Nations concludes. Developed regions are rated as 'on track' to meet their 2015 target of 5 deaths in under-fives per 1,000 live births. But although death rates have dropped rapidly in developing nations, the fall is not enough to achieve a 32 per 1,000 target by the same date, warns the UN's child mortality estimation group. In 2010, developing nations had an average of 63 deaths per 1,000, with sub-Saharan Africa on 121.

## SLOW PROGRESS ON INFANT DEATHS

The developing world is likely to miss its 2015 Millennium Development Goal on infant mortality.

