

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

RESEARCH

Higgs success

Particle physicists announced that they had found a new boson on 4 July, and officially declared success in their hunt for the long-sought Higgs boson. But data gathered from the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Europe's high-energy physics laboratory near Geneva, will need to be further analysed to establish whether the particle behaves exactly as the standard model of particle physics predicts. See page 147 for more.

Arsenic life

After 18 months of debate, two studies have been published refuting the suggestion that a bacterium found in California's Mono Lake can use arsenic in place of phosphorus to build its DNA and other biomolecules. In 2010, a group led by Felisa Wolfe-Simon, a microbiologist now at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, California, reported the astonishing finding to great fanfare (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/fkkgmq>; 2010). But two studies published by *Science* on 8 July found no evidence that the bacteria incorporate arsenic into their biomolecules — although they can grow on small amounts of phosphorus in extreme

NUMBER CRUNCH

172

Number of papers in which anaesthesiologist Yoshitaka Fujii fabricated results over two decades, according to a 29 June report from the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists.



CHINA/PHOTOS/PHOTOCOME/PRESS ASSOCIATION

Three Gorges Dam reaches full power

China's Three Gorges Dam — the world's largest hydroelectric-power project — is now running at full capacity (22.5 gigawatts) after its 32nd and final turbine was connected to the electricity grid on 4 July. Construction of the 2.3-kilometre-long dam, which began in 1994, forced the relocation of more than

one million people and cost tens of billions of dollars. Last year China's cabinet, the State Council, admitted that the dam is plagued by pollution, silt accumulation and ecological deterioration nearby, and has affected irrigation, water supply and shipping in downstream regions.

concentrations of arsenic. See go.nature.com/hl5jwk for more.

Polonium death?

The body of Yasser Arafat, former president of the Palestinian National Authority, will be exhumed to determine whether he was poisoned with the radioactive metal polonium-210. The Institute of Radiation Physics in Lausanne, Switzerland, found high levels of the isotope on Arafat's clothing, provided by his widow Suha. The test results were reported on 3 July by news organization Al Jazeera, which had approached the lab on Suha's behalf. Arafat died in

November 2004 after falling ill with symptoms consistent with polonium poisoning. His death has remained unexplained. See go.nature.com/oz8jqm for more.

Disease testing

The World Health Organization and the Cambodian Ministry of Health were scrambling last week to conduct tests on an initially undiagnosed illness that has killed at least 52 children in Cambodia since April, most of them under the age of three. On 9 July, the organizations announced that testing had pointed to a particularly virulent strain of hand, foot and mouth

disease. If that is confirmed, then the disease has hit Cambodia particularly hard: neighbouring Vietnam (with a population six times the size of Cambodia's) had only 29 deaths from the disease from January to 10 June.

Reefs at risk

Threats to coral reefs in the 'Coral Triangle' (which takes in parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines) are much higher than the global average. More than 85% of reefs there are directly threatened by local human activities such as coastal pollution and destructive fishing; the global average is 60%. The World Resources

YONHAP NEWS/YNA/NEWS.COM
Institute in Washington DC published the statistics on 8 July in an update to its 2011 *Reefs at Risk Revisited* report (see *Nature* 471, 10; 2011).

PEOPLE

Funding head

Peter Strohschneider, a historian at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, has been elected the next president of Germany's main research-funding agency, the DFG. From 1 January 2013 he will take over from engineer Matthias Kleiner, who has headed the agency for two three-year terms. Strohschneider, who was elected on 4 July, has plenty of experience with research funding and politics: he was chairman of the German Council of Science and Humanities from 2006 to 2011.

POLICY

Korean whaling

South Korea announced on 4 July at a meeting of the International Whaling Commission that it plans to begin hunting whales for research purposes — a move that could legitimize existing whale catches by South Korean fishermen (pictured). The country says that it needs to measure populations of minke whales off the Korean coast. But anti-whaling groups say



that is merely an excuse to justify a commercial hunt. Japan is the only country that currently practises 'scientific' whaling, an exception permitted under the 1986 whaling moratorium. See go.nature.com/bu2huy for more.

Nuclear inquiry

The Fukushima nuclear meltdown was a "man-made" disaster that could have been foreseen and prevented, according to a scathing report from a Japanese parliamentary commission, released on 5 July. The report blames poor safety protocols resulting from the negligence of government regulators, who were compromised by close ties to industry. It also suggests that safety equipment might have been damaged in the earthquake, not just the

tsunami — a possibility that Japan's nuclear industry has tried to play down because restarting the nation's 50 functional reactors depends on them being earthquake-safe.

Endangered species

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) routinely brushed aside advice from scientific experts when setting critical habitats for endangered species, according to a study led by analysts from the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Arizona (D. N. Greenwald, K. F. Suckling and S. L. Pimm *BioScience* 62, 686–690; 2012). The study looked at 42 critical habitats set by the FWS between 2002 and 2007, and found that in 92% of the cases in which experts had recommended extending the area, the agency had ignored the advice. The agency contends that it must consider economic and national security concerns, and not just science. See go.nature.com/dar8ps for more.

Deep-sea mining

India will invest in technology to scour the ocean floor for minerals, including rare-earth minerals, science minister Ashwani Kumar said on 4 July in New Delhi, after a meeting to discuss the country's research priorities. India's National Institute of

COMING UP

14–21 JULY

Scientists undertake the last scheduled mission to the Aquarius undersea laboratory off Key Largo, Florida (see *Nature* 457, 141–143; 2009). The lab's funding has been cut in the 2013 budget.

20 JULY

The American Civil Liberties Union and the Public Patent Foundation will challenge a court ruling that allows companies to patent DNA, in a federal appeals court in Washington DC.

go.nature.com/lq5rnm

Ocean Technology in Chennai already has one ship that can launch submersibles for deep-sea mining in the Central Indian Ocean Basin, said Kumar; it will gain a second on 31 July, and two further ships are being constructed.

Libel win

Nature Publishing Group and *Nature* news reporter Quirin Schiermeier on 6 July won a long-running libel suit brought by the theoretical physicist Mohamed El Naschie. The expense and time required to defend the case demonstrates the need to reform English libel laws, say campaigners. See Editorial, page 139; World View, page 141; and page 149 for more.

CORRECTION

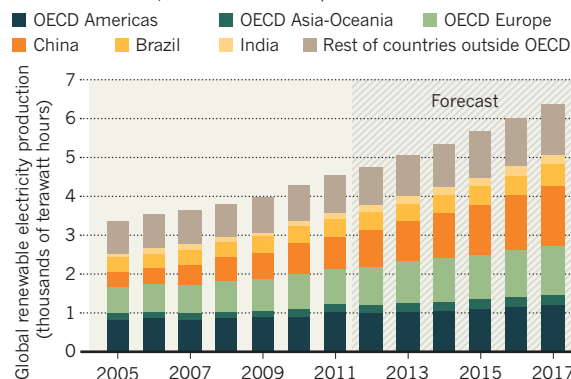
The story 'Nobel laureate dies' (*Nature* 486, 11; 2012) wrongly stated that Andrew Huxley worked on the axon of the giant squid. In fact, he worked on the giant axons of ordinary squid.

TREND WATCH

China will supply almost 40% of the world's added renewable electricity capacity over the next 5 years. In a 5 July forecast by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris, China's expansion is attributed to "ambitious policy targets, fast-growing electricity demand and ample financing". Worldwide, hydropower accounted for 80% of renewable generation in 2011 and will still dominate at 70% by 2017, the IEA says. The agency predicts a 17% contribution from wind power and 5% from solar energy in 2017.

CHINA TO LEAD RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY SURGE

Developing countries outside the OECD* account for two-thirds of the forecast 40% rise in renewable power to 2017.



*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.