

POLICY

US budget cuts

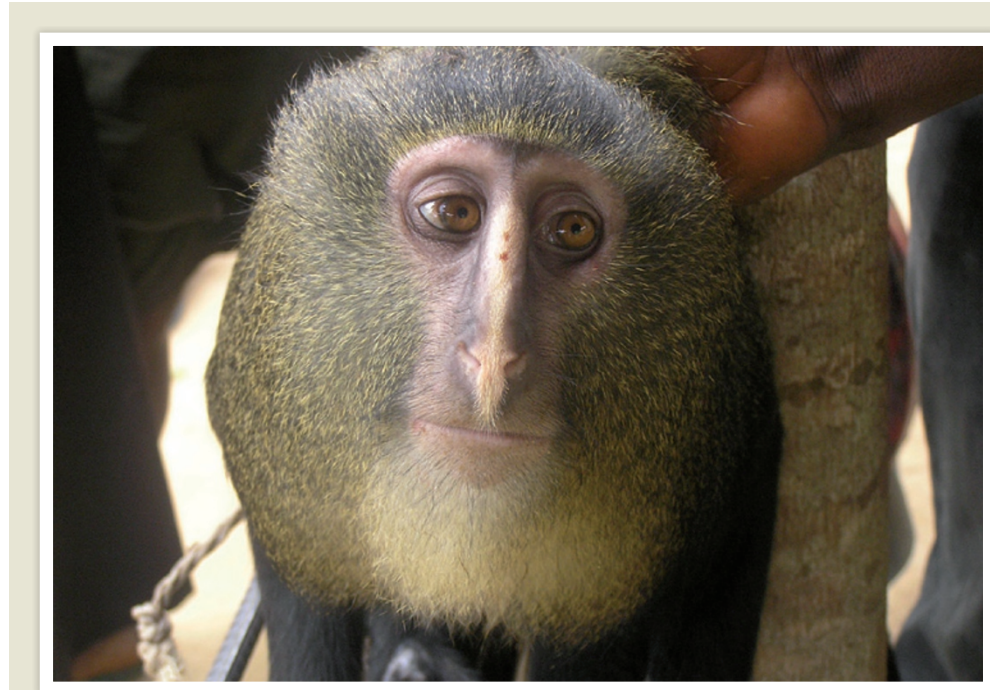
US science agencies would have their funding frozen at 2012 levels until 27 March 2013, under a bill passed by the House of Representatives on 13 September. The 'continuing resolution' provides temporary funds after the end of the 2012 US fiscal year (30 September), as US politicians are yet to agree on a 2013 budget. But it ignores another looming deadline: an enforced, across-the-board budget cut (or 'sequester') in January 2013 that would reduce non-defence spending at science agencies by 8.2%, according to an analysis released on 14 September by the White House's Office of Management and Budget. Politicians will have scant time after November's federal election to work out how to dodge this cut. See go.nature.com/def7mf for more.

Nuclear wind down

Japan is to phase out its 50 remaining nuclear reactors by the 2030s, the country's government announced on 14 September. In contrast to Germany, which last year decided to phase out its 17 nuclear reactors by 2022, the Japanese phase-out period is relatively long and so leaves scope for shifts or reversals in the future. See go.nature.com/dx6x4n for more.

Drug-safety drive

The European Union (EU) agreed to change its drug-oversight rules on 11 September, which should lead to speedier safety assessment and withdrawal of a drug from sale across the EU if its safety is questioned in one member state. The move was prompted by the scandal over the tardy withdrawal of the diabetes medicine Mediator (benfluorex) that erupted in



M. EMETSHU

New monkey species discovered

A slender, golden-maned monkey, well known to Congolese villagers in the Lomami River basin and first sighted by researchers in 2007, has been declared a new species. In an article published in *PLoS ONE* on 12 September (J. A. Hart *et al.* *PLoS ONE* 7, e44271; 2012),

Kate Detwiler of Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and her colleagues identified *Cercopithecus lomamiensis* from facial, behavioural and genetic features that distinguish it from similar species. It is only the second African monkey species discovered in 28 years.

France in November 2009. The drug, made by the French firm Servier, based in Neuilly-sur-Seine, was widely prescribed to people without diabetes as an appetite suppressant and is estimated to have caused more than 2,000 deaths from heart-valve disease and high blood pressure. See go.nature.com/9hukkh for more.

Open-access call

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Budapest Open Access Initiative — a campaign calling for open access to all peer-reviewed research — supporters on 12 September released a set of recommendations to cover the next ten years (see go.nature.com/kfvbbv).

They called on institutions and funding agencies to introduce open-access policies, and they set a new goal: to make open access the default method for distributing peer-reviewed research everywhere within a decade.

Space-agency boost

Poland has joined the European Space Agency (ESA). At a ceremony in Warsaw on 13 September, the nation became the 20th country to join the agency. Poland has been cooperating with ESA since 1994, and is involved in several of its science missions, including the Rosetta spacecraft

currently en route to the comet Churyumov–Gerasimenko. Poland will officially become a full member state at an ESA council meeting in November.

Nature reserve

The largest man-made coastal reserve in Europe is to be built using 4.5 million tonnes of earth from the construction of tunnels for London's Crossrail network. The project, launched on 17 September and managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, will transform 670 hectares of farmland on Wallasea Island in the Thames Estuary into wetlands and marshes to attract and house birds and other wildlife.

BUSINESS

Sequencing power

One of a new generation of DNA sequencers, a benchtop device from US biotech firm Life Technologies, began shipping to customers on 13 September, the company says. The US\$150,000 'Ion Proton' uses \$1,000 chips to sequence between 60 million and 80 million DNA fragments, each up to 200 bases long, in 4 hours. The company, based in Carlsbad, California, says that next year it will release a chip that can sequence a full human genome within 4 hours. Its competitor Illumina, headquartered in San Diego, California, says that its own high-throughput instrument, which can complete a full human genome within 24 hours, will be available by the end of this year. See go.nature.com/8g54pj for more.

Genomics deal

The world's largest genome sequencing centre, BGI in Shenzhen, China, announced plans on 17 September to buy into a leading human-genome sequencing firm. In a deal worth US\$117.6 million, BGI plans to buy all the outstanding shares of Complete Genomics, which is based in Mountain View, California. Complete Genomics provides services

for academic, medical and industry customers, but reported \$19 million in losses in the second quarter of 2012 and in June laid off 55 employees.

PEOPLE

Murder plea

Amy Bishop, a biologist formerly at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, who shot and killed her department chairman and two other colleagues during a faculty meeting on 12 February 2010 (see *Nature* 465, 150–155; 2010), has pleaded guilty to murder. The plea, made in Madison County circuit court in Huntsville, Alabama, on 11 September, means that Bishop will probably spend the rest of her life in prison but avoid the death penalty. See go.nature.com/ldk3g1 for more.

Drug doyen

Neurogeneticist Christopher Austin will head the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced on 14 September. Austin (pictured) worked in drug discovery at Merck before moving to the NIH in 2002, and has been head of the NCATS division of preclinical innovation since the centre,



based in Bethesda, Maryland, was launched in December 2011 with a proposed US\$575-million budget. See go.nature.com/fmdker for more.

RESEARCH

Himalayan melt

Glacier melt is accelerating in eastern and central parts of the Himalayas, but glaciers in the west could be growing, according to a report from the US National Research Council published on 12 September. Seasonal glacial melt contributes to the water supply of some 1.5 billion people in the region, but the report suggests that retreating glaciers are unlikely to threaten those supplies in the next few decades.

King question

A skeleton that may be that of Richard III, fifteenth-century king of England, has been discovered in Leicester, UK. Archaeologists from the

COMING UP

22–25 SEPTEMBER

The European Molecular Biology Organization meets in Nice, France, with keynote presentations on the life and death of RNA, and on the dynamic genome. go.nature.com/rj4a12

26–28 SEPTEMBER

In Arusha, Tanzania, politicians, firms, farmers and scientists convene at the African Green Revolution Forum to discuss how to invest in the continent's agricultural development. go.nature.com/x3ymat

University of Leicester last week announced that they had found the remains of a male with skull trauma and severe scoliosis — curvature of the lower back — consistent with historical accounts of the king's appearance and death. The body was found during a dig on the site of Grey Friars Church, now a city-centre car park. Researchers plan to compare mitochondrial DNA from the skeleton with that of Michael Ibsen, a man believed to be a descendant of the king's sister.

Weather satellite

The meteorological satellite MetOp-B was launched from Baikonur in Kazakhstan by the European Space Agency (ESA) on 17 September. It is set to replace the MetOp-A satellite by the end of 2012. MetOp-B will measure ozone and other trace gases, but it lacks most of the climatic instruments of ESA's satellite Envisat — lost in April — and the agency's as-yet unlaunched Sentinel satellite system, which faces delays owing to funding negotiations (*Nature* 484, 423–424; 2012).

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TREND WATCH

The financial and economic crisis has caused a worldwide drop in spending on research and development, as well as reductions in the creation of companies and venture-capital investment (see chart). Figures in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's 2012 outlook report, published on 13 September, also suggest that China, South Korea and other emerging Asian economies are out-innovating the Western world. See go.nature.com/p1quzi for more.

DEAL DOWNTURN

The global economic crisis has cut into venture-capital investments over the past four years.

