

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### EPA overruled

On 29 June, the US Supreme Court struck down a regulation to limit mercury emissions from power plants. The court ruled 5–4 that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should have conducted a cost–benefit analysis when it decided to regulate mercury, instead of doing so later in the regulatory process. The EPA is likely to revise its regulation in accordance with the ruling. Most utility companies have already complied with the rule by installing emissions-reduction equipment or closing down old coal-fired plants.

### US–China talks

The United States and China agreed to continue to cooperate on several measures, such as cracking down on illegal trafficking of wildlife and nuclear materials, and extending their five-year bilateral clean-energy research project. The seventh Strategic and Economic Dialogue, held on 23–24 June in Washington DC, included wide-ranging diplomatic discussions about climate, security and trade.

### Research conflict

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC said on 26 June that it plans to adopt stricter procedures governing conflicts of interest for its academics. The institution reviewed its policies in February, after allegations that solar physicist and climate-change sceptic Willie Soon of the Harvard–Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, failed to disclose his industry funding on his publications. The Smithsonian says that it will review sponsored awards for conflicts of interest and adopt standard terms and



BRENDON CREMER/ANS/MINDEN/CORBIS

## Lions restored to Rwanda after 15 years

Seven lions from South Africa began their journey to Akagera national park in Rwanda last week. The big cats — donated by two parks in KwaZulu-Natal province, where there is a surplus of lions — were selected for their reproductive

potential to repopulate Akagera. The last lion died in the Rwandan park 15 years ago, after the population was poisoned by cattle herders in the wake of the country's 1994 genocide when the park was left unmanaged.

conditions for this. It will also automate its annual financial-disclosure programme for all researchers and adopt a policy that requires scientists to disclose all sources of funding when publishing.

### Alberta carbon tax

The provincial government of Alberta, Canada, is to gradually double its carbon tax from Can\$15 (US\$12) per tonne to Can\$30 per tonne by 2017. Environment minister Shannon Phillips announced the plan on 25 June. She also appointed Andrew Leach, an environmental economist at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, to lead a panel that will review Alberta's overall climate policy before the United Nations climate summit in Paris this December.

## FUNDING

### Cancer campaign

Oregon Health & Science University in Portland announced on 25 June that it has raised US\$1 billion for its cancer centre in under 2 years. Philip Knight, co-founder of the sportswear company Nike, issued a challenge to the university in 2013: Knight would donate \$500 million only if the centre raised the same amount in 2 years. The money is thought to be the largest successful 'challenge pledge' in the United States and will go to research into cancer detection. See page 14 for more.

### Controversial fund

The European Council agreed on 25 June to create a European Fund for Strategic Investments

(EFSI), which will support large projects — including research — that face financing bottlenecks. The EFSI concept alarmed European researchers when it was first announced by the European Commission in January because some of its budget will be taken from the commission's Horizon 2020 research programme. The commission agreed in May to exclude some Horizon 2020 programmes, such as the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoc programme, from contributing.

## EVENTS

### Climate group wins

In a surprise ruling, a Dutch court has ordered the Netherlands to take measures

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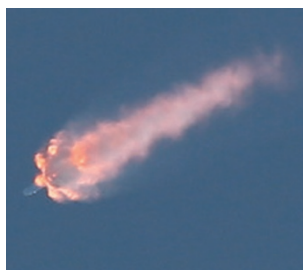
to cut its greenhouse-gas emissions by at least 25% by 2020, relative to 1990 levels. The court cited the undisputed state of climate science as evidence for its judgment, announced on 24 June. Under European Union pledges, the Netherlands needs to reduce its emissions by only 15%. But the Urgenda Foundation, a Dutch citizens' climate-change platform, said that this target is too low and sued the government for failing to take adequate action to prevent citizens from possible harm. The Dutch government can appeal against the ruling. See page 18 for more.

## Water worries

The water level of Lake Mead, the United States' largest reservoir, dipped to a historic low of 328 metres on 23 June, according to the US Bureau of Reclamation. That is lower than at any time since 1937. The site, located in Nevada, is part of the Colorado River system, which supplies water to roughly 40 million people in seven US states.

## SpaceX explosion

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying supplies to the International Space Station (ISS) broke up (**pictured**) shortly after lift-off on 28 June from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The mission is the third supply run to the ISS to fail since



late October. "Preliminary analysis suggests the vehicle experienced an overpressure event in the upper stage liquid oxygen tank approximately 139 seconds into flight," said SpaceX, a private company in Hawthorne, California. The next supply mission to the ISS is scheduled for 3 July, when a Russian Progress spacecraft will launch from Kazakhstan. See [go.nature.com/wmrcm5](http://go.nature.com/wmrcm5) for more.

## DNA law tested

A US company is the first to face penalties under the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, a US law that protects genetic privacy. Last week, a federal court in Georgia awarded US\$2.25 million to Jack Lowe and Dennis Reynolds, whose employer, Atlas Logistics Group Retail Services in Atlanta, Georgia, tested their DNA in a bid to identify who had left faeces on its premises. Neither man was the 'devious defecator'. See [go.nature.com/wtsvn3](http://go.nature.com/wtsvn3) for more.

## PEOPLE

### UCL stands ground

The head of University College London (UCL) has resisted calls to reinstate Nobel-prizewinning biologist Tim Hunt, who resigned from an honorary professorship after a media furore over comments he made about working with women. Michael Arthur, provost of UCL, said in a statement on 26 June: "Sir Tim has apologised for his remarks, and in no way do they diminish his reputation as a scientist. However, they do contradict the basic values of UCL — even if meant to be taken lightly — and because of that I believe we were right to accept his resignation."

## BUSINESS

### Patent tussle

Drug giant Eli Lilly has won a key UK patent fight over its blockbuster cancer drug Alimta (pemetrexed), the company announced on 25 June. Alimta's patent expires at the end of 2015, but Lilly, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, holds additional patents on a regimen of vitamins that are given with the drug. Dublin-based Actavis (now known as Allergan) proposed marketing an alternative form of Alimta after 2015, but the UK Court of Appeal ruled that this would violate Lilly's vitamin patents.

## COMING UP

### 6–9 JULY

Research on space planes, scramjets and other hypersonic vehicles will be discussed at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics conference in Glasgow, UK. [go.nature.com/hsvavt](http://go.nature.com/hsvavt)

### 7–9 JULY

Commercial and academic researchers meet in Boston, Massachusetts, for the ISS R&D conference to discuss innovation on the International Space Station. Elon Musk of SpaceX is among the speakers. [go.nature.com/dxkff2](http://go.nature.com/dxkff2)

### 9–13 JULY

The US Society for Developmental Biology holds its annual meeting in Snowbird, Utah. [go.nature.com/iy5m29](http://go.nature.com/iy5m29)

The decision could allow Lilly to maintain exclusivity in Britain and some other European countries until 2021.

## RESEARCH

### LIGO milestone

The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) has tripled the sensitivity of its detectors, members of the LIGO collaboration said at a meeting last week in Waterloo, Canada. The team estimates that the improvement, revealed last month by an 'engineering run' of the upgraded detectors, will give LIGO a one-in-three chance of detecting gravitational waves during an observation run this autumn. LIGO has detectors in Washington state and Louisiana.

## NATURE.COM

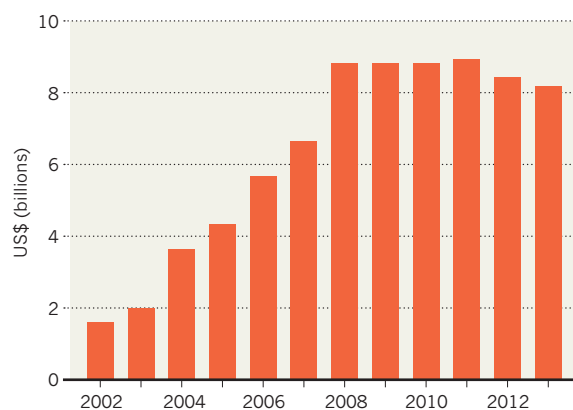
For daily news updates see: [www.nature.com/news](http://www.nature.com/news)

## TREND WATCH

Global efforts to combat AIDS must be scaled up urgently, or the epidemic is likely to rebound, warns a report by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and *The Lancet* Commission. The document says that the next 5 years are crucial to eliminating AIDS as a major public-health threat by 2030 (P. Piot *et al. Lancet* <http://doi.org/5sm>; 2015). The rate of new infections is not falling fast enough, and donations to fight the epidemic have levelled off, the report notes.

### AIDS FUNDS PLATEAU

International monies from donor governments to low- and middle-income countries to tackle HIV/AIDS have levelled off.

SOURCE: P. PIOT ET AL. LANCET [HTTP://DOI.ORG/5SM](http://doi.org/5sm) (2015)