

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

EVENTS

Space rock scoop

NASA plans to pluck a boulder off a larger asteroid and move it into orbit around the Moon for astronauts to visit. The decision on its controversial Asteroid Redirect Mission, announced on 25 March, rules out the possibility that a spacecraft would drag an entire asteroid into lunar space. NASA plans to launch a craft in December 2020, reach a yet-to-be-decided asteroid in 2022, and bring the rock back by 2025.

Livestock disease

A global campaign to eradicate a deadly livestock virus was launched this week at a meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Pestes des petits ruminants threatens 80% of goats, sheep and other small ruminants worldwide, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which co-hosted the meeting with the World Organisation for Animal Health. The agencies hope to eradicate the disease by 2030.

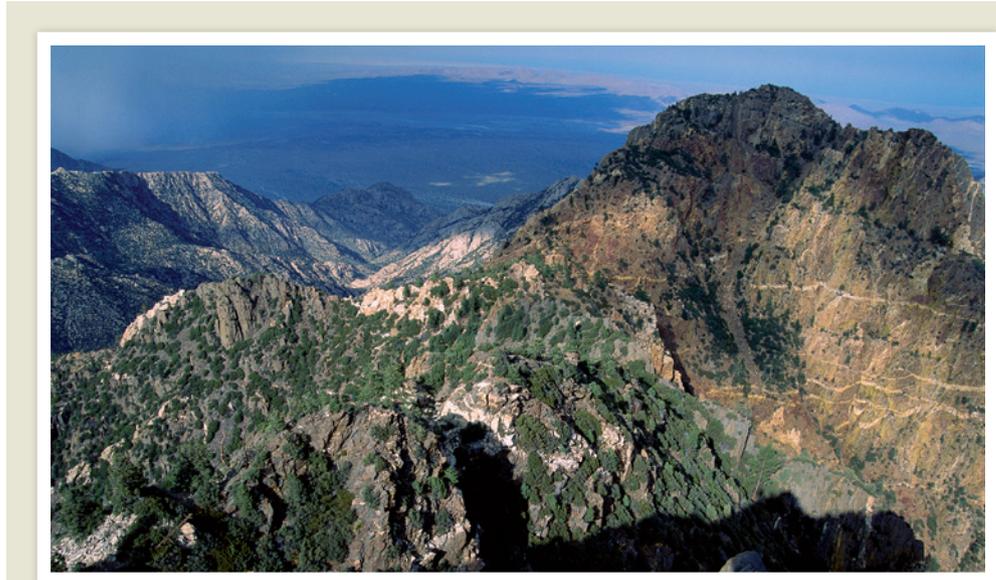
LHC debris cleared

Workers at CERN have managed to clear a piece of metal debris responsible for delaying the restart of the Large Hadron Collider last week. On 30 March, engineers at Europe's particle-physics lab near Geneva, Switzerland, burned away the fragment, which had caused a short circuit in a diode box, using a controlled electrical discharge. The restart of the particle accelerator should be possible within days, says Paul Collier, head of beams at CERN.

POLICY

Antibiotic strategy

On 27 March, the White House released final details of its long-term national strategy to tackle



PATRICIO ROBLES GIL / SIERRA MADRE / MINDEN PICTURES / CORBIS

Mexico or Spain for telescope array

San Pedro Mártir in Mexico's Baja California peninsula (pictured) is a finalist for the Northern Hemisphere site of the Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA). On 26 March, the CTA Consortium announced that it has narrowed down the five candidates to either San Pedro

Mártir or La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands, with a site in Arizona reserved as a back-up. The consortium will make its final decision in November. The roughly 100-telescope network at the CTA's Northern and Southern Hemisphere sites will detect high-energy γ -rays.

antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The plan, announced in September 2014, includes steps such as increasing surveillance for antimicrobial resistance at hospitals and providing incentives for drug companies to develop new antibiotics. President Barack Obama requested that US\$1.2 billion be set aside in the 2016 federal budget for initiatives to help curb antibiotic resistance.

Scientist gag fear

A rule change that could prevent UK government scientists from talking to the media without ministerial approval drew fire last week. In a 27 March letter to the UK government, Fiona Fox of the Science Media Centre in London joined with heads of the Association of British Science Writers and UK

science-communications network Stempa to protest against the change to the Civil Service Code. The letter warns that this could discourage scientists from talking to the media and might harm public understanding of science. Under the 16 March ruling, civil servants require "ministerial authorisation for any contact with the media". See page 5 for more.

FACILITIES

James Webb report

The James Webb Space Telescope, the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope due to launch in 2018, is at risk of falling behind schedule, says a 24 March report from the US Government Accountability Office (GAO). The famously over-budget, US\$8.8-billion

project, a collaboration between NASA, the Canadian Space Agency and the European Space Agency, was reorganized in 2011, and government auditors have kept a close eye on it since. Managers will be integrating and testing various parts of the telescope over the next 3.5 years. As time goes on and parts are joined together, project officials will be less able to accommodate slips in the schedule, the GAO warned.

RESEARCH

Anthrax attacked

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved a drug to treat people infected with anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*) after inhaling spores, for instance in a

bioterror attack. In 2011, the US government purchased the experimental drug from its maker, Cangene in Winnipeg, Canada, for the US Strategic National Stockpile. Cangene has since conducted studies on monkeys and rabbits, finding that between 36% and 70% of treated animals survived infection. The drug will no longer require emergency-use authorization, heralding faster treatment for those in need.

PEOPLE

Hawking trademark

Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking at the University of Cambridge, UK, is trademarking his name. According to media reports this week, he has applied to the UK Intellectual Property Office to register his name and safeguard its commercial use. In an e-mail to *Nature*, a university spokesman wrote: "It's a personal matter for Professor Hawking and is not a university issue, but I understand that it is correct that he has taken measures to protect his name."

Twin in space

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly (pictured, left) and cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) on 28 March, beginning a year-long study



into how the human body responds to long-duration spaceflight. Kelly's identical twin, Mark (pictured, right), a retired astronaut, will provide an Earth-based control, undergoing the same battery of tests so that researchers can compare the differences between the twins. Kelly and Kornienko are joined on the ISS by cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, who will stay for six months, and is expected to break the record for most cumulative time in space, currently 803 days. See go.nature.com/ikjgp4 for more.

BUSINESS

Drug buyout

The world's largest generic drug maker is to pay US\$3.5 billion to buy Auspex, a company in La Jolla, California, that is developing drugs for nervous-system disorders. Teva, of Petach Tikva, Israel, which announced the deal

on 30 March, is betting on the success of Auspex's drug SD-809 (deutetrabenazine) to recoup its investment. SD-809 is under consideration for approval in the United States for treating involuntary movements associated with Huntington's disease, and is in late-stage clinical testing for a type of involuntary movement disorder called tardive dyskinesia.

AWARDS

Turing prize

The first US\$1-million A. M. Turing Award was scooped by Michael Stonebraker of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge on 25 March. The computer scientist was recognized for fundamental ideas on databases that underlie modern 'big data' applications — ideas he also put into practice by co-founding numerous start-up companies. This

year's award (formally named the 2014 award) from the Association for Computing Machinery is quadruple the amount of previous years, owing to a donation from Google. It is named after the British mathematician Alan Turing.

FUNDING

Impact costs

The United Kingdom's first attempt to assess the economic and societal impact of its research cost £57 million (US\$85 million), says an analysis published on 25 March. In 2014, UK universities produced almost 7,000 case studies outlining their research impacts as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), a five-yearly assessment used to allocate £1.6 billion in funding annually. RAND Europe, in Cambridge, UK, said that because impact accounts for 20% of the funding assessment, the £57-million price tag translated to a 'transaction cost' of just 3.5% — lower than the estimated administration costs for grants allocated by UK Research Councils.

Renewable energy

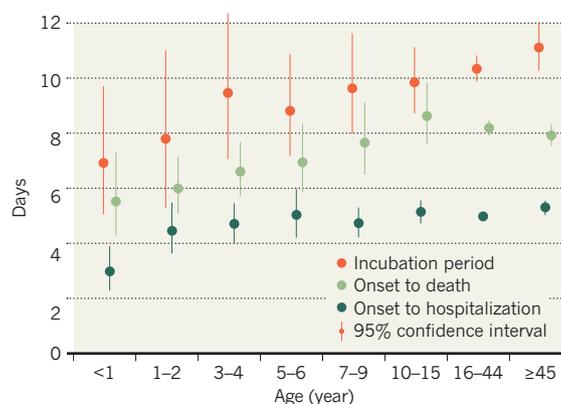
Global investment in renewable energy increased by 17% to US\$270 billion in 2014, the United Nations Environment Programme reported on 31 March. Led by China, the United States and Japan, the world added a record 103 gigawatts of capacity from renewables, which generated an estimated 9.1% of the world's electricity in 2014, up from 8.5% in 2013. The agency estimates that this reduced carbon dioxide emissions by roughly 1.3 gigatonnes — double the emissions from the global airline industry — compared with the CO₂ that would have been generated through fossil fuels. Solar and wind accounted for 92% of the total.

TREND WATCH

The Ebola virus infects fewer children than adults, but the disease progresses more quickly in children, according to a study of the current outbreak in West Africa (WHO Ebola Response Team *N. Engl. J. Med.* 372, 1274–1277; 2015). Young children had the highest case fatality rate, and also the quickest progression to death. The authors therefore recommend that children suspected to have Ebola should be referred and treated as early as possible.

EBOLA BY AGE

Incubation of the Ebola virus — and times from onset to hospitalization and to death — are shortest in young children.



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