

POLICY

Missile defence

The US missile-defence programme should end costly efforts to catch missiles in the early stages of launch and strengthen its ability to intercept them in mid-course, says *Making Sense of Ballistic Missile Defence*, a study from the National Academy of Sciences published on 11 September. Research into expensive space-based radars should be slashed, and efforts to distinguish warheads from dummies intensified, it says.

Climate-model plan

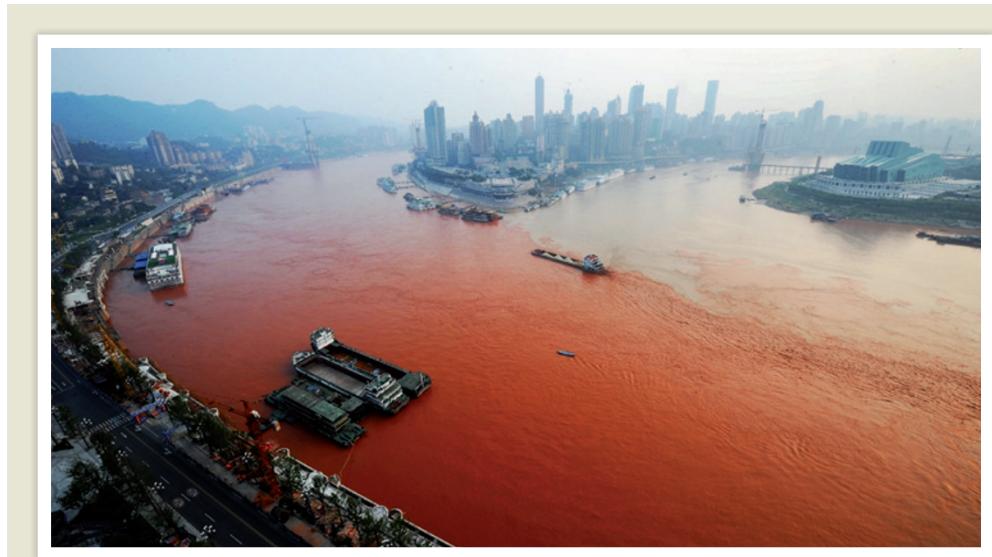
US climate modellers should work towards better ways of developing, interpreting and comparing climate and weather models, the National Research Council concludes in a report released on 7 September. A *National Strategy for Advancing Climate Modeling* recommends that the community try to standardize software platforms so that they are ready for the next generation of supercomputers. See go.nature.com/b2ymhi for more.

Nuclear future

The United Arab Emirates has started to build its first nuclear reactor, making it

JOURNALISM AWARD

Gayathri Vaidyanathan, who worked at *Nature* during a fellowship from the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa, Canada, has won the Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award for young journalists. The award cited 'The wheat stalker' (*Nature* **474**, 563–565; 2011) and 'The cultured chimpanzees' (*Nature* **476**, 266–269; 2011), and two pieces published elsewhere.



CHINA/GETTY IMAGES

Golden river turns red

A stretch of the Yangtze River near Chongqing in southwest China turned red on 6 September. What caused the sudden change in the river's colour is still unclear, but freshwater scientists contacted by *Nature* say that it is unlikely to

be attributable to an algal bloom because such algae do not grow in oxygen-rich, fast-flowing river waters. Last December, the Jian River in northern China turned red as a result of dye pollution.

the first country to embark on a commercial nuclear programme since China in 1985. On 30 August, reactor unit 1 at Barakah was reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna as being officially "under construction". The reactor is the first of four that will be supplied by a South Korean consortium at a total cost of US\$20 billion. The 1,400-megawatt pressurized water reactor is scheduled to begin operations in 2017.

Shale-gas risks

Drilling for shale gas might contaminate water resources, damage biodiversity and pollute the air — and such environmental risks are not adequately mitigated by existing legislation, says a study published by the European Commission on 7 September. A second study

notes that European shale gas would generate more greenhouse-gas emissions than conventional gas — but fewer than would be produced by importing gas into the European Union.

BUSINESS

Oil exploration

On 9 September, Shell began oil exploration in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska, the first offshore drilling in the sea for more than 20 years. The drilling is designed to reach an oil reservoir at a depth of 2,400 metres, but is unlikely to be finished this year: Shell's current permit is valid only until 24 September because of the threat of encroaching sea ice. Shell has requested an extension, arguing that sea ice is likely to arrive later this year. See go.nature.com/kjdtih for more.

RESEARCH

New species online

Animal species can now be described and named in electronic-only publications, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature announced on 4 September. Previously, descriptions of new animal species had to be published in print to be considered bona fide. Botanists endorsed electronic publication last year (see go.nature.com/ufq7sv). See page 178 and go.nature.com/pta96e for more.

Drilling depth

The deep-sea drilling vessel *Chikyu* has recovered rock samples from more than 2.1 kilometres beneath the sea floor, the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology announced on 6 September. *Chikyu* is drilling

off the coast of Japan north of the fault zone responsible for the 2011 Tohoku earthquake. Although oil wells frequently reach deeper, this is the first scientific expedition to retrieve core samples from such depths. See go.nature.com/vxrcrg for more.

Dengue trial

A dengue vaccine protected Thai schoolchildren from some forms of the mosquito-borne virus, reports a study published on 10 September (A. Sabchareon *et al. Lancet* <http://doi.org/jbq;2012>). Overall, 2.8% of 2,669 children who received the vaccine developed dengue, compared with 4.4% of the 1,333 in a control group, a result that was not statistically significant. But a secondary analysis found that the vaccine was 60–90% effective against three out of four genetic forms of dengue.

PEOPLE

Telescope chief

The world's largest radio-telescope project has chosen a director-general. On 5 September, the board of the Square Kilometre Array appointed Phil Diamond to oversee construction of the €1.5-billion (US\$1.9-billion) project, which will have sites in Australia and South Africa (see *Nature* **485**, 555–556;



2012). Diamond (pictured) is currently serving as the head of astronomy and space science at Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Marsfield. He replaces Michiel van Haarlem, who has served as interim director-general since December 2011.

Hauser disciplined

Marc Hauser, a former psychologist at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, engaged in research misconduct, the US Office of Research Integrity concluded on 5 September. He neither admits nor denies the charges. See page 189 for more.

FUNDING

Football donation

The US National Football League (NFL) is donating US\$30 million to the Foundation for the National

Institutes of Health to support research into brain injuries. The money will help to establish a Sports and Health Research Program at the National Institutes of Health, to fund research on chronic traumatic encephalopathy and other sport-related brain injuries. Meanwhile, a study in *Neurology* (E. J. Lehman *et al. Neurology* <http://doi.org/h97;2012>) has reported that professional American football players are more likely than the general population to have Alzheimer's disease or the neurodegenerative disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis as an underlying cause of death.

AWARDS

Balzan prizes

Kurt Lambeck, a geophysicist at the Australian National University in Canberra, has been awarded one of this year's two 750,000-Swiss-franc (US\$790,000) Balzan prizes in science for his research on sea-level changes and glacial cycles. Plant scientist David Baulcombe of the University of Cambridge, UK, won the other for his work on epigenetics.

Lasker award

The US\$250,000 Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award has been awarded to biologist Michael Sheetz of Columbia University in New York city,

COMING UP

14 SEPTEMBER

More details on the workings of the US National Institutes of Health's youngest centre, the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, are revealed at two key meetings in Bethesda, Maryland. The centre's advisory council and its Cures Acceleration Network Review Board both convene.

go.nature.com/zablws

17–21 SEPTEMBER

Nuclear safety and security are discussed at the annual general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

go.nature.com/dfaznk

biochemist James Spudich of the Stanford University School of Medicine in California and cell biologist Ronald Vale of the University of California, San Francisco, for their work on cytoskeletal motor proteins, which underlie cellular transport and muscle contraction. Winners of the award often go on to receive a Nobel prize.

EVENTS

Dawn departure

NASA's mission to explore the asteroid belt's two most massive bodies departed from its first target, Vesta, on 5 September. The Dawn probe had been mapping Vesta since July 2011. It is now heading for an early-2015 appointment with Ceres, the dwarf planet that is thought to harbour substantial amounts of subterranean ice. See go.nature.com/pgoftk for more.

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TREND WATCH

The world's network of protected areas is growing rapidly, but not fast enough to meet the 2020 Aichi biodiversity targets, according to the trend detailed in the United Nations' *Protected Planet* report, released on 7 September at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, South Korea. The proportion of area managed exclusively by governments has fallen, as conservation schemes based on local community management (often by indigenous peoples) play a growing part. See go.nature.com/dgve5x for more.

PROTECTED AREAS GROW — SLOWLY

The extent of the world's protected areas has increased 48% since 1990 — but more are needed to reach 2020 biodiversity targets.

