

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### Wolf delisted

The grey wolf will be removed from the US government's endangered species list in some northwestern states as a result of a policy initiative tagged on to the US federal budget bill, which was approved last week. Grey wolf populations have recovered significantly in northwestern states, but environmental campaigners such as the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Arizona, bemoaned the fact that politicians had lifted protection rather than waiting for due process under the Endangered Species Act. For details of the budget's settlement for science, see page 267.

### Israel to join CERN

Israel is set to become the first non-European member of CERN, Europe's high-energy physics research centre near Geneva, Switzerland. On 17 April, Israel's cabinet voted to join the lab. Full membership has historically been limited to European nations, but last June, CERN's council opened the door to outsiders. The council is expected to approve Israel's membership in an upcoming meeting. Brazil, Cyprus, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey are also pursuing full membership.

### Hormones in sport

Female athletes may not be eligible to compete as women if blood tests show they have natural testosterone levels in the male range, according to rules accepted by the International Association of Athletics Federations on 12 April. The decision on hyperandrogenism — in which the body produces higher than normal levels

of androgen hormones, particularly testosterone — has been broadly welcomed by experts. See [go.nature.com/xc5cnm](http://go.nature.com/xc5cnm) for more.

### European networks

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) said on 14 April that it is considering eight areas — including biotechnology, smart cities and ageing — in which to fund new collaborative research networks. It already funds three such initiatives, known as Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), focusing on topics including climate change. These are

networks of industry and academic partnerships with EIT funding of €308.7 million (US\$439 million) to 2013. Any new plans will feed into the European Commission's own proposals for the EIT's future, which are due in December. On 14 April the commission launched a public consultation on the subject.

### Shuttles at rest

The four remaining vehicles of the US Space Shuttle fleet were assigned their final resting places on 12 April. *Atlantis* will remain at the Kennedy Space Center in Merritt Island, Florida; *Endeavour* will head to the California Science

Center in Los Angeles; and *Discovery* will go to the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia, which is part of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington DC. A flight test vehicle, *Enterprise*, will travel to the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City. See [go.nature.com/tiilci](http://go.nature.com/tiilci) for more.

### Virus sharing

In the event of a future flu pandemic, member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) will send samples of flu virus to laboratories and drug makers around the world, in return



AP PHOTO/H. KOMAE

## Clean-up visions for Fukushima

As workers continue to douse stricken reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant with water, the facility's owner has laid out plans for stabilizing and cleaning up the site. On 17 April, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (whose executives are pictured at a harried press conference six days earlier) put forward a plan to stabilize the plant within six

to nine months. According to this, workers will continue to pump in water to cool three damaged reactors, as well as spent fuel pools, while, in parallel, developing techniques to store and decontaminate used water on the site. The company also plans to cover the damaged reactors with temporary structures in order to limit the release of radioactivity.

for greater access to any vaccines created. The deal, announced by the WHO on 17 April, heads off the prospect of countries refusing to share samples with WHO laboratories in protest at not benefiting from resulting research patents or vaccines — as Indonesia did in 2007.

## PEOPLE

**Research fraud**

Prosecutors in the United States are seeking to extradite a Danish scientist researching the relationship between autism and vaccines, who, they allege, stole more than US\$1 million in research funding. Poul Thorsen was a visiting scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta in the 1990s. US prosecutors say that after returning to Denmark in 2002, Thorsen submitted false invoices from the CDC to Aarhus University, which unknowingly transferred funds to his personal account. He was last week charged with 13 counts of wire fraud and 9 of money laundering.

**New chief scientist**

Australia's government has appointed Ian Chubb as its chief scientist. Originally a neuroscientist, Chubb has spent the past few decades in senior administration

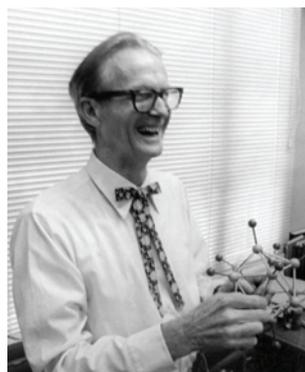
roles at various universities and research councils; most recently, he was vice-chancellor of the Australian National University in Canberra from 2001 to 2010. He replaces Penny Sackett, who in February announced her surprise resignation, halfway through her five-year term. Chubb's three-year term starts on 23 May.

**Lab death**

Michele Dufault, a 22-year-old undergraduate student, was found dead after an accident at Yale University's Sterling Chemistry Laboratory on 13 April. See page 270 for more.

**Nobel chemist dies**

William Lipscomb, who won the 1976 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work on



chemical bonding, died on 14 April aged 91. Lipscomb (pictured) helped to elucidate the nature of bonding between

molecular clusters of boron and hydrogen atoms — called boranes — which did not obey principles known at the time. After starting out at the University of Minnesota, he moved to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1959, where he remained for the rest of his career.

## RESEARCH

**Brain atlas debuts**

A genetic and anatomical map of the human brain, bankrolled by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, was officially unveiled on 12 April. The Seattle, Washington-based Allen Brain Science Institute's human brain atlas ([www.brain-map.org](http://www.brain-map.org)) logged gene-expression patterns and biochemical activity at 1,000 locations in brains donated by two people, generating a total of 100 million data points. The US\$55-million project follows a mouse brain atlas, released in 2006, and a map of the mouse spinal cord two years later. See [go.nature.com/l9923y](http://go.nature.com/l9923y) for more.

## FUNDING

**Golden rice funds**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is giving US\$18.6 million to research on transgenic, nutritionally fortified rice and cassava. The International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños, the

## COMING UP

**24–29 APRIL**

The European Science Foundation is holding a week-long conference devoted to the science and technology of graphene, in Obergurgl, Austria.

[go.nature.com/xnyc4t](http://go.nature.com/xnyc4t)

**26 APRIL**

The 25th anniversary of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in what is now Ukraine.

Philippines, won \$10.3 million to develop golden rice, which delivers extra vitamin A; it hopes that the rice will receive regulatory approval in the Philippines in 2013 and in Bangladesh in 2015. The Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St Louis, Missouri, was given \$8.3 million for work on BioCassava Plus, which contains extra vitamin A, iron and protein. The centre hopes the enhanced cassava will gain approval in Kenya and Nigeria by 2017. See [go.nature.com/uuyc6o](http://go.nature.com/uuyc6o) for more.

**Chernobyl shelter**

An international fund-raising effort to help decommission the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine seemed on 19 April to have fallen short of its goal. After a meeting in Kiev, Viktor Yanukovich, president of Ukraine, said that world governments and international organizations had pledged an extra €550 million (US\$780 million) to help build a spent-fuel storage facility and an enormous steel arch to cover the shattered reactor — currently surrounded by a crumbling concrete sarcophagus. But the meeting had hoped to raise €740 million to make up the roughly €2-billion cost of this effort. See [go.nature.com/xmmfhk](http://go.nature.com/xmmfhk) for more.

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## TREND WATCH

Patent filings received by the European Patent Office in 2010 topped 235,000, an all-time high. Applications from the European Union and United States slowed in the financial crisis, but have recovered, and filings from China have almost doubled from 6,490 in 2008 to 12,698 in 2010. But China's portfolio is unbalanced: 43% of its applications considered in 2005–10 were in digital and telecommunications, whereas biotechnology — a growing sector for other nations — made up only 3% of claims.

## PATENT FILINGS RESUME GROWTH

A boost from Asia accounted for an upturn in European patent filings in 2010.

