

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### Chemical weapons

Syria has destroyed all equipment essential for the production and mixing of chemical weapons, an international team of inspectors announced on 31 October. The news, issued jointly by the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, the Netherlands, came one day before the deadline set by the OPCW. By 15 November, the OPCW Executive Council must approve a plan submitted by Syria to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile.

### Flu fights

The Dutch university at which virologist Ron Fouchier and his colleagues created mammalian-transmissible strains of the H5N1 avian influenza virus has appealed against a court ruling obliging it to seek an export permit to publish such research. The Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, obtained a permit for a paper Fouchier published last year (S. Herfst *et al. Science* **336**, 1534–1541; 2012), but filed a legal challenge that sought to classify such work under

## NUMBER CRUNCH

# 29%

Studies that remain unpublished from 585 large clinical trials registered with [ClinicalTrials.gov](http://ClinicalTrials.gov) and completed before 2009. See [go.nature.com/sknhdp](http://go.nature.com/sknhdp) for more.

Source: C. W. Jones *et al. Br. Med. J.* **347**, f6104 (2013)



GUIDO PARRA

## New dolphin species reported

A previously unknown species of humpback dolphin has been found off the coast of Australia. Researchers led by Martin Mendez of the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York identified the as-yet-unnamed species (pictured) from an analysis of 180 skulls and 235 tissue samples of humpback dolphins from around the world (M. Mendez *et al. Mol. Ecol.* <http://doi.org/pp6>; 2013). The team proposes

that humpback dolphins in the Pacific and Indian oceans should be reclassified as three species instead of two: *Sousa plumbea* and *Sousa chinensis*. The humpback dolphin family — which has a characteristic hump just below the dorsal fin — includes at least one other species in the Atlantic Ocean. The discovery could affect conservation policies for the dolphins, which are threatened by habitat loss and fishing.

a regulatory exemption for basic research. The challenge was struck down in a court in September. See [go.nature.com/uhtxy3](http://go.nature.com/uhtxy3) and page 19 for more.

### Grant freeze ends

Officials in Texas have lifted a 10-month freeze on grant funding at the state-supported Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) in Austin. A moratorium was placed on CPRIT after concerns about its grant-making process prompted a criminal investigation of the agency. See [go.nature.com/xsloah](http://go.nature.com/xsloah) for more.

### Marine reserves

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources has failed to agree on a proposal to ban fishing in 1.25 million

square kilometres of the Ross Sea. The plan, discussed at a meeting in Hobart, Australia, that ended on 1 November, would have set up the world's largest marine reserve in what some researchers say is the most endangered area of the polar region. The commission, made up of representatives from 24 countries and the European Union, has failed twice before to agree on similar proposals. See [go.nature.com/133el5](http://go.nature.com/133el5) for more.

## FUNDING

### Genomic research

Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helú, the world's second-richest man, has donated US\$74 million to the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for genomic research. The gift from the

Carlos Slim Health Institute will fund collaborations with Mexican scientists to find genetic variants that affect the risk of diseases such as certain cancers, type 2 diabetes and kidney disease in Latin Americans, and follows a previous gift of \$65 million to the Broad made by Slim's foundation in 2010.

## FACILITIES

### Brain Project move

The European Union's Human Brain Project, launched last month, has unexpectedly scrapped plans to build a dedicated facility in Lausanne, Switzerland. On 29 October, officials at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL) announced that the prestigious, billion-euro project will instead

move close to Geneva. The programme will shift into the former Swiss headquarters of the pharma giant Merck Serono, now leased to EPFL and Geneva University.

RESEARCH

**Dark matter**

The world's most sensitive dark-matter experiment announced its first results on 30 October, reporting no sign of the elusive substance. Astronomical observations point to the presence of dark matter in space, but attempts to detect it directly passing through Earth have produced conflicting results. The findings from a 110-day search at the Large Underground Xenon experiment in Lead, South Dakota, did not confirm three earlier experiments that had reported hints of dark-matter particles. See [go.nature.com/lhcojd](http://go.nature.com/lhcojd) for more.

EVENTS

**Hybrid eclipse**

A rare hybrid solar eclipse took place on 3 November (pictured in northern Uganda), as the path of totality moved across the North Atlantic Ocean and Africa. The relative positions of Earth, the Moon and the Sun allowed observers in Africa to see a total eclipse. In parts of the Atlantic, where Earth's curvature placed its surface a



little farther from the Moon, observers saw an annular, or 'ring of fire', eclipse, with the Moon only partially blocking the Sun. This type of eclipse has not occurred since 1854 and will not recur until 2172.

**Mars launch**

India has launched a spacecraft to Mars. The Mars Orbiter Mission (informally called Mangalyaan) lifted off on 5 November, aiming to reach orbit around the red planet in September 2014. The 4.5-billion-rupee (US\$73-million) mission is the country's first interplanetary probe.

BUSINESS

**False drug claims**

US regulators announced on 4 November that Janssen Pharmaceuticals has pleaded guilty to making false claims about its schizophrenia drug Risperdal (risperidone). Janssen, based in Titusville, New Jersey, has agreed to pay more than US\$1.6 billion.

The US Food and Drug Administration approved Risperdal for schizophrenia and acute mania, but Janssen also marketed the drug for some elderly patients with dementia, despite the increased risk of stroke in older patients taking the drug.

**Prenatal testing**

A US court has invalidated a patent at the heart of a territory war in the booming industry of non-invasive prenatal testing. On 30 October, a California federal judge issued the ruling on a patent licensed to Sequenom of San Diego. Sequenom had attempted to invoke its patent in order to block other companies from selling their own non-invasive prenatal tests — a move that could have led to an industry monopoly (see *Nature* **486**, 454; 2012). Sequenom says that it will appeal against the ruling.

PEOPLE

**Alcohol agency**

Neurobiologist George Koob of the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, has been appointed to head the US National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). In January 2014, he will replace interim director Kenneth Warren, whose five-year stint saw the National Institutes of Health consider, and later scrap, a plan to merge

AWARDS

**Maddox Prize**

Pharmacologist David Nutt was awarded the John Maddox Prize for Standing up for Science on 4 November. The prize honours people who, in spite of challenges, promote science in the public interest. Based at Imperial College London, Nutt was fired from his post as the United Kingdom's chief drugs adviser in 2009, after criticizing the government's drugs policy. The award is named after a former editor of *Nature*, and it is jointly awarded by *Nature*, the Kohn Foundation in London and the UK campaign group Sense About Science.

CLARIFICATION

The item 'Data dash' (*Nature* **502**, 598; 2013) may have implied that NASA's rapid data transmission was the result of faster laser beams. In fact, the record was set thanks to greater bandwidth.

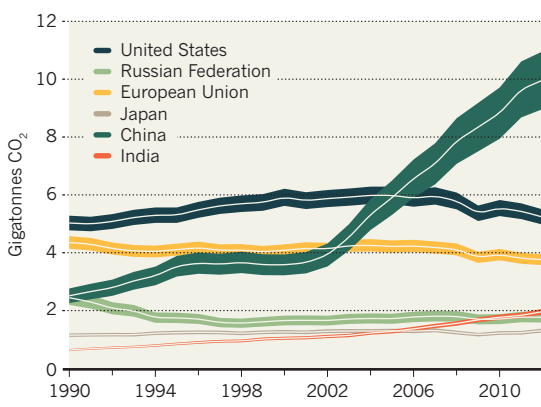
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[www.nature.com/news](http://www.nature.com/news)

TREND WATCH

Global carbon dioxide emissions increased by just 1.1% in 2012, compared with an annual average of 2.9% since 2000, according to a report released on 31 October by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. After growing by roughly 10% a year for a decade, Chinese emissions increased by just 3% in 2012, owing to slower economic growth and more low-carbon energy. Emissions from the United States and the European Union fell by 4% and 1.6%, respectively (see chart).

SLOWING GLOBAL EMISSIONS

Recent CO<sub>2</sub> trends may reflect gains in energy efficiency, renewable energies and less-carbon-intensive fossil fuels.



SOURCE: PBL NETHERLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY