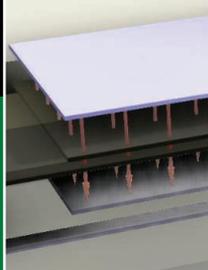




Chromatin dynamics
and cancer

1145



Peeling graphene
layer by layer

1146

but on a few images in our study. It is true that the occipital area and zygomatic arches have been heavily restored in plaster, probably to make it appear more complete, thus enhancing its commercial value, a common malpractice among Chinese fossil dealers. We indicated this in our study. This does not impinge on *A. kurteni*'s status as a primitive cheetah; the cranium and dentition present a plethora of cheetah apomorphies, conclusively proving its membership of the cheetah lineage, but also several primitive traits hitherto unknown for cheetahs. The occipital area and zygomatic arches have none of these apomorphies. Deng claims that "the skull is a composite"—i.e., a chimera. In our original study, we found no evidence of this.

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Response

WE ARE PLEASED TO SEE THAT MAZÁK AND Christiansen note that the occipital area and zygomatic arches of the cheetah skull (1) have been heavily restored in plaster, as we claimed in the News Focus story. We stand by our view that the skull is a composite with fabricated features.

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Letters to the Editor

Letters (~300 words) discuss material published in *Science* in the past 3 months or matters of general interest. Letters are not acknowledged upon receipt. Whether published in full or in part, Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space. Letters submitted, published, or posted elsewhere, in print or online, will be disqualified. To submit a Letter, go to www.submit2science.org.

Habitats at Risk: A Step Forward, a Step Back

TROPICAL FORESTS AND CORAL REEFS ARE well known as bastions of biodiversity, and Southeast Asia contains large areas of both. However, these habitats are threatened not only by human activity but also by climate-induced increases in sea temperatures and drought severity (1, 2). The steps we take to mitigate further degradation may be essential to saving these imperiled habitats. Here, we contrast positive steps taken by Thailand with insufficient action by Indonesia and the possible results of each course of action.

Sharp increases in sea temperature recently triggered widespread coral bleaching in reefs along the entire western length of the Malay Peninsula, from the tip of Sumatra to Myanmar (3). In response, the Thailand government closed several popular dive sites spread across seven Marine National Parks in an attempt to prevent damage by tourists (4), despite the risk of immediate losses to the tourism industry. Coral reefs may be particularly vulnerable to human disturbance during bleaching events (5), and Thailand's decision to take action may ultimately save this valuable natural resource. Bleaching events in the region are expected to become more common in the future (6), and preventative measures like the one implemented by Thailand will be crucial to ensure the survival of this endangered habitat.

Recent forest fire episodes in the region can also be partially attributed to climate change. Increased frequency of El Niño events and associated droughts in Southeast Asia have led to increased frequency of fires that destroy millions of hectares of tropical forests and peat swamps, particularly in Indonesia (7). These fires also produce large amounts of smoke that pollute the surrounding region, causing billions of dollars worth of losses in agriculture, timber, and tourism industries and contributing to

serious health problems (8). In the extreme 1997 El Niño year, fires from Indonesia produced the equivalent of 13 to 40% of mean annual global carbon emissions from fossil fuels (9); these enormous carbon discharges make Indonesia the world's third largest producer of greenhouse gases (10). Despite these threats, the Indonesian government's attempts to prevent these fires and the resulting smoke have been largely ineffective. As recently as October 2010, smoke blanketed the region, producing the worst haze in the region in 4 years (11).

Thailand's protective response to the latest coral bleaching event should serve as a model for other countries in the region and beyond. In contrast, Indonesia should work more actively to alleviate the increasing fire hazards in its forests and peat swamps. Some immediate steps that Indonesia could take include providing financial incentives to local communities to limit burning [e.g., through the United Nation's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Programme (12)], providing alternative methods to clear land without using fire, and ratifying the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution to engage neighboring countries and develop strict limits on the use of fire and joint plans to combat large fires (8). Climate change mitigation efforts have been far from satisfactory across the tropics, and Thailand's efforts should inspire others.

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