Quentin Cooper examines the practicalities of expanding wind farms in the North Sea. Last week a meeting of European ministers called for greater investment in wind technology, and an industry consortium was launched to look at ways of increasing the amount of offshore power that could be generated from the North Sea. The engineering challenges are huge, we get to grips with the big questions on how to wire up the sea for electricity production and look to the shape of future wind turbines, which would need to increase in six years if the plan is to be realised.

Gamma rays can be bent. A French research institute has found a way of refracting these radioactive beams in much the same way as visible light. The discovery opens up a whole new area of research, and potential Nano scale probing technologies which could seek out many materials from drugs' to nuclear waste and have the potential to treat cancer much more accurately than any current radiation based methods.

Astronomy is not currently big in Afghanistan, but it could be if a new project launched in Kabul get wide exposure. The 'reach for the stars' project aims to introduce astronomy to many of Afghanistan's schools as a way to encourage children to take an interest in science. Its founders say Afghanistan is a great place for stargazing, offering high altitudes and clear skies due to the lack of light pollution.

Also, on today's So You Want To Be A Scientist. Our 18 yr old amateur scientist Izzy Thomlinson launching a national experiment on Horrible Sounds this week.

Together with her mentor, Prof Trevor Cox, they've designed an online test to find out why some people are more sensitive to nasty noises than others.

You can take part by listening to a selection of noises, from nails scraping down the blackboard to squeaking polystyrene, and rating them on a scale of 'not unpleasant' to 'extremely unpleasant'.

Take the test now by clicking on the link below!

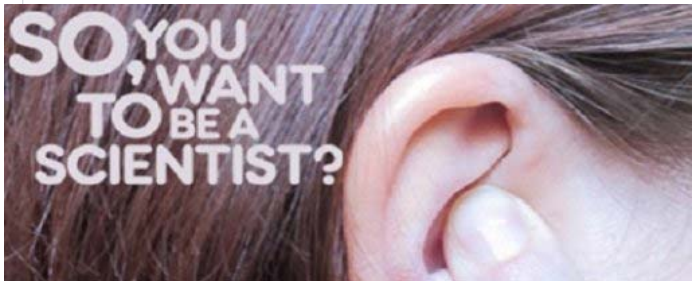
RELATED LINKS

1. Department of Energy and Climate Change (www.decc.gov.uk)
Astronomers without Borders (www.astronomerswithoutborders.org)
BBC Two: Stargazing LIVE
Click here to take the test! (www.sound101.org)
Crowdsourced project funding (www.indiegogo.com)
Follow Izzy's experiment on Facebook (www.facebook.com)
Gamma rays at Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL) (www.ill.eu)
Map of the venue in Sheffield (maps.google.co.uk)
Michael Oehler (www.michaeloehler.de)
Renewable UK (www.bwea.com)
So You Want to be a Scientist
The Sky at Night: Moore's Marathon
Trevor Cox (www.acoustics.salford.ac.uk)
University of Strathclyde Wind Energy (www.strath.ac.uk)

A SEAFRONT VIEW TO BECOME MORE FAMILIAR?

Credit: Eon Lyn Harris

WHAT MAKES SOME PEOPLE MORE SENSITIVE TO HORRIBLE NOISES?



So You Want to be a Scientist finalist Izzy

MORE DETAILS

A programme from
Material World

Duration
30 minutes

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Thomlinson is launching her online experiment to answer this question.

While Izzy is busy taking an A-level exam, Quentin talks to musicologist Michael Oehler and Izzy's scientific mentor Trevor Cox. They discuss some reasons for why we may be so sensitive to horrible noises and even suggest how we can sometimes be tricked into thinking a sound is less horrible than it really is.

BROADCASTS

Thu 3 May 2012	16:30	BBC Radio 4
Mon 7 May 2012	21:00	BBC Radio 4