



COUNTDOWN TO THE GOD MACHINE

Historic day as Europe's underground nuclear lab recreates Big Bang

MATTHEW VELLA

AT 9am this morning, the European laboratory for particle physics in Geneva, CERN – the one visited by Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi back in January – will switch on its awe-inspiring Large Hadron Collider (LHC) to herald what is being described as a new age of discovery.

History will be made when after 20 years of work by 10,000 scientists, the LHC will be switched on to produce enough energy to recreate the conditions that existed moments after the Big Bang.

It's called the hunt for God's particle, or 'Higgs boson' as termed by physicists, the particle that

is key to unlocking the secrets of the universe.

At full blast, the LHC today will fire two beams of particles in opposite directions around a 27km ring at 99.9% of the speed of light. That means the beams will be doing 11,245 laps of the machine every second.

At four points around the ring, the beams will collide into each other head-on.

As they slam into each other, they will be recreating the unimaginable energy that happened just a trillionth of a second after the Big Bang.

The machine has been described as a "once in a generation kind of machine" – but while nobody knows exactly what will be discovered, scientists say today's experiments will be answering many important questions. **pg 5 ▶**

INSIDE - How Smart City will be consuming more energy than 30,000 households

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Police granted new powers to seize personal data

KARL SCHEMBRI

GOVERNMENT has enacted new regulations that will bind service providers to give the police and security services personal data held by fixed and mobile telephony companies and Internet service providers.

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under the Data Protection Act, the amendments make it possible for police to request, process and retain location data in their investigation of "serious crimes".

Such data includes incoming and outgoing telephone numbers, subscribers' details, Internet protocol addresses, log-in and log-out times of Internet access and

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