

Find blasts Einstein law

GENEVA: Boffins reported yesterday they had found particles that travel faster than light, smashing a hole in Albert Einstein's celebrated theory of relativity, if verified.

In experiments conducted between the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland and a laboratory in Italy, the tiny sub-atomic particles were clocked at 300,006km a second, slightly faster than the speed of light.

"This result comes as a complete surprise," said physicist Antonio Ereditato, spokesman for the experiment, known as OPERA. "We wanted to measure the speed of neutrinos, but we didn't expect to find anything special."

Scientists spent nearly six months "checking, testing, controlling and rechecking everything" before making an announcement, he said.

Under Einstein's theory of special relativity a physical object cannot travel faster than the speed of light in a vacuum.

Researchers involved in the ex-



The world's largest superconducting solenoid magnet, preparing to take data at CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) particle accelerator

periments were cautious in describing its implications and they called on physicists around the world to scrutinise their data, which was to be made available online overnight.

But they said that the findings could potentially reshape our

understanding of the physical world. "If this measurement is confirmed, it might change our view of physics," said CERN research director Sergio Bertolucci — a view echoed by several respected independent physicists from around the world.

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