

will only be able to share the samples with commercial firms if the companies have already negotiated access with Indonesia.

More people have died of H5N1 in Indonesia than anywhere else in the world.

Iranians are dropped from American Chemical Society

Thirty-six Iranian researchers have had their membership of the American Chemical Society (ACS) cancelled because the society believes it has broken federal law by dealing with them.

The United States has imposed a total embargo on Iran, although professional societies still tend to take Iranian members because the measure does not extend to scholarly materials. But ACS assistant general counsel David Smorodin reviewed the embargo rules recently and decided that selling its journals at a discounted rate — a benefit the ACS offers to all members — would be seen as a commercial transaction that went beyond this exception. The Iranian members were then told that their memberships had been cancelled.

The ACS says it plans to apply to the Department of Commerce for a licence that exempts it from the embargo and that it hopes to be able to reinstate the Iranian researchers.

Japan's next supercomputer finds a home in Kobe

Japan is trying to regain its title as possessor of the world's fastest supercomputer, and last week it revealed that the machine will be housed in Kobe, which is aiming to become a major medical hub.

Last year, engineers began drawing up specifications for a computer that can operate at a speed of 10 petaflops, or 10 quadrillion calculations per second. That will make it more than 250 times faster than Japan's Earth Simulator, once the world's fastest supercomputer but currently ranked 14th. The main application for the new Japanese machine will be nanotechnology and life-science research, such as protein analysis, in addition to geoscience and astrophysics.

The ¥115-billion (US\$1-billion) national project is expected to be completed by 2012.

PS: when not playing games please do some science

Video-gamers using Sony's Internet-enabled PlayStation 3 (PS3) console have been given the option to contribute to science.

More than 50,000 people have signed up to take part in a distributed-computing project called Folding@home, which uses the



K. KASAHARA/AP

Game on: PlayStation owners can now help science.

spare processing power of home computers to compute the way in which different proteins fold, in a bid to tackle diseases such as Alzheimer's. Project scientists at Stanford University partnered with Sony, whose PS3 has computing power equivalent to ten average desktop computers. Other distributed-computing projects may also soon be available on the PS3.

Currently, the program must run in the foreground. Sony is considering making it a background application, but it will not be able to work during game play, which uses too much processing power. So sadly no one will be able to claim they are contributing to science by playing *Grand Theft Auto*.

Russian academy resists state move to gain control

Members of the Russian Academy of Sciences have voted almost unanimously against a government-proposed charter that would transfer control of the academy to the state.

The 1,200-member academy, which oversees a budget of US\$1.2 billion, some 400 research institutes and about 200,000 researchers and staff, has enjoyed relative autonomy for nearly 300 years. But last year, steps towards imposing government control began when the parliament passed a law stipulating that the academy's president must be approved by the government.

The new charter, prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science, calls for the creation of a nine-member supervisory board — consisting mainly of government representatives — to oversee the academy's work, budget and property. To be valid, the charter agreed by the academy would have to be ratified by the government.

Clarification

The News story "Congress requests bubble-fusion reports" (*Nature* **446**, 480; 2007) incorrectly implied that highly publicized hearings on allegations against the biologist Thereza Imanishi-Kari were held by the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee of the House Committee on Science and Technology. The hearings were actually held by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.