

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

Amazon forest loss

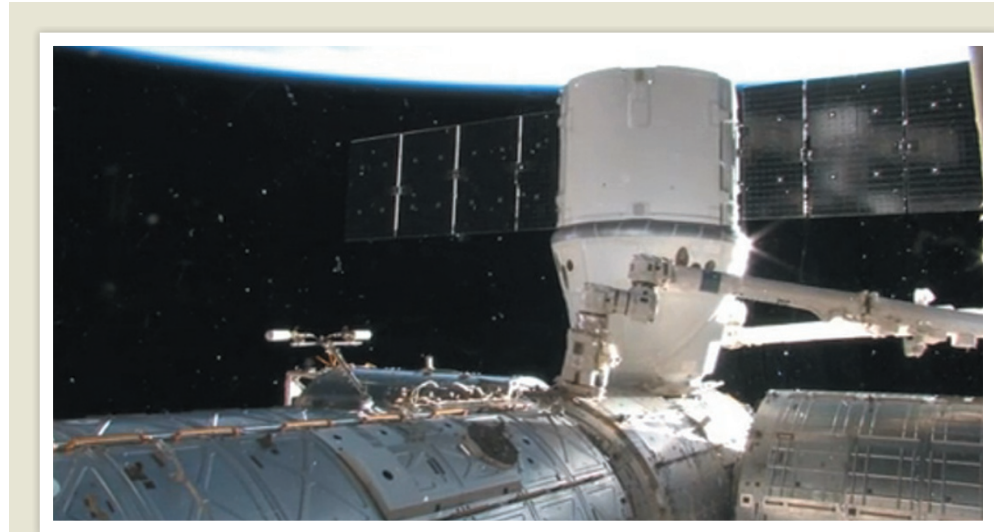
Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff, has vetoed some controversial provisions of landmark legislation to relax forest protections in the Brazilian Amazon. But in signing the bill into law on 25 May, she stopped short of the outright veto that many environmentalists had called for. Deforestation has plummeted in the Amazon rainforest, but the new laws may reverse that trend. See go.nature.com/ceogqx for more.

Carbon high

In 2011, anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions reached a record 31.6 gigatonnes, according to estimates released by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris on 24 May. That was 1 gigatonne (3.2%) more than the previous year, the agency said. China's emissions alone rose by 0.7 gigatonnes (9.3%) to 8.5 gigatonnes, mostly because of an increase in coal consumption. Even so, the IEA added, China has reduced its carbon intensity (CO₂ emissions per unit of gross domestic product) by 15% since 2005. See go.nature.com/quiyyz for more.

Open access

An online petition urging journal articles from US taxpayer-funded research to be made freely available had gained around 19,000 signatures by 28 May. The White House will have to officially respond if the petition gains 25,000 signatures. On 23 May, the University of California, San Francisco, became the latest institution to require its researchers to make their articles freely available in an online repository (although researchers can



NASA TV

Space station catches Dragon

Dragon has become the first private spacecraft to reach the International Space Station. The cargo capsule, built by SpaceX of Hawthorne, California, and launched on a Falcon rocket on 22 May, docked with the station (pictured)

on 25 May. It carried 460 kilograms of supplies and will spend 18 days attached to the station. Its return cargo includes a science experiment: aluminium alloy rods melted and solidified in microgravity. See go.nature.com/7a7dh8 for more.

opt out if this conflicts with publishers' contracts). On the same day, Argentina's lower house approved a bill requiring nationally funded research to be freely available. See go.nature.com/prgkit and go.nature.com/6esofl for more.

Telescope split

The battle to host the world's largest radio telescope, the US\$1.9-billion Square Kilometre Array, has ended in a draw. Sites in South Africa and Australia will split the project, it was announced on 25 May. See page 555 for more.

Disease target

The World Health Organization has approved a target to cut premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart attack, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases by 25% by 2025. The 26 May agreement at this year's

World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, followed a high-level United Nations summit on NCDs last September (see *Nature* 477, 260–261; 2011). It came with resolutions to develop a global monitoring framework to prevent and control NCDs, and to strengthen policies promoting more active lifestyles as people age.

Italian earthquakes

Two fatal earthquakes in the space of nine days have struck Italy's Emilia region. A magnitude-5.8 quake on 29 May had caused at least eight deaths as *Nature* went to press, and a magnitude-5.9 earthquake killed seven people on 20 May. In the aftermath of that quake, seismologists warned that little progress has been made on improving building codes since the magnitude-6.3 earthquake which struck L'Aquila, killing

309 people, three years ago. "It is unacceptable that modern constructions such as warehouses and industrial sheds have collapsed in an earthquake that was strong, but not exceptional," said Stefano Gresta, president of Italy's National Institute for Geophysics and Vulcanology. See go.nature.com/uujbk1 for more.

Polio push

The World Health Organization rolled out plans on 24 May to tackle the world's final pockets of polio, calling for more focus on regions in Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan with the lowest vaccination rates against the disease. But the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which coordinates much of the work, is US\$945 million short of reaching its roughly \$2.2-billion budget for 2012–13. See page 563 for more.

BUSINESS

Butanol biofuel

Gevo, a synthetic-biology firm based in Englewood, Colorado, announced on 24 May that production had begun at the first commercial plant for bio-isobutanol — a potential biofuel that stores more energy per litre than ethanol and is less corrosive to fuel pipelines. The factory, in Luverne, Minnesota, uses genetically modified yeast to ferment corn (maize) starch, and will be making 3.8 million litres of isobutanol per month by the end of the year. Like many other synthetic-biology firms, Gevo will at first sell its product to the chemicals industry, rather than marketing it as an expensive substitute for cheap fossil fuels. See go.nature.com/x8k3tz for more.

PEOPLE

Alien-hunter retires

Astronomer Jill Tarter (pictured), who has pioneered and popularized the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI), is retiring as director of research at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California. Tarter says that she will instead focus her efforts on what she calls “the search for intelligent funding” — referring to the institute’s troubles raising cash to run the Allen Telescope Array in northern California



(see *Nature* 475, 442–444; 2011). See go.nature.com/e1pvlc for more.

US nuclear chief

US President Barack Obama has nominated Allison Macfarlane, a nuclear-policy professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, to head the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The choice was announced on 24 May, three days after the current chairman, Gregory Jaczko, said he would resign. See go.nature.com/uci4f4 for more.

RESEARCH

Clinical stem cells

California’s state stem-cell agency is focusing more of its funds on clinical development, and shrinking support for basic research, facilities and training. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine in San Francisco voted for the new strategic plan on 24 May; by

July 2013, it hopes to have two programmes approved for US clinical trials. Translation of stem cells from research tools to therapies had been a major selling point for the agency when it was funded nine years ago. See go.nature.com/8wckrp for more.

Antibiotics search

The European Union (EU) has launched a seven-year effort to bring academic and industry researchers together to find and develop antibiotics. On 24 May, the EU’s Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) in Brussels put out a call for proposals supported by a budget of €224 million (US\$281 million): half from the IMI and half from major pharmaceutical companies. Company contributions will include experimental drugs and expertise. The programme, part of a wider strategy announced late last year to fight the rise of drug-resistant microbes, will focus at first on improving clinical-trial design. See go.nature.com/c8s9jb for more.

German grants

Academic scientists in Germany are increasingly relying on project-based grant money for their research. A funding atlas released on 24 May by Germany’s main research agency, the DFG, shows that universities

COMING UP

4–11 JUNE

Disputed claims to own the sea bed are discussed by states that are party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. They meet in New York, marking the 30th anniversary of the convention’s adoption. go.nature.com/m2duzm

5–6 JUNE

The planet Venus passes across the face of the Sun — the last chance to see such a transit until 2117. transitofvenus.org

attracted €5.3 billion (US\$6.6 billion) in grants in 2009, more than twice what they got in 1998. The funding that universities receive from the state has not kept pace, increasing by just 23%. Because some external grants don’t include overhead costs, gaining project funding can make it harder for host institutions to provide reliable career paths for young scientists, experts warn. See go.nature.com/izevp1 for more.

GM crop protest

A heavy police presence prevented a protest group of about 200 people from tearing up a trial crop of genetically modified (GM) wheat at Britain’s leading agricultural research centre on 27 May. The ‘Take the Flour Back’ campaign had earlier publicized its intention to destroy the crop at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden; scientists had reacted with public pleas about the importance of their work. With their plans thwarted, protesters instead held a picnic, with speeches focusing largely on corporate malfeasance by agribusinesses. See go.nature.com/if1d5e for more.

► **NATURE.COM**

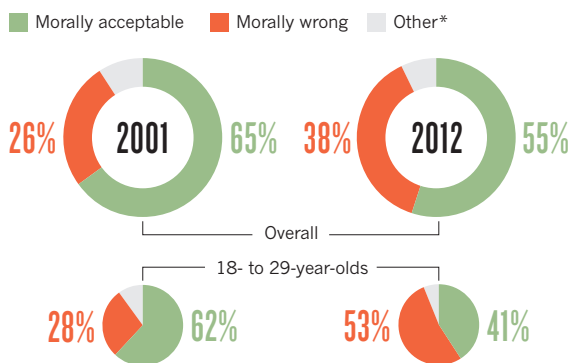
For daily news updates see: www.nature.com/news

TREND WATCH

The proportion of Americans who believe that medical testing on animals is ‘morally wrong’ grew by 12%, to 38%, between 2001 and 2012, according to the latest results from the Gallup organization’s annual *Values and Beliefs* survey of around 1,000 respondents, released on 22 May. During the same period, the number of people judging the practice ‘morally acceptable’ dropped by 10%, to 55%. The largest jump in opposition has been in 18- to 29-year-olds (see chart).

GROWING DOUBTS ON ANIMAL TESTING

More than half of Americans feel medical testing on animals is morally acceptable, but opposition has grown over the past 11 years.



*No opinion/not a moral issue/depends on situation