

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

EVENTS

MRI spy charges

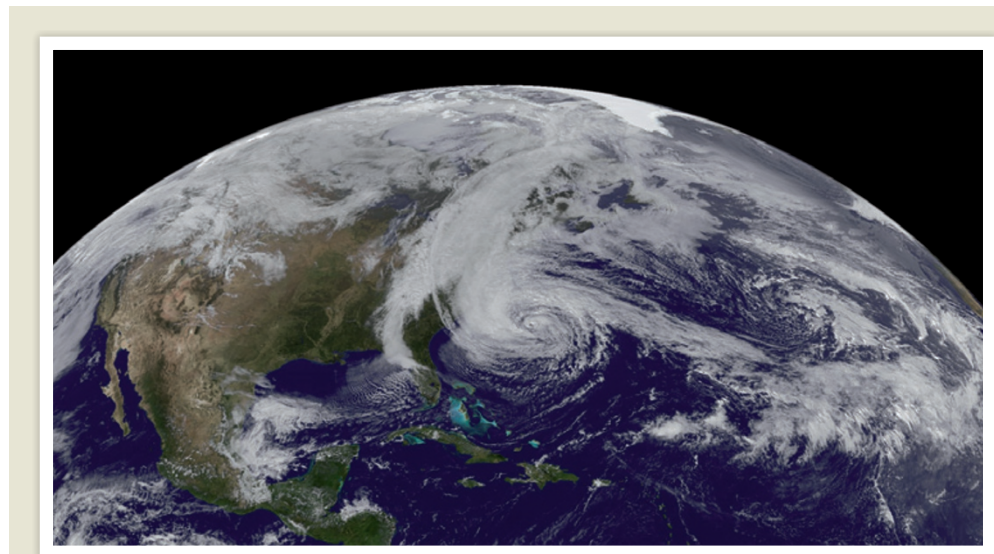
Three Chinese researchers working in the United States have been charged with commercial bribery, announced the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Attorney's Office in Manhattan last week. Officials say that radiology professor Yudong Zhu recruited Xing Yang and Ye Li to help him develop magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology at New York University's Langone Medical Center. While funded by a multimillion-dollar grant from the US National Institutes of Health, the three allegedly took payments from a rival medical-imaging company and a research institute in China in exchange for confidential information about their research.

Spain unrest

In response to steep budget cuts, Spanish scientists, university officials and science advocates have called for protests in defence of science in the country. In a 21 May document, the Open Letter for Science movement urged participation in demonstrations on 14 June against what it described as the ruin of the Spanish research system. Spain has reduced its state budget for science by roughly 40% since 2009, and research funds for 2013 are being delayed. The group asks the government to boost science funding and implement measures to retain the country's scientific talent.

Lobbying lull

Citing huge advances under US President Barack Obama in the availability of human embryonic stem cells for US-funded researchers, one key advocacy group says that its work is done. The Coalition



ROBERT SIMMON/GOES PROJECT SCIENCE TEAM/NASA/NOAA

Eye of the storm

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has predicted an extremely active Atlantic hurricane season, six months after Hurricane Sandy devastated the US northeast (pictured). In its forecast released on 23 May, the agency says there is a 70% chance that 7–11 hurricanes, including 3–6 major ones, will form between 1 June and 30 November.

“There are no mitigating factors that we can see that would suppress the activity,” says Gerry Bell, lead hurricane forecaster for NOAA. But the agency says that a new supercomputer and an updated forecasting model — fed with real-time Doppler radar data collected by aeroplanes that fly through storms — should improve the accuracy of its hurricane tracking.

for the Advancement of Medical Research, based in Washington DC, announced its dissolution on 21 May, after lobbying for federal funding for the controversial research since 2001. The news comes nearly five months after the US Supreme Court refused to hear a legal challenge that attempted to stop government support of the research (see go.nature.com/5jegit).

Deep shocks

Eastern Russia was struck by a deep, magnitude-8.3 earthquake off the Kamchatka peninsula on 24 May. The epicentre was located 610 kilometres below Earth's surface in the Sea of Okhotsk and about 400 km northwest of the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, according to

the US Geological Survey. Data suggest that the quake ruptured a deep fault in the Pacific plate, which is being forced under neighbouring plates. See go.nature.com/kipwvjv for more.

Remodelled sub

With upgrades complete, the US flagship submersible *Alvin* is en route to Astoria, Oregon, from where it will return to exploring the dark depths of the oceans in December. *Alvin* left the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts on 25 May aboard the research ship *Atlantis*, after being taken out of service in 2010 for a US\$41-million makeover. Among its improvements is a new titanium sphere — in which researchers sit during

dives — equipped with extra windows and high-definition cameras. See go.nature.com/mdgxhy for more.

BUSINESS

Antibiotics deal

In the first partnership of its kind, the US government will pay GlaxoSmithKline up to US\$200 million to develop drugs to combat antibiotic resistance and bioterrorism, the London-based pharmaceutical giant announced on 22 May. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, a federal office established to address public-health emergencies and biodefence threats, will pay the company \$40 million over 18 months and up to

\$160 million more if the contract is renewed over 5 years.

Sleep aid

On 22 May, advisers to US drug regulators recommended approval of a first-in-class therapy for insomnia, but proposed its use only at low doses. The drug, called suvorexant, is made by Merck, a pharmaceutical company in Whitehouse Station, New Jersey. If approved, it will be the first insomnia drug to block orexin, a neurotransmitter that regulates sleep–wake cycles. Reviewers at the US Food and Drug Administration expressed concern about the side effects seen at higher doses, including suicidal thoughts and narcolepsy-like symptoms.

PEOPLE

Shaw prizes

Six scientists in Britain and the United States won this year's Shaw prizes, each worth US\$1 million. Jeffrey Hall at the University of Maine in Orono, Michael Rosbash at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and Michael Young at the Rockefeller University in New York share the prize in life sciences and medicine for work on circadian rhythms. Steven Balbus (pictured) at the University of Oxford, UK, and John Hawley



at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville won in astronomy for work on disks of gas and dust around stars. The mathematics prize went to David Donoho of Stanford University in California, for advances in statistics.

RESEARCH

Stem-cell censure

Criticisms of apparent data duplication have tarnished a recent study in *Cell* that reported the creation of human stem-cell lines through cloning. An anonymous online commenter noted apparent duplicated images and scatterplots in the paper by Shoukhrat Mitalipov of the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, and his colleagues. Mitalipov says that the duplications were innocent mistakes, and is working with *Cell* to correct them. See page 543 for more.

FACILITIES

Swiss biotech site

Plans for a major Swiss biotechnology initiative have moved forward with the purchase of a host site, announced on 22 May. The Campus Biotech consortium, backed by billionaires Hansjörg Wyss and Ernesto Bertarelli, has bought the 45,000-square-metre former Merck Serono facility in Geneva, Switzerland, for an undisclosed amount. The group plans to open an institute for bio- and neuroengineering in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne and the University of Geneva. See go.nature.com/bxaqxp for more.

Making waves

Plans for the world's largest wave-energy farm, off the northwest coast of Lewis in Scotland, were given the all-clear by the Scottish government on 22 May. Edinburgh-based firm Aquamarine Power will install 40–50 wave-energy devices, with an overall power capacity of about 40 megawatts once electricity cables are installed, which will probably be 2017 at the earliest.

Arctic break-up

Fracturing Arctic ice has prompted Russia to order the evacuation of its North Pole 40 research station, which collects

COMING UP

1–5 JUNE

The interaction between human activities and the environment takes centre stage at the third World Summit on Evolution, held in the Galapagos Islands.

go.nature.com/reklva

2–6 JUNE

Updates on the search for habitable worlds and results from the Curiosity Mars rover are among the programme highlights of the 222nd American Astronomical Society meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

go.nature.com/2mq471

meteorological observations and monitors pollution. The ice floe that hosts the 16-crew station has broken into six pieces, according to news reports last week. In a statement, the environment ministry expressed concern for staff safety, and noted the possible risk of environmental contamination near Canada's economic zone in the event of a disaster.

POLICY

Water priorities

The US Agency for International Development released its first global water and development strategy on 21 May. The foreign-assistance agency already spends about US\$452 million each year on water-related programmes, but said that the new plan “elevates the importance” of water as a priority for the group. From this October, the organization will focus all new water programmes on two goals: improving human health and enhancing food security by providing clean, sustainable water.

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TREND WATCH

The United Nations is leading a push to give the entire world access to electricity and less-polluting cooking fuel by 2030. The agency also aims for renewables to constitute a greater share of energy consumption. But initial statistics released on 28 May in a Global Tracking Framework report (see chart) show that those targets will be hard to reach, mainly because rising populations and economic growth are countering improvements. See go.nature.com/gyowo6 for more details.

WIDER ACCESS TO CLEAN ENERGY NEEDED

World falling short of 2030 target to expand global access to electricity and clean household fuels.

