

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

EVENTS

G8 science summit

Five years since their last meeting, science ministers from the G8 countries met last week at the Royal Society in London, for the first time also including the heads of the national science academies. Antimicrobial drug resistance received particular attention as a major global health challenge. In a statement, the group agreed to work on developing quicker diagnostic tests for microbial infections and more targeted treatments. Officials also proposed cooperating internationally to increase access to peer-reviewed, published scientific results.

POLICY

DNA patents

The US Supreme Court has ruled that naturally occurring human genes extracted from the genome cannot be patented. The 13 June decision marks the end of a lawsuit over the validity of gene patents held by Myriad Genetics, a medical diagnostics company based in Salt Lake City, Utah. The genes, *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*, are associated with breast and ovarian cancers. The court noted that 'synthetic' DNA, including complementary DNA synthesized from an RNA template, can still be patented. See page 281 and go.nature.com/nlwsud for more.

Japan NIH opposed

Scientists in Japan are resisting the government's plan to form an agency modelled on the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). Under the proposal outlined in April, Japanese government officials would select research fields and manage budgets for projects aimed at boosting health-related science. Last



PIERRE-PHILIPPE MARCOU/AFP/GETTY

Spanish researchers march against cuts

Rallying against the sharp decline in government support for science, Spanish researchers gathered in 19 cities on 14 June. According to the Letter for Science movement, which organized the protests, some 5,000 scientists marched to the economic ministry in Madrid (pictured) to deliver a set of proposals to stop "the ruin of the Spanish science system". Spain has cut its science budget by 39% since

2009, and eliminated its science ministry in 2011. An estimated one-third of all projects slated for 2013 funding under the National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation — the country's main science funding scheme — have yet to receive payments. Letter for Science has called for increases in science spending and the creation of an independent science agency. See go.nature.com/htidtx for more.

week, seven major bioscience societies, including the Molecular Biology Society of Japan in Tokyo, circulated an 'emergency statement' warning that such a top-down approach would stifle the creativity and motivation of scientists. In a separate statement, a further 54 scientific societies expressed similar concerns.

Plan B for all

A controversial emergency contraceptive will become available without a prescription to women of all ages in the United States. President Barack Obama's administration said last week that it would drop

its legal bid to continue requiring prescriptions for girls younger than 15 who seek to buy Plan B One-Step (levonorgestrel). In April, a federal judge ordered that the 'morning after pill' be sold without this restriction, echoing an earlier decision by the Food and Drug Administration (see *Nature* 496, 138; 2013). Obama's justice department was appealing the judge's ruling. See page 272 for more.

Medical malware

Personal medical devices such as pacemakers and cardiac defibrillators should be safeguarded against

hacking, says the US Food and Drug Administration. Responding to the increasing use of wireless and Internet-connected medical products, the agency issued draft guidelines on 14 June that would consider cybersecurity in the regulatory-approval process for new devices. Manufacturers should ensure that medical devices are safe from unauthorized access and manipulation, the agency says.

Chimp change

The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to declare captive chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) in the United States endangered, bringing

them under the same designation as their wild counterparts, according to a 12 June proposal. The change could seriously impede the availability of captive chimps for invasive research, because scientists would be required to obtain permits for any invasive studies by showing that the work would contribute to the survival of the species. The proposal, which will be open for public comment for 60 days, comes as the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, considers retiring most of the 360 chimps it owns. See go.nature.com/ppywfs for more.

RESEARCH

Peruvian forests

Annual deforestation in the Peruvian Amazon declined in 2010 and 2011, according to Peru's first comprehensive analysis, released last week. Peru is the second country, after Brazil, to systematically track deforestation with satellite imagery. The country's programme is based on software from the Carnegie Institution for Science in Stanford, California. Annual deforestation averaged 163,000 hectares in 2005–09, up 79% from the average between 2000–05. By 2011, however, deforestation had dropped by nearly 37%.

PEOPLE

**Nobel chemist dies**

The death earlier this month of Jerome Karle at 94 was reported on 14 June. Karle shared the 1985 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for helping to develop X-ray crystallography, a technique that uses the scattering patterns of X-rays to reveal the three-dimensional structure of molecules. His mathematical methods led to advances in understanding the structure and function of small-molecule drugs and other complex chemical compounds. Karle worked at the US Naval Research Laboratory in Washington DC from 1944 until 2009. He died on 6 June.

FACILITIES

Marine lab hitched

The Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, has

finalized an affiliation with the University of Chicago in Illinois that is slated to begin on 1 July. Neil Shubin, an evolutionary biologist at the university, will facilitate academic collaborations between the institutes. The MBL will remain an independent entity, and the university will provide oversight and resources. See go.nature.com/lukscr for more.

Neutrino factory

A study ordered by the European Commission in 2008 has identified the leading project proposal for high-intensity neutrino research in Europe. In a report presented last week at CERN, Europe's particle-physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland, the Neutrino Factory was ranked as the best option among three facilities for testing whether neutrinos and antineutrinos behave differently. Whether the projected multibillion-dollar accelerator will be built remains uncertain. See go.nature.com/pvc6ej for more.

FUNDING

Money for Mars

After years of instalments, the European Space Agency (ESA) on 17 June committed to the final payments for the initial stage of ExoMars, a mission to search for signs of life on the red planet. At

COMING UP

24–29 JUNE

Researchers gather in San Francisco, California, at the 26th International Symposium on Lepton Photon Interactions at High Energies, to discuss advances in particle physics and astrophysics, and to plan for future facilities.

go.nature.com/pdhzqu

25–28 JUNE

Ghent in Belgium plays host to the International Conference on Genomics in Europe, with next-generation sequencing and bioinformatics on the agenda.

go.nature.com/s6xagp

the Paris Air & Space Show, ESA signed a €643-million (US\$857-million) contract with Thales Alenia Space Italy, based in Rome, that covers the cost of an orbiter spacecraft to be launched in 2016 and preparations for a planned follow-up mission in 2018 to place a rover on Mars.

France grant slump

Government auditors in France have expressed concern over the country's falling share of European Union (EU) research grants. In 2012, France garnered 9.5% of EU grants, down from 14.4% in 2007, according to a report released by the auditors last week. The country contributed €6 billion (US\$8 billion) to EU research programmes from 2007 to 2012, but won back just €3.42 billion in grants. In May, France approved a strategic plan called France Europe 2020 to better align domestic research priorities with those of EU-wide programmes.

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TREND WATCH

China's Tianhe-2 computer took first place in a list of the world's fastest 500 supercomputers, released on 17 June. With Tianhe-2, to be deployed at the National Supercomputer Centre in Guangzhou, the country reclaims a lead it first gained in November 2010. Over the past 20 years, the power of the leading supercomputer has increased by an order of magnitude roughly every 3.5 years; it should reach an exaflop (10^{18} floating point operations per second, or 1,000 petaflops) by 2019.

CHINA REGAINS FASTEST SUPERCOMPUTER

The top ten most powerful supercomputers were developed in four countries. At 33.9 petaflops per second, Tianhe-2 is the world's fastest.

