

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

EVENTS

US shutdown ends

People in the United States breathed a collective sigh of relief on 17 October when a last-minute budget deal between lawmakers reopened the government, which had shut down on 1 October. A stopgap measure will fund government operations until 15 January. Science agencies are now scrambling to restart research programmes. See page 419 and go.nature.com/x9swwx for more.

POLICY

Energy storage

The California Public Utilities Commission has approved the first energy-storage plan in the United States. Adopted on 17 October, the scheme promotes the use of renewable sources such as wind turbines and solar panels, which produce energy intermittently. Under the regulation, three major utility companies must buy a combined 200 megawatts of energy-storage capacity by 1 March 2014, and a total of 1,325 megawatts of storage by 2020.

Science for UN

Twenty-six scientists from around the world have been appointed to a newly created Scientific Advisory Board for the United Nations. The panel is charged with providing science-based advice on environmental, developmental and socio-ethical issues. See go.nature.com/4ts2qb for more.

Spanish bailout

Spain's science system received a much-needed cash infusion on 18 October, when the government approved a €70-million (US\$96-million) package to save the Spanish National Research Council



ALEXANDER FIRSOV/AP

Russian lake yields massive meteorite

On 16 October, Russian scientists recovered a large chunk of the 9,000-tonne meteorite that exploded over the Ural region in February, injuring more than 1,000 people (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/pck>; 2013). Weighing around 600 kilograms, the blackish rock (pictured) was winched out of Lake Chebarkul. Reconstructions of the meteorite's trajectory

— and an ominous hole in the frozen surface of Lake Chebarkul on the morning after the impact — led scientists to suspect that the main fragment had landed there (see *Nature* **495**, 16–17; 2013). “This is without doubt the largest fragment yet of the Chelyabinsk meteorite,” says researcher Viktor Grokhovskiy of the Ural Federal University in Ekaterinburg.

(CSIC) from bankruptcy. In June, the council received an extra €25 million in government support, but in July, CSIC president Emilio Lora-Tamayo said that a further €75 million would be needed by the end of the year. As Spain's largest scientific organization, the CSIC maintains more than 100 institutes and supports about 6,000 scientists. See go.nature.com/goitsc for more.

RESEARCH

Smoking gun

The *British Medical Journal* (*BMJ*) announced on 15 October that it will no longer publish studies funded by the tobacco industry. *BMJ* editors had previously defended the

inclusion of such studies but reversed course last week, citing the industry's wilful misuse of research to cast doubt on the health risks of smoking. The policy applies to the *BMJ* and its sister journals *Thorax*, *Heart* and *BMJ Open*. The American Thoracic Society already refuses tobacco-industry-funded studies, as do some journals published by the Public Library of Science.

Gravity mission

Europe's gravity-hunting space mission is over. Having run out of xenon fuel, the Gravity Field and Steady-state Ocean Circulation Explorer (GOCE) will re-enter Earth's atmosphere within weeks, the European Space Agency said on 21 October. GOCE has

produced the most accurate gravity maps yet — in part because its final measurements were taken from an unusually low orbital altitude of 224 kilometres. Since its launch in 2009, the mission has created many maps, including records of ocean circulation and the planetary gravitational reference known as the geoid (see *Nature* **458**, 133; 2009).

Reproducibility test

An initiative to replicate important research results has been awarded US\$1.3 million to verify 50 high-profile cancer studies from the past three years. The Reproducibility Initiative, co-founded by Elizabeth Iorns (see *Nature* **500**, 14–16; 2013), will repeat studies including 27 published

CIRM

in *Nature*. The grant, from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation in Houston, Texas, was announced on 16 October. See go.nature.com/bqxm5q for more.

Ethics update

The World Medical Association has revised the Declaration of Helsinki, an influential guide to ethical conduct in research on human subjects. The international association of physicians, based in Ferney-Voltaire, France, approved the updated version on 19 October. The revision includes provisions for compensating people who are harmed in the course of research, strengthens protection for vulnerable populations and renews the association's call for the sharing of research results.

PEOPLE

Stem-cell leader

Alan Trounson (pictured) will step down as president of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) in San Francisco, the organization announced on 16 October. Trounson, a former stem-cell scientist at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, joined the CIRM in 2007. His replacement will be charged with navigating the publicly funded agency, which was established in 2004 with a



US\$3-billion allocation from the state, through an uncertain financial future (see *Nature* **482**, 15; 2012).

Data faked

Nitin Aggarwal, a cardiac scientist formerly of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, has agreed to have his research supervised for the next three years, and to be excluded during that time from peer-review committees for US agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The US Office of Research Integrity reported on 17 October that Aggarwal had falsified or fabricated data in his graduate thesis, two journal articles and grant applications to the American Heart Association and the NIH.

BUSINESS

End sequence

Roche, a health-care company based in Basel, Switzerland, confirmed last week that it

will discontinue its 454 Life Sciences sequencing platform in 2016. The platform has struggled to compete with cheaper, more accurate alternatives since being acquired by Roche in 2007. The company said last week that about 100 employees will be laid off when it closes its facility in Branford, Connecticut. Roche ended internal research-and-development efforts on third-generation sequencing technologies in April, and in September signed a US\$75-million deal to develop diagnostics applications with Pacific Biosciences, based in Menlo Park, California.

FUNDING

Ocean monitoring

The US National Science Foundation announced a US\$16-million award on 18 October to launch an ocean-observing array in the North Atlantic. Deep-water currents in that region are part of a global system that is thought to affect weather and climate (see *Nature* **497**, 167–168; 2013). Disbursed over five years, the money will fund the Overturning in the Subpolar North Atlantic Program — a multinational effort to monitor ocean temperature, salinity and the strength of currents along a line that runs from

COMING UP

27–30 OCTOBER

Extreme rain and floods that hit Colorado in September are discussed at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Denver. go.nature.com/7quicy

30 OCT–1 NOV

Topics range from health to agriculture at the 8th International Conference on Genomics in Shenzhen, China. The programme also highlights big-data management and open data platforms. go.nature.com/qgpvtl

Newfoundland in Canada to Scotland, passing Greenland's southern tip.

African genetics

Genomics research in Africa received a boost on 18 October when the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, announced the award of ten grants totalling US\$17 million from the Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) programme. The four-year grants will fund research on the role of genetics in disorders such as tuberculosis and African sleeping sickness, and will support two science centres in Nigeria. Backed by the NIH and the UK Wellcome Trust, H3Africa has awarded \$74 million for research since its inception in 2010.

CORRECTION

The story 'Nobel laureate dies' (*Nature* **501**, 467; 2013) should have said that neural signals generated from light, rather than light itself, are transmitted from the eye to the visual cortex.

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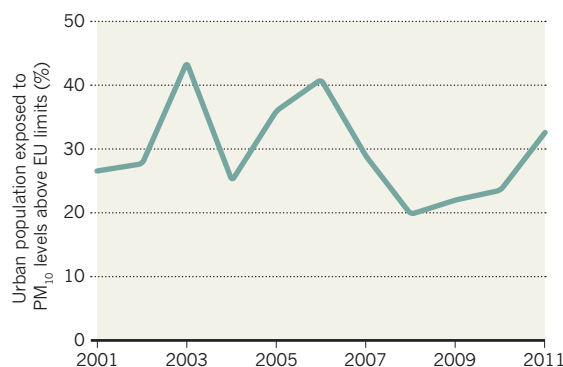
For daily news updates see: www.nature.com/news

TREND WATCH

The World Health Organization's cancer agency has classified outdoor air pollution as a human carcinogen. On 17 October, the International Agency for Research on Cancer cited studies linking dirty air to lung cancer and an increased risk of bladder cancer. The agency also labelled the particulate matter found in outdoor air pollution as a cause of cancer. Urban exposure to particulates in Europe was highlighted in a separate report last week by the European Environment Agency (see chart).

HOLD YOUR BREATH

Between 2001 and 2011, about one-third of Europe's city dwellers were exposed to hazardous levels of particulate matter in the air.



* PM₁₀, particulate matter smaller than 10 micrometres in diameter. EU limits: 50 micrograms PM₁₀ per cubic metre, not to be exceeded on more than 35 days a year.

SOURCE: EEA/ESTAT