

POLICY

Ebola support

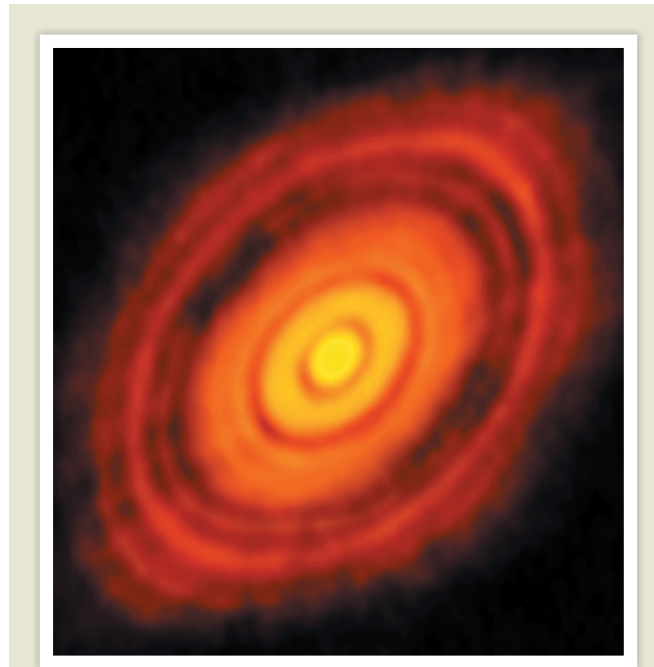
On 5 November, US President Barack Obama requested that Congress approve US\$6.18 billion in emergency funds this fiscal year to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. On the same day, China's state-run media outlet Xinhua reported that the country plans to send about 1,000 medical workers and experts to West Africa in the coming months to help in the fight against Ebola. The Chinese government had previously announced that it would send an elite military medical unit to assist in Liberia.

US election results

Republicans took control of the US Senate in the midterm federal election held on 5 November, winning 52 of 100 seats (with two races yet to be decided). The party maintained its hold on the House of Representatives, taking 244 of 435 seats (with seven races still contested). The Republicans' big win is expected to give key leadership positions to lawmakers who are sceptical of climate-change science, and in favour of smaller federal budgets, in the 114th Congress, which begins on 3 January 2015 and runs to 2016.

Nuclear restart

On 7 November, Japan moved closer to resuming nuclear-power generation when a local government approved the restart of two reactors on the southern island of Kyushu. Japan's 48 commercial nuclear reactors have been idle since the triple meltdown in March 2011 at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear facility. In September, the Nuclear Regulation Authority approved the technical redesign of reactors



View of planetary births

This 6 November image may be the best ever taken of a protoplanetary disk, the dust and gas that swirl around a young star and seed new planets. The Sun-like star HL Tau, 138 parsecs (450 light years) from Earth, sits in the centre of an orange-coloured disk of gas and particles that have started to coalesce into clumps. These emerging planets accumulate material as they orbit the star, eventually clearing out the lanes in which they travel, which are seen as black rings. The image comes from the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in Chile, whose 66 radio antennas are being ramped up to image celestial objects in unprecedented detail. Since September, the antennas have been positioned so that their data can be combined to produce the sharpest images yet.

at two units of the Sendai Nuclear Power Plant in Kagoshima, Kyushu. Pending the regulator's final approval, the two 890-megawatt pressurized-water reactors could be restarted early next year.

Transgenic potatoes

The US Department of Agriculture decided on 10 November that it did not need to regulate a transgenic potato, after determining that it poses no threat to other

crops. Engineered by Simplot of Boise, Idaho, the potato contains transgenes that silence natural potato genes related to the production of acrylamide — suspected to cause cancer — when the vegetable is cooked. The potato, which also resists bruising, is part of a new generation of transgenic crops aimed at benefiting consumers as well as farmers. Nevertheless, it has met with opposition from some consumer groups.

EVENTS

L'Aquila appeal

Six seismologists accused of misleading the public about the risk of an earthquake in Italy were cleared of manslaughter on 10 November. An appeals court overturned their six-year prison sentences and reduced to two years the sentence for a government official who had been convicted with them. The magnitude-6.3 earthquake struck the town of L'Aquila on 6 April 2009, killing more than 300 people. See page 171 for more.

ALMA (ESO/NAOJ/NRAO)

RESEARCH

HIV baby test

The US National Institutes of Health is sponsoring a clinical trial to test whether babies who become infected with HIV in the womb can benefit from antiretroviral therapy given within hours of birth. The phase I/II proof-of-concept study announced last week aims to build on findings from the 'Mississippi baby' case (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/w2n>; 2014), and will test whether early treatment can send the virus into remission. The trial will enrol up to 472 infants and their HIV-infected mothers in at least 9 countries in Africa and North and South America.

FACILITIES

Telescope reprieves

Two astronomical observing facilities won new leases of life last week. On 4 November, the University of California announced that it had reversed a 2013 decision to phase out funding for the Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton, California (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/w2m>; 2014). Days earlier, the University of Hawaii took ownership of the United

Kingdom Infrared Telescope in Hawaii. In 2012, the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council had announced that it would close the telescope and concentrate funds on a much larger planned telescope in Chile.

Microbiome centre

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge is to host a centre for studying the role of the microorganisms found in the human body — known as the microbiome — in health, and for developing treatments for related illnesses. MIT and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston announced on 6 November that the Center for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics will be supported by a US\$25-million fund for its first five years. The centre will initially focus on inflammatory bowel disease, but organizers hope to eventually broaden the scope to diseases such as multiple sclerosis, arthritis and autism.

PEOPLE

CERN chief

Italian physicist Fabiola Gianotti will be the next director-general of CERN, the European particle-physics laboratory announced on 4 November. In July 2012, Gianotti (pictured) first revealed evidence for the



existence of the Higgs boson to the world, as spokeswoman for ATLAS, one of two experiments at CERN's Large Hadron Collider that discovered the particle. Gianotti, who will be the first woman to lead the laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland, will take charge on 1 January 2016. See *Nature* <http://doi.org/w2p> (2014) for more.

PubMed leader

Don Lindberg, who has directed the US National Library of Medicine for 30 years, announced on 6 November that he will retire in March 2015. During his tenure, Lindberg created the National Center for Biomedical Information, which hosts such tools as the biomedical-journal database PubMed and the genetic-sequence database GenBank. He was also instrumental

in creating some of the first biomedical computing projects for the White House and other agencies.

BUSINESS

Rocket rethink

Orbital Sciences of Dulles, Virginia, plans to fly cargo to the International Space Station next year using an as-yet unspecified rocket, rather than the Antares design that exploded last month (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/ws5>; 2014). The company announced on 5 November that the accident was probably caused by a turbopump failure in one of its two AJ26 rocket engines, built in the Soviet era and since refurbished. Orbital maintained that it would fulfil its NASA contract to deliver supplies and scientific equipment to the space station by the end of 2016.

COMING UP

15–19 NOVEMBER

Washington DC hosts the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. Programme highlights include research on neurodegeneration, addiction and sleep. go.nature.com/dmfqpf

Animal trouble

Antibody-maker Santa Cruz Biotechnology has fallen foul of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a second time. On 4 November, the agency filed a formal complaint against Santa Cruz of Dallas, Texas, for alleged violations of the Animal Welfare Act. The allegations include failure to provide adequate nutrition, veterinary care and safe, clean enclosures at its animal facilities. In October 2012, USDA inspectors discovered that the company had been keeping an undisclosed herd of research goats, including some ill animals (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/w29>; 2013).

AWARDS

Millionaire prizes

Two teams of astrophysicists shared the US\$3-million Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, announced on 9 November, for their discovery that the expansion of the Universe is accelerating. The six winners of the life-sciences award each got \$3 million; they included neurosurgeon Alim Louis Benabid, a pioneer of deep-brain stimulation, and biologists who developed the gene-editing technique CRISPR. The awards are sponsored by philanthropists including Google co-founder Sergey Brin. See go.nature.com/dmdcmg for more.

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TREND WATCH

An analysis by Google reports that papers are increasingly citing literature more than a decade old (*A. Verstak et al.* Preprint at <http://arxiv.org/abs/1411.0275v1>; 2014), consistent with earlier findings (*V. Larivière et al.* *J. Am. Soc. Inf. Sci. Technol.* **59**, 288–296; 2008). The trend shows that scholars now have easier access to the older literature, the Google researchers say, as print articles have been digitized and the Internet makes it easier to find and cite papers.

GROWING IMPACT OF OLDER ARTICLES

The proportion of citations made to papers at least 10 years old increased between 1990 and 2013.

— Humanities, literature and arts — Health and medical sciences
— Chemical and materials sciences — Computer science

