

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

EVENTS

Torture collusion

The American Psychological Association (APA) released a long-awaited report on 10 July that concluded that its ethics guidelines on national security interrogations ultimately supported torture. The independent report, led by Chicago lawyer David Hoffman, found that APA officials colluded with the US Department of Defense (DOD), a major employer of psychologists, to craft permissive language for the guidelines that aligned with the DOD's own wishes. The APA released a statement apologizing for "organizational failures" and recommended updates to its ethical policies, such as prohibiting psychologists from participating in military or intelligence interrogations.

MERS lawsuit

Some of those affected by Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in the large hospital-acquired outbreak in South Korea are suing the government and numerous hospitals. News of a lawsuit emerged on 9 July in the national newspaper *The Chosun Ilbo*.

NUMBER CRUNCH

£246 m

The estimated cost incurred by UK universities to participate in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 — a quality, impact and output assessment used by government funding agencies to distribute money. The figure (US\$384 million) was published in a review by Technopolis on 13 July.



KYE R. LEE/AP/PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

Waco mammoths get monument status

The Waco Mammoth palaeontological site in Texas was one of three new areas designated as national monuments by US President Barack Obama on 10 July. The monument features the well-preserved remains of 24 Columbian mammoths (*Mammuthus columbi*) that lived about 65,000 years ago. They include the only

preserved nursery herd of mammoths in the United States. "This is one of the most incredible collections of mammoth fossils anywhere in the country," said Obama. The site will be protected under the Antiquities Act. The other new monuments are the Berryessa Snow Mountain in California and the Basin and Range in Nevada.

The plaintiffs, represented by the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, argue that the government violated the country's constitution by failing to prevent a disaster and protect the public, and that the situation was made worse by its refusal to name affected hospitals. MERS infected 186 people in the outbreak, but no cases are known to have arisen since 4 July.

NASA soil probe

A radar instrument aboard a new NASA satellite to monitor soil moisture around the globe stopped transmitting on 7 July. The radar is one of two instruments aboard the Soil Moisture Active

Passive observatory, which launched in January. The satellite's mission is to measure moisture levels in the top 5 centimetres of soil to improve understanding of the links between Earth's water, energy and carbon cycles. NASA has convened a team to investigate.

Russian row

A private Russian science-funding organization, the Dynasty Foundation, is closing down after being branded a 'foreign agent' by Russia's Ministry of Justice. The foundation — which supports hundreds of young Russian researchers — said on its website that the decision

was taken at a board meeting on 5 July. Under a 2012 law, the label (which has connotations of spying), is reserved for non-governmental organizations that receive funding from abroad and are deemed to be involved in vaguely defined "political activities". See go.nature.com/jw7xbl for more.

FACILITIES

Telescope scrapped

The University of Hawaii at Hilo announced on 7 July that it will dismantle its 0.9-metre educational telescope on Mauna Kea, where native Hawaiians have been protesting against

the construction of another project, the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT). In May, the state's governor required the university to decommission one-quarter of the 13 telescopes on the mountain before the TMT is launched. The 0.9-metre instrument is the smallest of these and has not worked since it was installed in 2010.

RESEARCH

Rare gibbon family

A new family group of the world's rarest primates has been discovered. Last year, researchers warned that just 23–25 Hainan gibbons (*Nomascus hainanus*) remained (*Nature* 508, 163; 2014). But a team led by the Zoological Society of London announced on 13 July that it had observed a previously unknown mating pair with a baby last month, adding not just three individuals to the count, but also a crucial extra social group.

Pluto sized up

On its way to a 14 July fly-by of Pluto, NASA's New Horizons probe discovered that the dwarf planet is 2,370 kilometres across, making it the largest-known object in the Solar System's icy Kuiper belt. That measurement is larger than many previous estimates for Pluto, making it bigger than



Eris, the 2,326-kilometre-wide dwarf planet that lies beyond it. New Horizons has also sent back a spectacular close-up of Pluto's surface (pictured), taken on the night of 13 July. See go.nature.com/dkztyn for more.

PEOPLE

Seabra steps down

Miguel Seabra has stepped down as president of research-advocacy group Science Europe with immediate effect. The Brussels-based group, which represents European research funders and institutions, announced on 10 July that Seabra had resigned less than a year into the job because of ill health. In April, he left his role as president of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Civil engineer Elisabeth Monard, secretary-general of the Research Foundation Flanders, also in Brussels, will be acting president of Science Europe

until it elects a new president at its general assembly in November.

BUSINESS

Heart-drug approval

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved a new treatment for heart failure. The drug Entresto was approved on 7 July and is expected to be a blockbuster for its Swiss developer, Novartis. The drug combines two therapies: a previously approved treatment (sacubitril) for high blood pressure and heart failure, and a new drug (valsartan) that dilates blood vessels and promotes sodium excretion by inhibiting a protein called neprilysin. Entresto is the first approved neprilysin inhibitor.

POLICY

Climate concerns

Current policies fail to address the political and technological challenges for limiting global greenhouse-gas emissions, scientists warned on 13 July in a climate-risk report commissioned by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The combined efforts of the world's major economies, including China and the European Union, are unlikely to result in emissions being cut to safe levels, it says. It highlights the "enormous

COMING UP

18–22 JULY

About 1,200 researchers gather in Dresden, Germany, for the European Biophysics Congress. go.nature.com/r5uehz

18–23 JULY

Scientists and clinicians meet in Washington DC for the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. Topics include early detection, risk factors and clinical trials for Alzheimer's and dementia. go.nature.com/avsh5k

20 JULY

The crew of NEEMO (NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations) is due to start its 14-day mission 19 metres under the sea, off Key Largo in Florida. NEEMO aims to prepare for future deep-space missions.

risks" to security if greater competition for land or water cause conflict. Climate-change risks need to be assessed in the same way as international security threats, the authors conclude.

Medical-cures bill

On 10 July, the US House of Representatives passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which would provide a US\$8.75-billion boost to the US National Institutes of Health over five years and speed regulatory approval for new antibiotics and medical devices. The bill also sets aside money for research into precision medicine and opportunities for young researchers. The bill will now need to be passed by the US Senate.

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TREND WATCH

More ivory has already been destroyed this year in the fight against poaching than in any previous year. Last week, Mozambique burned 2,400 kilograms of seized elephant tusks and nearly 200 kilograms of rhino horn. Other nations, including the United States and China, have also burned or crushed ivory, in the hope of discouraging trafficking and poaching. High levels of poaching in Africa in 2014 are likely to be still driving down the number of elephants on the continent.

IVORY CRUSH

The amount of illegal ivory destroyed has escalated greatly as nations attempt to deter poachers.

