

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

RESEARCH

Contamination risk

Several clinical trials at US National Institutes of Health (NIH) facilities have been suspended in response to safety violations at manufacturing facilities. Two NIH labs — one that manufactures immune cells for use in patients at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland; the other that makes brain-imaging molecules at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda — were shut down last week after contamination risks had been found. Twenty-eight clinical studies that use materials from these labs are on hold and will not recruit new patients until the issues are resolved, the NIH said on 19 April. See go.nature.com/uzq5kq for more.

Image problems

An analysis of more than 20,600 biomedical papers published from 1995 to 2014 in 40 journals has found that 4% contain deliberately or accidentally duplicated images (E. M. Bik Preprint at bioRxiv <http://doi.org/bfnw>; 2016). The prevalence of inappropriate images — and hence of misrepresented experiments — ranged from about 12% in the *International Journal of Oncology* to 0.3% in the *Journal of Cell Biology*. The authors of the study, a preprint of which was posted on 20 April, have reported all affected papers to the respective journals, so far resulting in 62 corrections and 6 retractions. See go.nature.com/axjb6l for more.

PEOPLE

Pachauri out

Rajendra Pachauri, former chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on



JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY

Paris climate pact signed

Representatives from more than 175 nations have signed the landmark Paris climate agreement to limit the rise in global average temperature to between 1.5°C and 2°C above pre-industrial levels. French President François Hollande (pictured, centre) and 54 other heads of state attended the signing ceremony on 22 April at the United Nations headquarters in

New York City, four months after the deal was agreed in Paris. By signing the treaty, which governments must yet ratify, nations formally pledge to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions. However, current pledges to the United Nations are unlikely to keep warming below 2°C unless countries update their commitments in the near future. See go.nature.com/rezlw9 for more.

Climate Change (IPCC), has stepped down as executive vice-chair of the Energy and Resources Institute in New Delhi. Pachauri, who resigned last year as head of the IPCC amid accusations of sexual harassment, told the media that he wanted to pursue other interests.

Physicist in need

Jailed Iranian physicist Omid Kokabee underwent kidney-cancer surgery in Tehran on 20 April. Kokabee, who has studied laser physics in Spain and the United States, was arrested in Iran in 2011 while visiting his family, and sentenced to 10 years in prison for alleged espionage. The young scientist and his supporters claim that he was

sentenced for refusing to cooperate with Iran's nuclear programme. Appeals to Iran's supreme leader by the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science to release Kokabee on humanitarian grounds have previously gone unheeded.

FUNDING

Excellence drive

The German government plans to continue a multi-billion-euro initiative set up in 2005 to strengthen the research performance of the country's top universities. Starting in 2017, universities will be able to apply for extra government support from a total pot of €533 million

(US\$600 million) per year, federal research minister Johanna Wanka said on 22 April. In line with recommendations from an independent review, up to 50 research hubs will receive €3 million to €10 million a year. And 8–11 'excellence universities', which must host at least 2 such clusters, are to receive €10 million to €15 million per year.

ENVIRONMENT

Diversity wanted

A global effort to assess the value of biodiversity in ecosystems needs a broader range of expertise among the scientists who contribute to its reports. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is struggling to find enough experts who could help it to assess the economic and social benefits of nature, IPBES chair Robert Watson warned last week. Earlier this year, a lack of social scientists — and of funding — prompted the panel to postpone its planned social-science programme for 2016, including a report on the diverse ways in which people value biodiversity. See go.nature.com/pa3dod for more.

Nuclear leak

An ongoing nuclear-waste leak has escalated at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation site in Washington state. On 18 April, the Washington Department of Ecology confirmed that radioactive waste is seeping from the primary tank of a double-shell storage container into the space between the primary and secondary tanks. Efforts to remove overflow waste safely from the tank were put on hold while engineers assess the situation. Officials emphasize that there is no indication of waste leaking into the environment.

Waning wolves

Ecologists involved in the world's longest-running predatory-prey study are mourning the declining



number of wolves in Isle Royale National Park (pictured). Wolves and moose on the island in Lake Superior, Michigan, have been studied for 58 years. But after several years of decline, the population of wolves dropped last year to just two inbred animals, and in the absence of predation, the moose population continues to rise. Isle Royale needs more wolves if the predators are to be an “ecological force” there, the team reported on 18 April (see go.nature.com/zlmjss).

POLICY

Free speech

Many scientists in the United Kingdom are to be exempted from a rule that will require recipients of public funding to maintain silence about the policy implications of their work. An ‘anti-lobbying’ clause will be applied to public grants awarded from May

onwards, which has raised concerns that it would exclude UK scientists from political consultations and democratic debate. In a 19 April statement, UK science minister Jo Johnson said that grants provided by the UK research and education councils and national academies will be exempted from the contentious gagging order. See go.nature.com/gewosj for more.

EVENTS

G7 science agenda

Brain science, disaster resilience and cultivation of young scientists are areas that urgently require a concerted global effort, science academies worldwide have told international leaders ahead of the G7 meeting next month in Japan. The statements, delivered to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on 19 April,

COMING UP

30 APRIL – 3 MAY

The US National Academy of Sciences holds its 153rd annual meeting in Washington DC. go.nature.com/5hebou

2 MAY

US Department of Energy officials are expected to report to Congress on whether the United States should stay in ITER, the international fusion experiment under construction in Caderache, France. go.nature.com/vqrxpx

represent the opinions of learned academies from 13 countries, including the G7 nations, and the African regional science academy. The toll that brain disease has on well-being and the economy; increasing damage from natural disasters; and the need for well-trained scientists who can engage the public are areas of universal concern, the academies say.

BUSINESS

Biotech probe

The US government has launched investigations into the troubled blood-analysis firm Theranos of Palo Alto, California. *The Wall Street Journal* reported on 18 April that Department of Justice federal prosecutors and the government's Securities and Exchange Commission are examining whether Theranos misled investors. The company claimed to have developed new technology to allow testing of minute quantities of blood, but has since been accused of running most of its analyses on conventional platforms.

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TREND WATCH

Aerial and underwater surveys have revealed that 93% of Australia's Great Barrier Reef has been affected by bleaching, in the worst-ever observed event. Bleaching — in which heat-stressed corals expel their symbiotic algae — can kill corals when it is severe. The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies in Townsville, Queensland, found that only 68 of 911 reefs have escaped bleaching, and hundreds have been severely affected. See go.nature.com/xamggr for more.

GREAT BARRIER REEF GROWS PALE

Bleaching has hit many reefs in the Great Barrier Reef. The northern parts are worst affected, with all corals bleached in some reefs.

