

## EVENTS

### Macron's website

French President Emmanuel Macron has launched a website that offers climate scientists from other countries jobs in France — giving them the chance to apply for 4-year grants of up to US\$1.5 million for senior scientists, and up to \$1 million for junior researchers. MakeOurPlanetGreatAgain.fr was launched on 8 June, a week after US President Donald Trump decided to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord, and after Macron made a statement inviting US scientists to come to France to “work on concrete solutions” to climate change. The website invites foreign scientists to upload their CVs and have ready a “well-defined proposal” for a laboratory in France. A spokesperson at the French science ministry said that the amount of funding for the initiative has not yet been finalized, and will partly depend on the number and quality of applications.

### Plutonium accident

Five workers at a nuclear-research facility in Japan were exposed to radiation after inhaling plutonium released during an accident on 6 June. The workers were inspecting storage containers at the Oarai Research and Development Center, 110 kilometres northwest of Tokyo, when a plastic bag containing plutonium ripped, showering the men with radioactive dust. All five were found to have plutonium in their lungs and have been treated to remove it from their bloodstreams, but some radioactive material is likely to remain in their bodies. None of them has yet shown any health problems, but at least one, a worker in his fifties who opened the container and



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## Ancient baby bird bound in amber

Scientists have discovered the 99-million-year-old remains of a baby bird encased in amber from northern Myanmar, according to a study published on 6 June (L. Xing *et al.* *Gondwana Res.* <http://doi.org/b8dw>; 2017). Most of the bird's head, neck, a wing, a clawed foot and parts of its tail were preserved by the sticky

resin. Unlike juvenile modern birds, the ancient hatchling — which was no more than several weeks old when it died — had a full set of flight feathers on its wings. It was part of a now-extinct group of birds known as Enantiornithes, which died out with the dinosaurs about 65 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous period.

inhaled the most plutonium, could now face a much greater risk of developing a fatal cancer.

## POLITICS

### UK election shock

A UK general election on 8 June, called by Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative government in an effort to boost its mandate for Brexit negotiations, ended with the party losing its overall majority. The Conservative Party lost seats but retained the biggest bloc in the House of Commons, the lower chamber of Parliament. May remained prime minister in the immediate aftermath. As *Nature* went to press, she was negotiating a deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party that would allow

the Conservatives to govern. The result suggested that May's government would be forced to pursue a 'softer' Brexit than planned, seen as favourable among UK scientists. See page 336 for more.

## FUNDING

### Polio cash boost

The global effort to eradicate polio got a US\$1.2-billion boost on 12 June. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Rotary International together pledged \$450 million; national governments, businesses and other organizations and individuals contributed the rest. Just three countries — Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria — have failed to eliminate wild strains of the virus. (Outbreaks caused

by vaccine-derived strains, indicative of low vaccination coverage, still occur elsewhere.) The 3 nations have recorded just 5 polio cases in 2017, down from 16 this time last year.

### EU military money

The European Union has launched its first fund dedicated to supporting military research and development. The European Commission plans to spend €90 million (US\$101 million) on defence research by the end of 2019, and will increase the pot to €500 million per year from 2020. The cash will cover research on fields including electronics, 'metamaterials', encrypted software and robotics. The first grant calls, published on 7 June, are aimed at marine drones, soldiers'

equipment and 'foresight analysis' (a technique for assessing future technologies, risks and trends in a particular area). The money comes from a wider European Defence Fund that European heads of state backed last December. The fund's chief goal is to make member states' defence spending more efficient.

## RESEARCH

## Sea-floor maps

An international group of researchers will develop a high-resolution map of the entire ocean floor by 2030. Announced on 6 June, Seabed 2030 is a partnership between the Nippon Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Tokyo, and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, a global consortium of scientists who specialize in ocean mapping. The Nippon Foundation will provide US\$18.5 million for the first 10 years of the project, which will establish centres in the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, the United States and Sweden to compile existing data and coordinate efforts to fill in the gaps.

## PEOPLE

## Cancer institute

US President Donald Trump announced on 9 June that he will appoint cancer researcher



Norman Sharpless (pictured) to head the US National Cancer Institute (NCI). Sharpless, a practising physician, is currently director of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; he has studied the role of the cell cycle and tumour suppressor genes in ageing and cancer. He is also a co-founder and adviser of G1 Therapeutics, a company in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, that is developing cancer drugs. Sharpless will replace Douglas Lowy, who has been the acting NCI director since 2015.

## NIH director stays

US President Donald Trump has chosen Francis Collins to lead the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on a permanent basis, the White House announced on 6 June. The geneticist, who has led the agency since August 2009, is a holdover from the administration of president

Barack Obama — and is now the first NIH director since the 1970s to be chosen by two presidents. In January, Trump asked Collins to stay at the NIH temporarily while the White House evaluated candidates to lead the agency. Collins is known for his leadership of the Human Genome Project, which in 2000 published the first 'rough draft' of the genome.

## POLICY

## Drug withdrawal

On 8 June, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) called for the withdrawal of an opioid pain medication because of the harm caused by its abuse. It's the first time the agency has called for the removal of this type of medication while it was still on the market. The FDA acted on advice from an advisory panel that said the damage caused by the drug, an extended-release form of Opana (oxycodone hydrochloride), outweighed its benefits. Among the life-threatening events cited in the panel's recommendation was a 2015 outbreak of HIV in Indiana caused by dirty needles used to inject the opioid.

## Early-career grants

Following backlash from the scientific community, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has dropped a proposal

to cap the number of agency grants that an investigator can hold at any one time. The NIH announced on 8 June that it will instead create a special fund — drawn from its existing budget — for early- and mid-career scientists. The Next Generation Researchers Initiative will start with US\$210 million, but the annual amount will grow to \$1.1 billion in 5 years. It will support researchers who have been NIH-funded principal investigators for less than ten years, whose grant proposals would have been rejected even if they had got high scores from peer-review committees. See [go.nature.com/2sbd1bh](http://go.nature.com/2sbd1bh) for more.

## Biosimilar ruling

A US Supreme Court ruling on 12 June is likely to reduce the time it takes for biosimilars — cheaper, generic versions of biological products such as vaccines — to reach the market. Current US law requires that firms making biosimilars tell the original drugmaker about their manufacturing processes six months before marketing, so they can check for any patent infringement. Amgen of Thousand Oaks, California, had argued that the clock should not start until after regulatory approval of the biosimilar, giving more time to mount patent challenges. But in a unanimous decision, the court ruled that the six-month period can start before approval — finding in favour of Sandoz, the generics arm of Swiss drug giant Novartis, which is seeking to market a biosimilar of Amgen's biological cancer drug Neupogen (filgrastim).

## CORRECTION

The Seven Days item 'Singular bat' (*Nature* 546, 191; 2017) misspelt the surname of the taxonomist behind the research. His name is Ricardo Moratelli.

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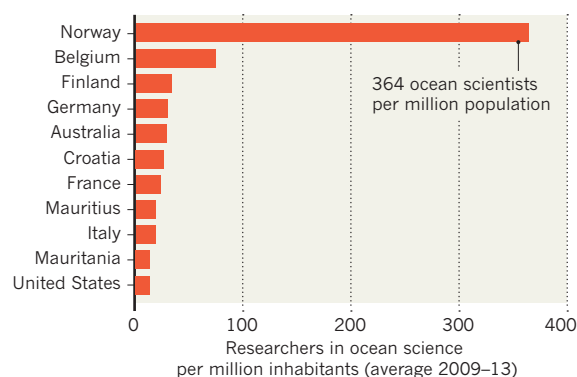
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## TREND WATCH

Norway is home to the world's highest density of ocean scientists. The country, which has one of the longest coastlines in the world, employs 364 full-time marine researchers per million people, according to the first Global Ocean Science Report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. That's almost five times more than Belgium, which comes second in the ranking. China, the United States and Germany lead the field in absolute numbers of marine researchers.

### WHERE ARE ALL THE OCEAN SCIENTISTS?

Norway, which has one of the world's longest coastlines, has by far the most marine researchers per capita.



Self-reported country data; nations including the United Kingdom did not provide information.