

# NEWS BRIEFING

## ● POLICY

**Misconduct:** Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has acknowledged that it has found famed evolutionary psychologist Marc Hauser responsible for eight counts of scientific misconduct. Michael Smith, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, confirmed the findings in a letter to his faculty on 20 August. Smith cited “problems involving data acquisition, data analysis, data retention, and the reporting of research methodologies and results” in three of Hauser’s publications. He did not elaborate further (see Editorial, page 1023).

**Stem-cell ban:** A US district court has blocked the current policy for federal funding of human embryonic stem-cell research. The suit was brought against the Department of Health and Human Services by Christian groups and researchers last August, after US President Barack Obama lifted the previous administration’s restrictions on embryonic stem-cell studies (see [go.nature.com/RyW82Y](http://go.nature.com/RyW82Y)). The judge agreed with the plaintiffs, who contend that the research violates federal law by destroying human embryos. See [go.nature.com/O341gd](http://go.nature.com/O341gd) for more.

**Stem-cell boost:** Ten months after committing US\$230 million to fund 14 research teams developing stem-cell-based therapies (see *Nature* 462, 22; 2009), the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine in San Francisco has earmarked \$243 million to fund 12 more such translational grants. The scheme, approved on 19 August by the state stem-cell agency’s governing body, will give out planning grants (for which applications begin in November), before full awards are approved in 2012.

### **Pakistan flood damage:**

As flood surges in Pakistan continued to destroy homes and farmland last week, engineers warned that water diverted from the swollen Indus River was



## STAR SPACECRAFT

Japan’s mission to study an asteroid suffered many technical glitches, but its much publicized troubles have only helped its celebrity status. The Japanese space agency (JAXA) says that more than 100,000 people have crowded into exhibitions throughout the country to see the plucky Hayabusa spacecraft’s recovery capsule (pictured), which may have returned with a dust sample. Fans have also paid tribute to the craft in online music videos (see [go.nature.com/dukEgl](http://go.nature.com/dukEgl)). The capsule’s next appearance is at a Tokyo museum on 26 August. JAXA has not yet announced whether the mission succeeded in bringing asteroid dust back to Earth.

swamping irrigation canals. The practice could affect irrigation infrastructure in the long term, making severe food shortages even more likely over the coming months. Farmland will probably not be ready for rice planting later this year, says Etienne Labande, deputy chief of the Preparedness and Response Branch of the United Nations World Food Programme. See [go.nature.com/pZXTJc](http://go.nature.com/pZXTJc) for more.

**Reactor opens:** Almost four decades after construction began, Iran opened its first nuclear reactor on 21 August. The 1,000-megawatt, Russian-built pressurized water reactor is located at a power plant near Bushehr, in southwestern Iran. It is not considered a proliferation risk because Russia will supply the fuel and repatriate the waste that the plant produces. Engineers have begun to load the reactor with fuel, and the process should be completed by early September.

## ● RESEARCH

**Journal shrinks:** Extra data can be more of a hindrance than a help, according to the *Journal of Neuroscience*. In a notice published in its 11 August issue, editor-in-chief John Maunsell announced that the journal won’t be accepting supplementary material for review, nor including it online with papers it publishes (see [go.nature.com/Xs7sX6](http://go.nature.com/Xs7sX6)). Maunsell says that a massive influx of supplementary material was making peer review difficult. The journal will go back to basics from 1 November.

**Orbital breakdown:** The European Space Agency (ESA) is working to regain data transmission from its gravity-field and steady-state ocean circulation explorer satellite (GOCE). Since launching in 2009, the low-flying satellite has mapped Earth’s gravity, providing data sets that can be used for global estimates of sea level and improved

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**Number of days that a colony of cyanobacteria from Britain’s sea cliffs survived in space — the record for a fully functional photosynthetic organism.**

Source: BBC News

REUTERS

models of ocean circulation. It emerged last week that ESA suspended telemetry in July while troubleshooting GOCE's computer systems. Project scientists are patching software and hope to resume transmitting data by mid-September.

**Gulf-oil health study:** The US National Institutes of Health has announced the details of a US\$10-million project to study the long-term health effects of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. From October, researchers will start recruiting people who live in the nearby community, or who were involved in the clean-up operation, to take part in the study. They hope to monitor the cardiovascular, respiratory, reproductive and mental health of around 50,000 people.

**● BUSINESS**

**Sequencing buy-up:** Research-services giant Life Technologies of Carlsbad, California, announced on 17 August that it plans to acquire start-up gene-sequencing company Ion Torrent, based in Guilford, Connecticut, for US\$375 million in cash and stock. The start-up's shareholders are eligible for another \$350 million if it meets certain milestones by the end of 2012. Ion Torrent's sequencing machines use semiconductor chips to detect hydrogen ions that are released as nucleotides are added to a DNA strand. The machines, which Life Technologies plans to launch later this year, will cost less than \$100,000, making them accessible to researchers as well as diagnostic labs.

**SOUND BITES**

**“From where I sit, that’s a Greenslide.”**

Bob Brown, Australian Greens party leader, on the election of six new Greens senators to Australia’s upper house on 22 August (see Editorial, page 1023).

Source: Sydney Morning Herald



**● PEOPLE**

**Fields medals:** Four mathematicians were awarded the Fields Medal, the discipline's most prestigious prize, on 19 August at the quadrennial International Congress of Mathematics, held this year in Hyderabad, India. Elon Lindenstrauss, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, won for his work on ergodic theory; Ngô Bảo Châu (pictured, above right), who works at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, for his proof of the Fundamental Lemma; Stanislav Smirnov, of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, for his work on lattice models in statistical physics; and Cédric Villani, of the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, France, for his work on the Boltzmann equation.

**NIH deputy named:** Lawrence Tabak will become the new principal deputy director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. Tabak, who has spent the past ten years as director of the NIH's dental research institute, will become the number-two official at the US\$31-billion agency. His research focuses on the biosynthesis and function of

**THE WEEK AHEAD**

**29 AUGUST-1 SEPTEMBER**

**Five teams of neuroscientists compete to find the best computer algorithms for mapping a nerve cell in three dimensions. The finals of the Diadem Challenge take place at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Janelia Farm Research Campus in Ashburn, Virginia.**

▶ <http://diademchallenge.org>

**29 AUGUST-2 SEPTEMBER**

**The effects of acupuncture and studies of pain in newborns are on the agenda of the 13th World Congress on Pain in Montreal, Canada.**

▶ [go.nature.com/KObh8T](http://go.nature.com/KObh8T)

**30 AUGUST**

**The InterAcademy Council will release its eagerly awaited review into the processes and procedures of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It will deliver its report to IPCC chair Rajendra Pachauri and UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon in New York City.**

▶ [go.nature.com/fbSfDo](http://go.nature.com/fbSfDo)

mucin glycoproteins. Tabak also oversaw the recent reshaping of the NIH's peer-review system, and shepherded through the spending of \$10.4 billion in agency economic-stimulus funds. He replaces Raynard Kington, who became president of Grinnell College in Iowa on 1 August.

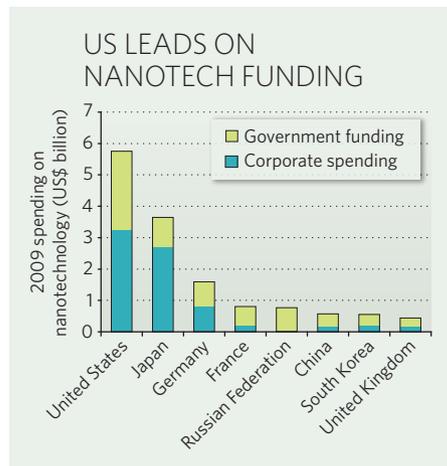
**BUSINESS WATCH**

The United States, Japan and Germany together accounted for 65% of worldwide government funding and corporate investment in nanotechnology in 2009, according to an 18 August report from Lux Research, a business consultancy in Boston, Massachusetts.

US government and corporations spent the most: US\$2.5 billion and \$3.2 billion, respectively (see graph). US-based researchers were also awarded the largest number of patents, 2,378, by a wide margin. The country takes top spot in nanotech research and development not just because of healthy government funding, but also because of its strong private sector, robust patenting system and a culture of innovation,

says David Hwang, a research associate at Lux. "With Germany, Japan and South Korea, it doesn't look like their growth rates are so much faster than the United States that they're going to overtake it any time soon," he says.

Although nanotechnology research publications generally correlate with funding, last year Chinese scientists put out 13,049 papers to the United States's 11,818. Still, Hwang says that China seems to be focusing more on manufacturing than on nanotech innovation. But as it develops its private sector and shores up its patenting system, China has a good chance of overtaking the United States in the next 10-20 years, Hwang says.



SOURCE: LUX RESEARCH