

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

Nuclear shutdown

Obedying a 6 May request from Prime Minister Naoto Kan, Japanese utility Chubu Electric Power has suspended operations at its Hamaoka nuclear power station, which sits in an area considered overdue for a large earthquake. Three reactors at the plant, which some seismologists have dubbed the “most dangerous” in the country, will not be restarted until Chubu completes existing plans to upgrade sea-wall defences there. The suspension has worried both utilities and local industry, who fear for their electricity supply if other nuclear plants under inspection following the Fukushima disaster are also ordered to close.

Spanish shake-up

A wide-ranging bill that updates 1986 legislation on Spain's science system was expected to pass Congress this week, after the Senate unanimously approved it on 4 May. The bill — a pet project of science minister Cristina Garmendia — would create a state research agency with the power to grant independent funding and allow scientists to move more easily between private and public sectors. After petitions from thousands of researchers, it will also ensure that all scientists, including doctoral students, are hired through contracts rather than fellowships. See go.nature.com/iepb8n for more.

Clinic shut down

One of the world's most notorious stem-cell therapy centres had to cease operations last week, after German law caught up with its widely condemned practices. The XCell-Center, which has units in Düsseldorf and Cologne,



G. GORDON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pacts to curb illegal logging

Liberia's logging industry was once used to fund bloody civil wars that killed hundreds of thousands of people. But this week the country became only the fifth from Africa to sign a trade agreement with the European Union to stop illegal timber exports. Last week, Indonesia became the first Asian country to do the same. The deals are meant to ensure that timber

reaching Europe is sourced legally; measures include electronically tagging trees (pictured). But none of the six countries that have signed the pacts has yet started producing licensed timber. And much of Liberia's wood ends up in China, which does not ask for licences, yet forwards products made from the wood to Europe. See go.nature.com/xwkhck for more.

injected stem cells from bone marrow into the brain, spinal cord and other body parts of patients. An 18-month-old boy died after treatment at the Düsseldorf centre last year. Despite numerous media exposés, the centre's activities continued; but it has now run out of time to apply for a special licence for tissue engineering, under 2007 European regulations implemented in German law in 2009. See go.nature.com/uku3t5 for more.

Australian budget

The feared Aus\$400-million (US\$430-million) cuts in government funding for medical research have not appeared in Australia's 10 May federal budget, to the relief of thousands of scientists who

had rallied in April to protest against the rumoured cuts. But as *Nature* went to press, it seemed that the four-year budget — which aimed to cut the national deficit — did not increase research spending either. The Australian and New Zealand bid to host the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope received US\$40.2 million, in one notable initiative. See go.nature.com/9bqrb2 for more details.

Renewables report

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has released its first major report since 2007. The 9 May study examined the future of six renewable energy sources (biomass, hydro, wind, solar, geothermal and oceans). More than half of the

164 future scenarios presented in the report suggest that these sources will provide more than 27% of the global energy supply by 2050. In the most optimistic forecast, the proportion rises to 77%. See page 134 for more.

Integrity deadline

After a slow start, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is suddenly demanding fast progress on US President Barack Obama's scientific integrity initiative, launched in March 2009. John Holdren, the OSTP's director, said on 5 May that agencies have 90 days to submit draft policies on scientific integrity. So far, 6 out of the 31 agencies affected reportedly have such policies, and only one, the Department

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of the Interior, has a final policy. See go.nature.com/s547fr for more.

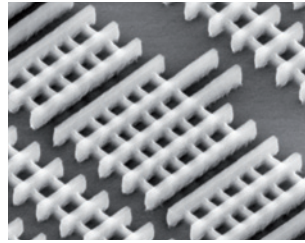
Tevatron shutdown

The Tevatron proton-antiproton collider at Fermilab near Batavia, Illinois, will continue to run until 30 September, when the US fiscal year ends, said Pier Oddone, director of the lab, on 5 May. The US Department of Energy had said in January that it would not fund the collider into 2012, but even a full 2011 running schedule could not be confirmed until Fermilab received its budget breakdown from the April deal made by legislators in Congress.

BUSINESS

Stem-cell trials

California's state stem-cell agency can for the first time say that it is funding a clinical trial. On 4 May, the board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) in San Francisco voted to give a US\$25-million loan to Geron of Menlo Park, California, which in 2009 was the first company to get US approval to undertake a clinical trial involving human embryonic stem cells. When the creation of CIRM was put to a public vote in 2004, translation of stem cells from research tools to therapies was a major selling point.



3D transistors

Computer-chip manufacturer Intel has announced that it will mass-produce three-dimensional transistors for its next generation of chips. Usually, the channel along which electric current passes in a transistor is flat; in the 'Tri-Gate' transistors (pictured), it protrudes from the surface so that the 'gate' that switches current on or off wraps around the channel on three sides. The concept — developed in the late 1990s by Chenming Hu at the University of California, Berkeley, and his colleagues — should allow smaller components to be packed more closely on chips. See go.nature.com/2omjfp for more.

RESEARCH

Cholera in Haiti

The cholera epidemic currently raging through Haiti was inadvertently introduced to the country through faecal contamination of river water, a four-member

panel appointed by the United Nations concluded in a report published on 4 May. The report pointed to probable leakage from latrines at a riverside United Nations peacekeepers' camp. However, it stopped short of directly accusing Nepalese soldiers in the camp, who are widely suspected of carrying in the strain (which matches cholera strains circulating in Nepal). The outbreak — the first in Haiti in nearly a century — had by mid-April killed almost 4,900 people and made 286,000 ill.

Gravity probe B

NASA announced on 4 May that its Gravity Probe B mission — conceived and funded five decades ago — had at last confirmed predictions of general relativity. The US\$750-million satellite flew from 2004 to 2005, but it took researchers six years to unpick systematic errors from the data it had collected. Meanwhile, other experiments had already matched its precision. See page 131 for more.

US veterans biobank

The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hopes to enrol 1 million military veterans to form what could be the world's largest research database linking genetic profiles with health records. On 5 May it announced

COMING UP

14–18 MAY

The science and politics of protecting marine life is the focus of the 2nd International Marine Conservation Congress in Victoria, Canada. go.nature.com/ukzje9

16–24 MAY

The 64th World Health Assembly, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, includes a meeting to decide whether to destroy smallpox stocks. go.nature.com/th3feu

16–19 MAY

Eighteen Nobel laureates are participating in a symposium on global sustainability in Stockholm. go.nature.com/f7mow7

that the Million Veterans Program, already launched at the Boston VA Medical Center, would be expanded across the nation over the next 5–7 years. If it reaches its goals, the programme will be larger than other major personalized medicine initiatives, such as the UK Biobank, which has 500,000 enrolled volunteers.

PEOPLE

New to US academy

Among 72 members elected to the US National Academy of Sciences on 3 May were geneticist George Church of Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, and Neil Shubin, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Chicago in Illinois. Stem-cell pioneer Shinya Yamanaka at the University of Kyoto in Japan was among 18 new foreign associate members. See go.nature.com/ax7qth for more.

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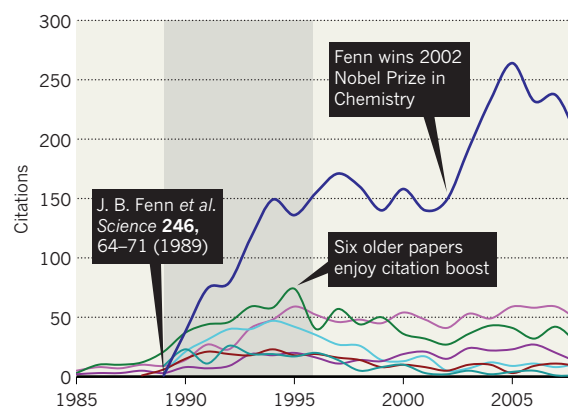
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TREND WATCH

A pivotal paper by chemist John Fenn saw huge numbers of citations almost immediately after its 1989 publication, but citations of at least six of the future Nobel laureate's older papers also rose (see chart). The same attention boost, or 'citation cascade', is evident in records of more than 100 other Nobel prizewinners, says a study published on 4 May (A. Mazloumian *et al.* *PLoS ONE* 6, e18975; 2011). The finding may shed light on how scientific reputations emerge. See go.nature.com/gphgcp for more.

HOW SCIENTIFIC PRESTIGE EMERGES

A landmark paper quickly boosts an author's citations — but it also generates a cascade of citations and attention for older papers.



SOURCE: PLOS/WEB OF SCIENCE