

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

RESEARCH

Infant HIV cure

A second HIV-infected child seems to have been successfully treated, according to the doctor who last year reported the first child to be cured of the infection (see *Nature* **504**, 357–365; 2013). Deborah Persaud, who studies paediatric infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Maryland, presented the results on 5 March at the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston, Massachusetts. She said that a girl born last April to an HIV-infected mother was treated with retroviral drugs within four hours of birth, and that tests suggest she has been cured. The child continues to receive anti-HIV medication.

Retraction call

Two prominent research papers that describe a method for reprogramming mature cells into an embryonic state should be retracted, a co-author of the papers said in media reports on 10 March. The studies, published in *Nature* (H. Obokata *et al.* *Nature* **505**, 641–647, 676–680;

NUMBER CRUNCH

€182.5 m

The total amount (US\$253 million) that Italian regulators fined the Switzerland-based drug companies Novartis and Roche for colluding to block the use of an eye treatment in order to promote a more-expensive alternative drug that they jointly market.

29 October 2013



15 November



13 December



14 January 2014



D. JEWITT (UCLA)/ESA/NASA

Asteroid caught in the act of falling apart

For the first time, the Hubble Space Telescope has captured an asteroid in the process of breaking into pieces. A series of close-up images taken over several months (pictured) revealed that a fuzzy object first spotted in September 2013 is actually a set of ten rocky

fragments that are slowly drifting apart. A team led by astronomer David Jewitt at the University of California, Los Angeles, describes the findings this month in *Astrophysical Journal Letters* (D. Jewitt *et al.* *Astrophys. J.* **784**, L8; 2014).

2014), apparently contain images duplicated from the doctoral dissertation of the lead author, Haruko Obokata of the RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology in Kobe, Japan. "I have lost faith in the paper," said Obokata's co-author, Teruhiko Wakayama, a mouse-cloning expert at the University of Yamanashi. See go.nature.com/5gpzoz for more.

BUSINESS

Live longer

Genomics pioneer Craig Venter hopes to discover how to keep ageing adults fit and healthy for longer with the launch of a new company, Human Longevity, announced on 4 March. Based in San Diego, California, the business is a joint venture

with Robert Hariri, chief executive of the stem-cell company Celgene Cellular Therapeutics in Summit, New Jersey, and the X Prize Foundation founder Peter Diamandis. It will sequence the genomes of cancer patients and their tumours, and the genomes of 40,000 people per year from all age groups, with the aim of increasing this to 100,000 per year, to build the largest database yet of human genetic information.

POLICY

Budget cuts bite

The US National Institutes of Health awarded 750 fewer new research grants in 2013 compared with 2012, an 8.3% drop, as a result of the sweeping budget cuts known

as sequestration that hit government agencies last year. The finding is part of a report published on 6 March by the US Government Accountability Office, which notes that it will be years before the full effects of the cuts are known. The 2013 sequestration also hit the US National Science Foundation, which awarded 690 fewer grants. See pages 139 and 147 for more.

China congress

China's Premier Li Keqiang declared a war on pollution in his opening speech to the annual National People's Congress on 5 March. At the meeting, attended by the country's leading lawmakers and politicians, Li said that green measures will target outdated energy production

NOAA

and industrial processes. He also gave the nation's researchers a boost, pledging cash for basic science. See page 148 for more.

PEOPLE

ACS head retires

The world's largest scientific society, the American Chemical Society (ACS), will lose its chief, Madeleine Jacobs, when she retires at the end of this year. Jacobs has spent more than 24 years with the society, including 11 years as its chief executive. She came to the ACS after spending 21 years in science journalism and public affairs, and during her tenure oversaw a boom in fund-raising activity that netted the society more than US\$500 million per year.

Smithsonian head

David Skorton, the president of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, will be the new head of the US Smithsonian Institution from July 2015. Skorton, a cardiologist who was formerly president of the University of Iowa in Iowa City, will replace Wayne Clough, the Smithsonian's Board of Regents announced on 10 March. The institution, a collection of museums and research complexes headquartered in Washington DC, has an annual budget of US\$1.3 billion.

**New NOAA chief**

The US Senate approved Kathryn Sullivan to lead the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on 6 March. Sullivan (pictured) is a former NASA astronaut and the first US woman to walk in space. She replaces marine ecologist Jane Lubchenco, who resigned in February 2013. Sullivan returned to the agency in 2011 as its deputy administrator after serving as its chief scientist in the 1990s.

Forensic fraud

Disgraced forensic chemist Annie Dookhan, who worked at the Hinton State Laboratory Institute drug lab in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, until 2012, acted alone when she falsified data and tampered with drug samples. So concludes Glenn Cunha, Massachusetts' Inspector General, in a report dated 4 March. However, the report

adds that poor lab management and training, and weak security enabled the crimes. Dookhan admitted to the fraud in 2012 and is currently serving a prison sentence. See go.nature.com/oohole for more.

EVENTS

El Niño cometh?

The eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean might shift into a warm phase, known as El Niño, in the next few months, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said on 6 March. The phenomenon disrupts weather patterns around the globe and could become more frequent as a result of global warming. NOAA says that there is a 50% chance of an El Niño developing during the Northern Hemisphere's summer or autumn, but that the accuracy of forecasts will improve over the next two months.

Coal-mine fine

One of the largest coal companies in the United States has agreed to spend around US\$200 million to reduce water pollution and monitor the environment at mines in the Appalachian Mountain region, the US Environmental Protection Agency announced on 5 March. Alpha Natural Resources, based in Bristol, Virginia, and its subsidiaries

COMING UP

16–18 MARCH

A symposium entitled 'The Evolution of Modern Humans' — From Bones to Genomes' takes place in Sitges, Spain. Hosted by Cell Press, the meeting will discuss multidisciplinary approaches to studying the evolution of *Homo sapiens*.

go.nature.com/63txud

24–25 MARCH

Representatives of more than 50 nations meet at the third Nuclear Safety Summit in The Hague, the Netherlands. They will discuss ways to reduce the amount of nuclear material in the world and tackle smuggling.

go.nature.com/pdiaam

will also pay fines totalling \$27.5 million for thousands of violations of the Clean Water Act. The settlement covers 79 mines and 25 processing plants in 5 states, including West Virginia.

Radiation contained

No radioactive contamination or air-quality problems were detected by the first probes lowered into the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico, the US Department of Energy announced on 9 March. One section of the nuclear-waste facility suffered a leak last month (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/rtw;2014>), but energy-department officials say that the plant's air-filtration system stopped the radiation reaching other parts of the facility. The results must be confirmed before employees can re-enter the plant and begin investigating the cause of the leak.

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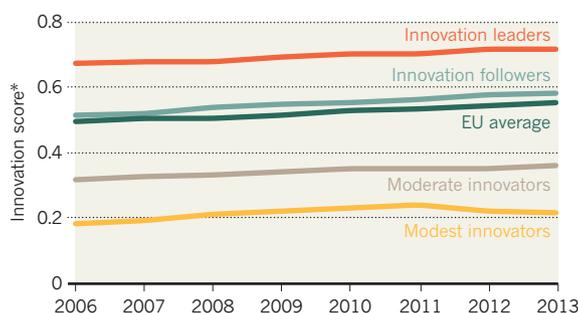
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TREND WATCH

The European Union (EU) is getting more innovative, but its member states remain divided into leaders and laggards, suggests the European Commission's *Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014* (see chart). The worst countries barely improved, as measured by a set of metrics covering research systems, papers, patents, entrepreneurship and innovative firms. At the sub-national level, performance got worse in one-fifth of EU regions. Europe closed the gap between itself and the United States and Japan, however.

SPLIT STREAMS IN EUROPE'S INNOVATION

There are stark differences in innovation performance in EU member states (clustered into four groups by the European Commission).



*Based on a set of 25 indicators.

Innovation leaders: Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Finland. **Innovation followers:** Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, UK. **Moderate innovators:** Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain. **Modest innovators:** Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania.

SOURCE: INNOVATION UNION SCOREBOARD 2014