SEVEN DAYS *The news in brief*

RESEARCH

Ebola drug restart

Phase I trials of an experimental Ebola drug will restart after US regulators modified restrictions they had placed on the study. Tekmira Pharmaceuticals of Burnaby, Canada, said on 10 April that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will allow the company to administer TKM-Ebola to a number of healthy people for up to one week. The FDA had halted the study in July 2014, requesting more information about how the drug works (see *Nature* **511,** 520; 2014). Although regulators later allowed use of the drug in patients infected with Ebola, testing higher doses in healthy people remains on hold.

Precision medicine

On 14 April, California launched a statewide US$3-million precision-medicine initiative to study how genomic, socio-economic, environmental, mobile and other forms of patient data can be combined to inform the development of drugs and the better practice of medicine. Hosted at the University of California, San Francisco, the initiative will be led by Atul Butte, director of its Institute for Computational Health Sciences. The effort follows the US Precision Medicine Initiative announced in January, a national project to collect data from one million people. See go.nature.com/2zelzo for more.

EVENTS

Stop-and-go scope

Organizers of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea in Hawaii will halt construction until at least 20 April, Hawaii's governor David Ige announced on 11 April. Last week, dozens of protesters were arrested for trying to block building work on the mountain's summit. Many Native Hawaiians consider Mauna Kea to be sacred, and some have filed lawsuits against the project.

DON PREISLER/UC DAVIS SCHOOL VET. MED.

Breeding programme to boost rare voles

An endangered population of California voles may soon be helped towards recovery by animals raised in captivity. Researchers at the University of California, Davis, announced on 10 April that a breeding programme for the Amargosa vole (*Microtus californicus scirpensis*; pictured) is preparing to release its first animals into the wild. The subspecies has been driven almost to extinction by loss of habitat and by climate change; only a few hundred are estimated to remain in the Mojave Desert marshes. The programme, started in July 2014 in collaboration with state and federal wildlife officials and the University of California, Berkeley, has grown from 20 to 90 captive voles. The researchers plan to release about two dozen animals into two desert marshes near Tecopa, and will track the voles using radio transmitters for up to a year.

Disease control

The African Union and the United States signed an agreement on 13 April to create the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The African CDC will launch later this year, beginning with a surveillance and response unit to assist in public-health emergencies on the continent. As part of the agreement, the US CDC will second two public-health experts to the African Union to act as long-term technical advisers, and will provide fellowships for ten African epidemiologists.

PEOPLE

Research fraud

The US Office of Research Integrity has uncovered a series of data fabrications by neuroscientist Ryousuke Fujita. Fujita, formerly a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University in New York City, had previously admitted to faking results in a retracted 2011 *Cell* paper that described the conversion of skin cells from people with Alzheimer's into neurons. The office's findings, released on 7 April, also reveal sample-size inflation and image manipulation in a 2013 *Nature* paper and in an unpublished manuscript. Fujita has agreed to exclude himself from federal research funding and from peer-review committees for agencies such as the US National Institutes of Health for three years.

Retraction request

Neuroscience researcher Teresita L. Briones will request the retraction of five publications as part of an agreement with the US Office of Research Integrity announced on 7 April. The office found that the former professor at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, "intentionally, knowingly,

and recklessly" falsified and fabricated data related to studies of neuroinflammation, cognitive impairment and the accumulation of amyloid proteins in a rat model of brain injury. The faked results also affect three grant applications submitted to the US National Institutes of Health.

Psychiatry chief

The University of Minnesota in Minneapolis announced on 9 April the resignation of Charles Schulz, head of its psychiatry department. Schulz said that he wanted to focus on his medical practice and make way for new leadership. The university is currently reviewing and revamping its ethics policies for clinical research, after an external report found inadequate protections for human participants in psychiatric studies. Enrolment in all of the department's interventional drug trials have been suspended since March (see *Nature* http://doi.org/3nk; 2015).

FUNDING

Exascale computer

The US Department of Energy will spend US$200 million on a next-generation supercomputer for Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois, it announced on 9 April. The machine, to be called Aurora, uses an Intel high-performance computing system and is due to open for scientific research in 2018. The grant is the third and final in the energy department's push towards exascale computing, a milepost expected to be reached in the early 2020s (see *Nature* **515,** 324; 2014).

LUIZ FERNANDO SOUZA FERNANDES/GETTY

Transgenic tree

Brazilian regulators approved on 10 April the commercial use of a genetically modified eucalyptus species developed by biotechnology firm FuturaGene of Rehovot, Israel. The eucalyptus is engineered to grow faster and produce about 20% more wood (see *Nature* **512,** 357; 2014) than do conventional trees. Use of the plant could free up some industrial forest land, the company said; roughly 3.5 million hectares are currently occupied by eucalyptus plantations across Brazil (**pictured**). The decision paves the way for the world's first large-scale commercial deployment of a genetically modified tree.

Contract cool-off

Energy provider Southern Company in Atlanta, Georgia, confirmed last week that it will not be renewing its funding agreement with the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when the agreement expires later this year. The centre and one of its researchers, climate-change sceptic Willie Soon, came under fire in February after documents revealed the terms of their earlier contracts with the company. In one case, they agreed to notify the company if disclosing it as a source of funding. See go.nature.com/khqcem for more.

COMING UP

18–22 APRIL
Highlights at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, include developments in antibody–drug complexes and stem-cell cultures for drug testing.
go.nature.com/obebc4

20–23 APRIL
The Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, hosts Hubble's 25th Anniversary Symposium, where astronomers will share results from the telescope.
go.nature.com/tcuzoe

21–23 APRIL
Tsunami resilience and the future of earthquake early-warning systems are on the agenda at the annual meeting of the Seismological Society of America in Pasadena, California.
go.nature.com/17ifbo

BUSINESS

Eyes on natural gas

Oil-and-gas giant Royal Dutch Shell will take over the UK gas firm BG Group in a US$70-billion deal announced on 8 April. BG's natural-gas holdings are expected to give Shell a leg up in the fast-growing market for liquefied natural gas, a cleaner-burning alternative to coal for generating electricity and heating homes. Industry experts at Wood Mackenzie, an energy analysis firm headquartered in Edinburgh, UK, say that the combined company is on track to become the biggest seller of liquefied natural gas by 2018.

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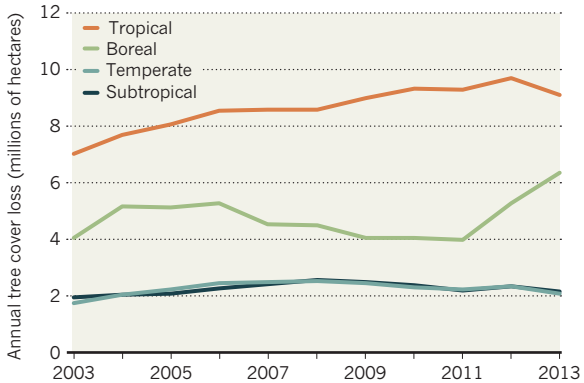
TREND WATCH

Loss of tree cover has surged since 2011 in the boreal forests of Russia, Canada and Alaska, according to an analysis of satellite data released this month by the World Resources Institute in Washington DC (see go.nature.com/6izl4p). The authors suggest that recent spikes in forest fires, which vary greatly from year to year, could be to blame. In the long term, it is predicted that climate change could lead to more frequent and intense boreal wildfires in the twenty-first century.

BOREAL BREAKDOWN

Tree cover losses in northern boreal forests have spiked in recent years, but worldwide, losses in tropical regions continue to dominate.



Trend lines represent moving averages of each year and the previous two years.

SOURCE: WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE