

## EVENTS

### Torture trial

Two psychologists who were involved with controversial interrogation techniques for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) will face trial. On 7 August, a US judge for the Eastern District of Washington agreed to hear the American Civil Liberties Union's case against James Mitchell and John Bruce Jessen. The lawsuit alleges that the psychologists promoted methods such as waterboarding, which were allegedly used by the CIA to torture three detainees who were suspected of involvement in the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. According to the lawsuit, a company formed by Mitchell and Jessen received between US\$72 million and \$81 million from the US government between 2005 and 2009 for their services. The trial is scheduled for 5 September in Spokane, Washington.

### India marches

Thousands of researchers, university students and science enthusiasts gathered in dozens of Indian cities to march in support of science on 9 August. The protests, in cities including Delhi and Bangalore, focused on India's stagnant investment in research and development, and on what some scientists call government promotion of 'unscientific ideas'. But some scientists *Nature* spoke to said that they had been told to stay away from the event. See page 270 for more.

## PEOPLE

### Adviser resigns

A science adviser to the South Korean government has resigned four days after her appointment, amid controversy over her role in a decade-old misconduct scandal. Ky Young



NASA/USGS

## Wildfires burn near Greenland's ice sheet

Satellite images of wildfires burning in Greenland have highlighted a poorly understood threat to the mainly permafrost-covered island. Fires were spotted on 31 July near the western edge of the ice sheet, and have been burning since. The fires are the largest in the satellite record, although these data go back only to 2000. The cause is not clear, but researchers say the

fire seems to be burning through peat. Areas in southwestern Greenland thaw in summer, drying out peat and vegetation, and making them more likely to burn, according to NASA, whose MODIS and Suomi satellites captured images of the event. Wildfires in Greenland are not unprecedented, but satellite data suggest they have become more frequent over the past decade.

Park, a biology professor at Sunchon National University in Suncheon, was appointed chief of the science ministry's Science, Technology and Innovation Office on 7 August. But researchers raised concerns over the move, and thousands signed petitions calling for her resignation. Park was science adviser to the president when a scandal broke out in 2005 over studies published in *Science*, led by South Korean stem-cell researcher Woo Suk Hwang. The work claimed to have cloned human embryos and harvested stem cells from them, but was later found to be fraudulent. Hwang's research had been generously supported by the government, and Park was a co-author on the first

paper, published in 2004. She resigned as science adviser in 2006 after the affair.

### Gunman sentenced

A US medical researcher was sentenced on 9 August to 28 years in prison for shooting a former colleague, Dennis Charney, dean of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. In June, a jury had found Hengjun Chao guilty of attempted murder, assault and criminal use of a gun. Chao had stalked Charney for days before shooting him in the shoulder and chest with a shotgun on 29 August 2016 in Chappaqua, New York. Chao was released from his position as an assistant

professor at the Icahn School six years ago after a committee there — whose members included Charney — accused him of fudging data. Chao later sued the school for wrongful dismissal and lost.

### Director retires

Josie Briggs has retired as director of the US National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced on 10 August. Briggs, a kidney researcher, has directed NCCIH since 2008 and led the launch of the NIH's Precision Medicine Initiative in 2015. Briggs will become editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the American Society*

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of *Nephrology*. Deputy director David Shurtleff will head the centre while the NIH searches for a permanent replacement.

## Protest letter

Scientists, diplomats and former Egyptian government officials published a letter on 9 August opposing the sentencing of Ismail Serageldin, a science advocate and former director of Egypt's Library of Alexandria. On 1 August, an Egyptian judge ordered him to serve 3.5 years in prison for mishandling about US\$1 million in state funds for the library. Following the overthrow of Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak in 2011, several officials and professors who served under him have faced charges of embezzlement and corruption. Serageldin — a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences — appealed against the verdict and wrote on Facebook that he had donated his own money and books to the library to serve Egyptian researchers and young people.

## HISTORY

### Frozen fruit cake

A fruit cake has survived for more than 100 years on Antarctica's Cape Adare, according to the Antarctic Heritage Trust in Christchurch, New Zealand. The organization was



restoring artefacts and huts from the area used by Robert Scott's expedition in 1911 when workers discovered the delicacy. Wrapped in paper and ensconced in a corroded storage tin, the fruit cake (pictured) looked and smelled very nearly edible, said Lizzie Meek, programme manager of artefacts, in an announcement on 10 August. Conservators with the Heritage Trust are working to repair the damaged tin and torn paper. They will return the cake to the site after the huts have been restored.

## PUBLISHING

### Chemistry preprints

The American Chemical Society launched a preprint site for chemistry on 14 August. ChemRxiv will allow chemists to share early results and data online before publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The site follows the model of preprint repositories such as the arXiv

for physics and bioRxiv for biologists. But ChemRxiv has competition: on 7 August, publishing giant Elsevier launched ChemRN, another chemistry preprint server.

## FUNDING

### Ecology cash cuts

Australian ecologists are protesting against plans to stop funding the country's Long Term Ecological Research Network (LTERN) by the end of the year. The network operates 12 sites covering deserts, rainforest, savannahs and alpine regions. In a June letter, leaders of the consortium that funds the network cited budget cuts and shifting priorities as the root of the decision. Ecologists fear the move would break time-series data collected over decades. "Terminating Australia's LTER network is totally out of step with international trends and national imperatives," wrote the network's science

director, David Lindenmayer, and 68 co-authors in a letter in *Science* on 11 August. See [go.nature.com/2i1bxg9](http://go.nature.com/2i1bxg9) for more.

## POLICY

### Tuna not listed

Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) will not be listed as threatened or endangered under the US Endangered Species Act, said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The decision, announced on 8 August, came after 14 environmental organizations filed a petition in 2016 to list the fish, prompting a scientific review. Researchers assessed threats including commercial and recreational fishing, pollution and climate change. About 1.6 million bluefin tuna remain in the wild, and 140,000 are of reproductive age — enough to prevent the species' extinction in the foreseeable future, NOAA said.

### Climate language

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has come under fire for a series of e-mails directing employees at its Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to avoid referring to global warming when talking about their work. News reports on 7 August revealed that Bianca Moebius-Clune, director of soil health at the service, had sent an e-mail in February to staff telling them to avoid the term 'climate change' and instead talk about 'weather extremes'. The message also blacklisted the phrases 'reduce greenhouse gases' and 'sequester carbon'. The USDA said in an e-mailed statement that the NRCS "has not received direction from USDA or the Administration to modify its communications on climate change or any other topic".

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## TREND WATCH

US President Donald Trump declared opioid misuse a national emergency on 10 August, following a recommendation from a White House commission. A July report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that opioid prescribing in the United States tripled between 1999 and 2015. Since 2010, there has been a drop in the annual prescription rate, but a rise in overdose deaths involving heroin and synthetic opioids (G. P. Guy Jr *et al. MMWR Morb. Mortal. Wkly Rep.* **66**, 697–704; 2017).

### OPIOID MISUSE DECLARED A US EMERGENCY

Deaths involving heroin and synthetic opioids other than methadone, such as fentanyl, increased hugely between 2014 and 2015.

