

## EVENTS

### Spaceplane returns

The European Space Agency (ESA) successfully tested its prototype reusable spaceplane on 11 February, in a mission that took the craft 413 kilometres above Earth. The Intermediate eXperimental Vehicle (IXV) splashed down in the Pacific Ocean after a 100-minute trip from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana. The IXV is trialling technology for PRIDE (Programme for Reusable In-Orbit Demonstrator for Europe), a future ESA craft that could eventually allow the agency to ferry planetary samples and humans, or to service satellites and perform low-orbit experiments. See [go.nature.com/y2lgph](http://go.nature.com/y2lgph) for more.

### Disease renamed

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) has been given a new name by an influential US panel. In a 10 February report, the US Institute of Medicine controversially proposed the name systemic exertion intolerance disease (SEID), along with a new definition. To be diagnosed with SEID, a person must have unrefreshing sleep, fatigue that impacts life and exhaustion after any exertion. Previously, CFS was a catch-all diagnosis for patients with fatigue-related symptoms, once other diagnoses had been ruled out. The report also stated that SEID is a physiological, not psychological, disease. See [go.nature.com/eutffs](http://go.nature.com/eutffs) for more.

### Deep-space probe

The Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR) soared into space on 11 February, ending more than a decade of battles over the Earth- and space-weather-observing probe.



KARL MONDON/TNS/NEWSCOM

## US flight body drafts looser drone rules

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed regulations that would more freely allow 'commercial' drone flights, which include those made for research purposes (pictured). Such flights are currently not permitted without FAA approval, which is given on a

case-by-case basis. Under the draft rules, released on 15 February, drones weighing less than 25 kilograms would be allowed to fly in daylight at up to 161 kilometres per hour and a maximum altitude of 152 metres, provided that they remain in view of the person operating them.

A Falcon 9 rocket from the private company SpaceX lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spacecraft. DSCOVR, originally planned as an Earth-imaging satellite by former US vice-president Al Gore, will monitor space weather from about 1.5 million kilometres above Earth. It was the first deep-space launch by SpaceX, which, because of rough seas, cancelled an opportunity to try to land the rocket's used first stage on a barge.

### Japan aftershock

An earthquake shook the northeast of Japan on 17 February. The quake's magnitude was recorded by the Japan Meteorological

Agency (JMA) as 6.9 and by the US Geological Survey as 6.7. According to media reports, a seismologist from the JMA told reporters that the event was an aftershock of the 2011 Tohoku quake that caused huge damage on Japan's coast.

## POLICY

### Wildlife trade

The United States has outlined how it will increase efforts to stamp out illegal wildlife trading. The departments of justice, state and the interior say that they will strengthen controls over US trade in ivory, among other measures, and reduce demand for certain wildlife products. The plan, released on 11 February, builds on President Barack Obama's 2014 strategy for combating

the wildlife trade. Meanwhile, in South Africa, environment minister Edna Molewa announced on 10 February that a committee has been established to investigate the feasibility of a regulated trade in rhino horn. Molewa said that any proposal would be "based on sound research".

### Risky climate plans

More research is needed into some areas of the nascent field of geoengineering, say a pair of reports by the US National Research Council. The findings, published on 10 February, could set the stage for a formal US research programme to test ways to manipulate Earth's climate. The reports argue that the risks of schemes that aim to alter Earth's reflectivity to

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cool it down often outweigh the benefits. Small-scale research should begin on ways to capture and store carbon permanently, the authors say. See [go.nature.com/ddxd2j](http://go.nature.com/ddxd2j) for more.

## Climate draft

A draft text for negotiation in the run-up to the next big United Nations climate meeting was hammered out last week. After six days of talks in Geneva, Switzerland, delegates came up with the 86-page document as the basis for the climate agreement to be finalized by nations in Paris later this year. That accord will come into force in 2020, and will aim to keep average global temperatures from rising by more than 2°C.

### PEOPLE

## Climate chief dies

Michael Raupach, a leading Australian climate and ocean scientist, died on 10 February, aged 64. After a long career in marine and atmospheric research at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Canberra, he was last year appointed director of the Australian National University's Climate Change Institute in Canberra. Raupach (pictured) was best known for his work in atmospheric physics and on water and



carbon cycles. In 2001, he co-founded the Global Carbon Project, an initiative to establish a knowledge base to inform policies to curb greenhouse-gas emissions.

### RESEARCH

## Grey-wolf woe

A grey wolf spotted near the Grand Canyon in October last year — the first in the area since the 1940s — was shot and killed in Utah in December, according to a genetic analysis by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The results were announced on 11 February. The three-year-old female is thought to have travelled at least 1,200 kilometres from Wyoming, where it had been tagged with a radio collar in January 2014. The animal's extensive wandering attracted so much interest that a national contest was held to give her a name, Echo. Wolves in Utah are protected under the Endangered Species Act; the

hunter allegedly mistook the animal for a coyote.

## Ebola report

Clinical trials of Ebola vaccines should continue in West Africa — even if there are too few new cases to determine definitively whether they work, urges a 17 February report. Released by UK biomedical charity the Wellcome Trust and the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, the report says that testing and manufacturing of Ebola vaccines and medicines should be ramped up in case there is a resurgence of the current outbreak in West Africa, and to combat future Ebola epidemics.

### FACILITIES

## Ultrafast Arab laser

The Arab world's first attosecond-laser facility opened at the King Saud University in Riyadh on 16 February. Such facilities use laser pulses lasting a few billionths of a billionth of a second to capture images of the motion of electrons for study. In collaboration with the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics in Garching, Germany, and the University of Munich, the Saudi Arabian facility will carry out research in atomic

## COMING UP

### 19 FEBRUARY

The US National Academy of Engineering will launch a contest called The Next MacGyver, crowdsourcing ideas for a television show featuring a female engineer as the lead character. The competition, created in response to a White House request, involves Hollywood producers including the creators of the popular series *MacGyver* and *CSI*. [go.nature.com/wz8ban](http://go.nature.com/wz8ban)

### 23–27 FEBRUARY

The Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics in Santa Barbara, California, will hold a meeting on the physics of exoplanets, with particular emphasis on 'super-Earths' — planets with radii 2.5 times that of Earth. [go.nature.com/jcsuf6](http://go.nature.com/jcsuf6)

physics and molecular biology. See page 281 for more.

### BUSINESS

## Transgenic apples

Apples genetically engineered to be 'non-browning' when cut have been deregulated by the US Department of Agriculture, meaning that they can be grown and sold to consumers. Arctic Apples were developed by Okanagan Specialty Fruits in Summerland, Canada, to have reduced levels of an enzyme responsible for turning fruit flesh brown when it is exposed to air. This is one of the first genetically modified plant products with a trait aimed at consumers rather than farmers. The first of the apples could be on the market by 2016.

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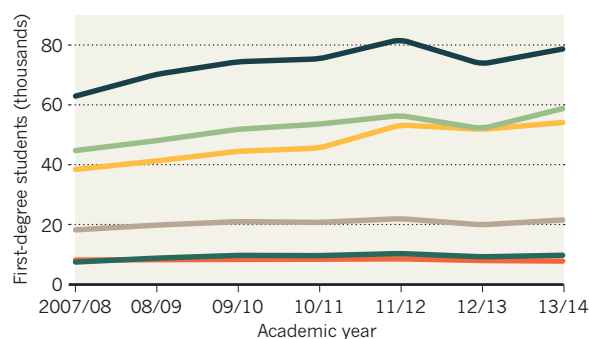
## TREND WATCH

Some science subjects have seen large hikes in undergraduate student numbers in Britain over the past seven years, according to a report by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency. The biggest winners were subjects allied to medicine, such as nursing and pharmacology, which grew by 39%, followed by biological sciences, which rose by 30%. The next highest gains in popularity were jointly in maths and in business and administrative studies, which attracted 24% more students.

## BIOMEDICAL-SCIENCES BOOM

UK students have turned to subjects allied to medicine, biology and maths in the past seven years.

— Business and administrative studies — Physical sciences  
— Biological sciences — Mathematics  
— Subjects allied to medicine — Medicine and dentistry



SOURCE: HESA