

Hello Nature readers,

Your weekly update from Nature's global news team.



New Zealand is part of what some scientists argue should be a new continent




NEWS

Geologists spy an eighth continent: Zealandia

Beneath the waves in the southwest Pacific Ocean lies a mostly hidden realm — dubbed Zealandia — that deserves to be called a continent, geologists say. They’ve been making the case for decades, but just published a more technical synthesis. It’s unclear how much traction their argument will get, because there is no international body in charge of designating official continents.

Nature | 12 min read

(GSA Today [research papers](#))

Share   

Collapse of Aztec society




linked to catastrophic

salmonella outbreak

One of the worst epidemics in human history, which devastated Mexico’s native population in the sixteenth century, may have been caused by a deadly form of salmonella from Europe. One study extracted bacterial DNA from Mexican burials of the time, which points to a specific salmonella strain. That same strain was circulating in Europe in the twelfth century, another ancient-DNA study found.

Nature | 12 min read

(bioRxiv [research papers](#))

Share   

Watch these robo-insects run

Scientists should be permitted to genetically modify human embryos destined for implantation in the womb to eliminate devastating genetic diseases such as sickle-cell anaemia or cystic fibrosis — once gene-editing techniques advance sufficiently for use in people and proper restrictions are in place. That’s the conclusion of a long-awaited 14 February report from the US National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

Nature | 12 min read

(Nature Communications [research papers](#))

Share   

Giant crack in Antarctic ice shelf spotlights advances in glaciology

A Chinese scientist has been convicted in the United States of trying to steal samples of genetically engineered rice. Weiqiang Zhang worked as a rice breeder for Ventria Bioscience in Kansas and was found to have stolen hundreds of engineered rice seeds from the company’s research facility. It not the first time China has been linked to ‘agricultural theft’: last year, a [Chinese national was jailed](#) for three years for stealing specially bred corn seeds.

Nature | 12 min read

NAS report




Share   

The race to map the human body — one cell at a time

Germany is planning what may be the most ambitious Arctic research expedition ever. In 2019, it plans to allow the research vessel Polarstern to become locked in Arctic ice and drift across the pole. During the year-long mission, scientists will be able to use the sensor-packed ship as a base and take measurements from across the pole.

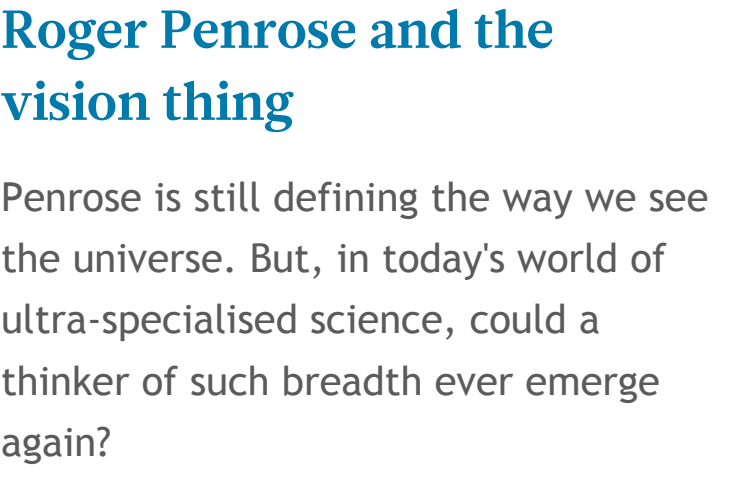
Nature | 12 min read

NAS report

Share   

COMMENTARY

US Republican idea for tax on carbon makes climate sense



A group of senior US Republicans has proposed an entirely sensible climate policy: put a substantial and steadily rising tax on carbon, and then send the proceeds back to citizens to offset the economic pain of higher energy prices.

Nature | 12 min read

(science [research papers](#))

Share   

Roger Penrose and the vision thing

Penrose is still defining the way we see the universe. But, in today's world of ultra-specialised science, could a thinker of such breadth ever emerge again?

Share   

Thought for the day

“To prevent further breakdown of the EU, scientists must shout from the rooftops that many of our problems today can be solved only at a European, or even a global, level.”

Belgian microbiologist Herman Goossens, in Nature

For daily science news, check in at www.nature.com/news; @NatureNews on Twitter; or on our [Facebook page](#).

nature

41,456 newsletter readers

Join our community

Please send feedback to daily@nature.com.

Manage your [subscription preferences](#)

[Unsubscribe](#) anytime

Nature Publishing Group | One New York Plaza, Suite 4500 | New York | NY 10004-1562 | USA

