

Current Events



- | | | |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1. | | TONGA |
| 2. | | VANUATU |
| 3. | | SAMOA |
| 4. | | AMERICAN SAMOA |
| 5. | | NAURU |
| 6. | | NIUE |
| 7. | | TUVALU |

#14: Oceania

Shake, Rattle, and Roll

An earthquake measuring 6.3 has hit central New Zealand, rattling Wellington and Christchurch.

The quake, centered in the Nelson region, occurred at a depth of 80 kilometers, 45 kilometers east of the village of St Arnaud, on the north of the South Island, at 3.36pm, said GeoNet, which provides geological hazard information for New Zealand.

A magnitude 4.2 earthquake was registered in a similar location at a depth of 69 kilometers at 3.46pm, followed by a 4.1 quake, 76 kilometers deep, at 3.53pm.



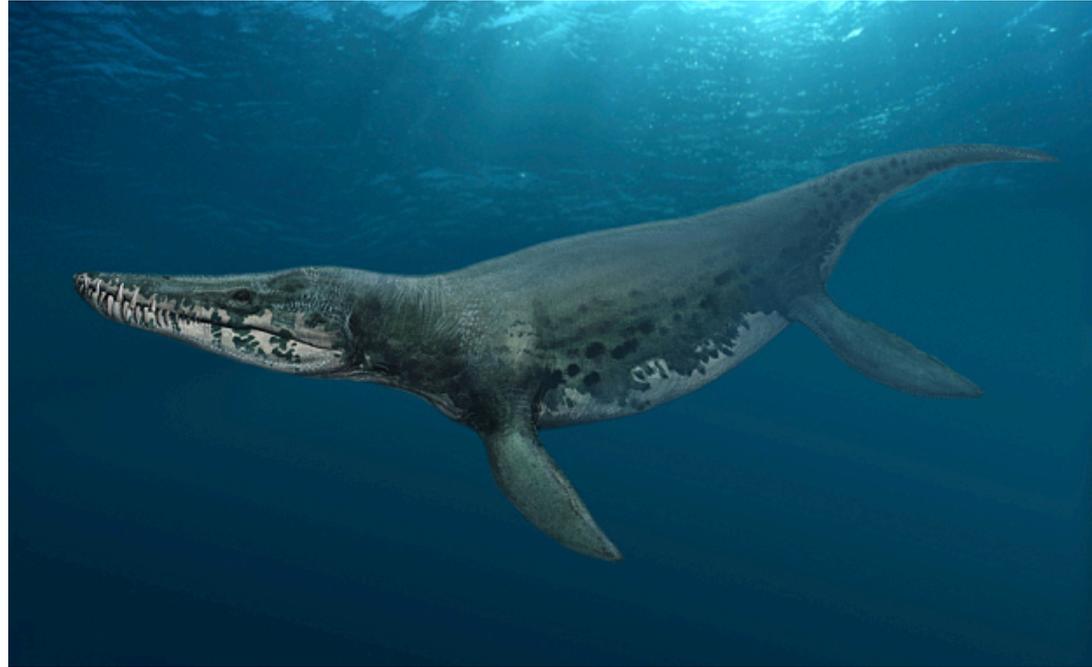
<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/3034433/earthquake-measuring-63-hits-new-zealand/?src=rss>

We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat

A cattle farmer in Australia has discovered a five-foot prehistoric fossil that is believed to be one of the most complete sets of remains of the Kronosaurus Queenslandicus, a 100 million-year-old sea monster.

Robert Hacon, from northern Queensland, was spraying weeds on his property when he came across the lower giant jawbone. The fossil appears to have become visible because a local drought has killed much of the grass.

"I was kicking a few stones around with my feet ... I looked over a little bit and I thought 'oh my God what have I got here'," Mr Hacon told ABC News.



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/11552174/Farmer-in-Australia-finds-perfect-fossil-of-ancient-sea-predator.html>

Paging Doctor Death

Australia is alert to a new threat of professionals defecting to Islamic State, the immigration minister says, confirming a doctor has defected to the terrorist organization.

Peter Dutton, who is also acting foreign affairs minister, said Tareq Khamleh, an Adelaide doctor, had left for Syria some time in March, according to security agencies.

Khamleh has appeared in a propaganda video for Isis, calling himself Abu Yusuf, urging medical professionals to work for Isis.

Dutton said it was a disturbing development a highly educated person had succumbed to “the death cult’s evil message”.



<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/26/australian-doctor-stars-in-isis-video-urging-others-to-join-him-in-syria>

Too Young

A 14-year-old schoolboy is accused of directing an Isis-inspired Lee Rigby style terror attack in Australia from his Lancashire home and encouraging fanatics there to behead people, a court has heard.

The youngster allegedly gave advice to his Australian contact on how to carry out an attack during Anzac Day celebrations and suggested he behead a “loner” first to “get a taste for it”.

He said methods of attack could be a knife, gun or “car op” on police, it is alleged.

The boy, who lives in Blackburn but cannot be named for legal reasons, is Britain’s youngest Islamist terror suspect.



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11558980/Anzac-Day-plot-British-boy-14-charged-with-inciting-terrorism.html>

G'Day "Devil"

Australia, an important ally of the United States, has agreed to share some of its intelligence with Iran.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said the deal is "an informal arrangement" with an emphasis on tracking Australians who go to Iraq to fight for ISIS.

But one Australian lawmaker reportedly described the move as "dancing with the devil."

Over the weekend, Bishop became the first Australian government minister to visit Iran in 12 years, meeting with President Hassan Rouhani. The intelligence-sharing deal was announced in an interview released Monday that Bishop gave to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation while in Tehran.



<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/20/asia/australia-iran-intelligence-sharing/index.html>

Mount Wanahakalugi Lives

Banning fishing in sections of Australia's Great Barrier Reef has succeeded in restoring fish populations to levels not seen since the arrival of European settlers, a 30-year study has found.

The controversial bans, which were expanded to a third of the reef area in 2004, have led to a sharp increase in the numbers and size of fish.

The study, which examined underwater survey data for coral trout from 1983 to 2012, found the total mass of the fish was about two and a half times higher in the reserves.

Scientists said the levels were as high as they had been since the arrival of British settlers more than 200 years ago.



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/11499533/Great-Barrier-Reef-fish-populations-restored-to-pre-European-settlers-levels.html>

Not Biblical, Yet

The death toll from heavy rains that inundated Australia's east coast has climbed to six, as flood warnings continued Sunday following a severe deluge that cut power to thousands of homes and isolated numerous communities.

The eastern states of Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) faced a huge clean-up task ahead, but were forecast to experience easing conditions on Sunday following two days of wild weather.

"Never before have we seen such a huge volume of rain drop in such a short period of time," Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk told broadcaster Channel Seven from the state's capital Brisbane on Sunday.

Australia flooding

Death toll from flash flooding rises to six



<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/world/a/27565646/death-toll-rises-to-six-in-australian-floods/>

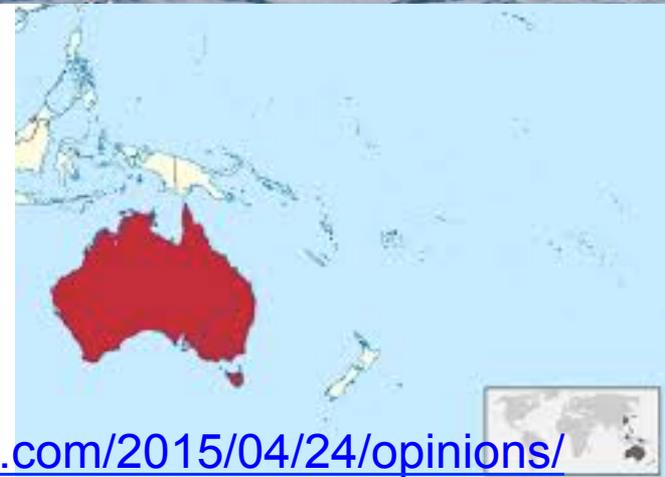
You Shall Not Pass

Much of the world has been stunned by the huge increase of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean this year, increasing the number of deaths at sea by a factor of 30 compared to the same time last year. Almost all the deaths have occurred in the perilous central Mediterranean crossing from Libya to Italy.

So what would it mean if the EU did "get Australian" in its approach to asylum seekers?

Anyone arriving without a visa by boat would not be processed in the EU, following Australia's model.

All people who seek to enter Australia by sea, under the Asylum Legacy Act, are no longer entitled to enter or stay in Australia while their refugee claims are processed. Instead, they can be transported to detention facilities in Papua New Guinea or Nauru. Alternatively, under a recent agreement, they can also agree to move to Cambodia.



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/24/opinions/europe-australia-migrant-policy/index.html>

Going...Going...[Gone?]

A new island that formed in the Pacific after an underwater volcano eruption off Tonga has begun to erode and is "getting smaller".

The cone-shaped island - about half a mile wide and just under a mile long - formed in January about 40 miles north-west of Nuku'alofa, the capital, after an eruption at the Hunga Tonga volcano.

Scientists predicted that the land mass would be fragile and was likely to gradually disappear - a prediction that has now been borne out by an expedition by locals to examine the island.



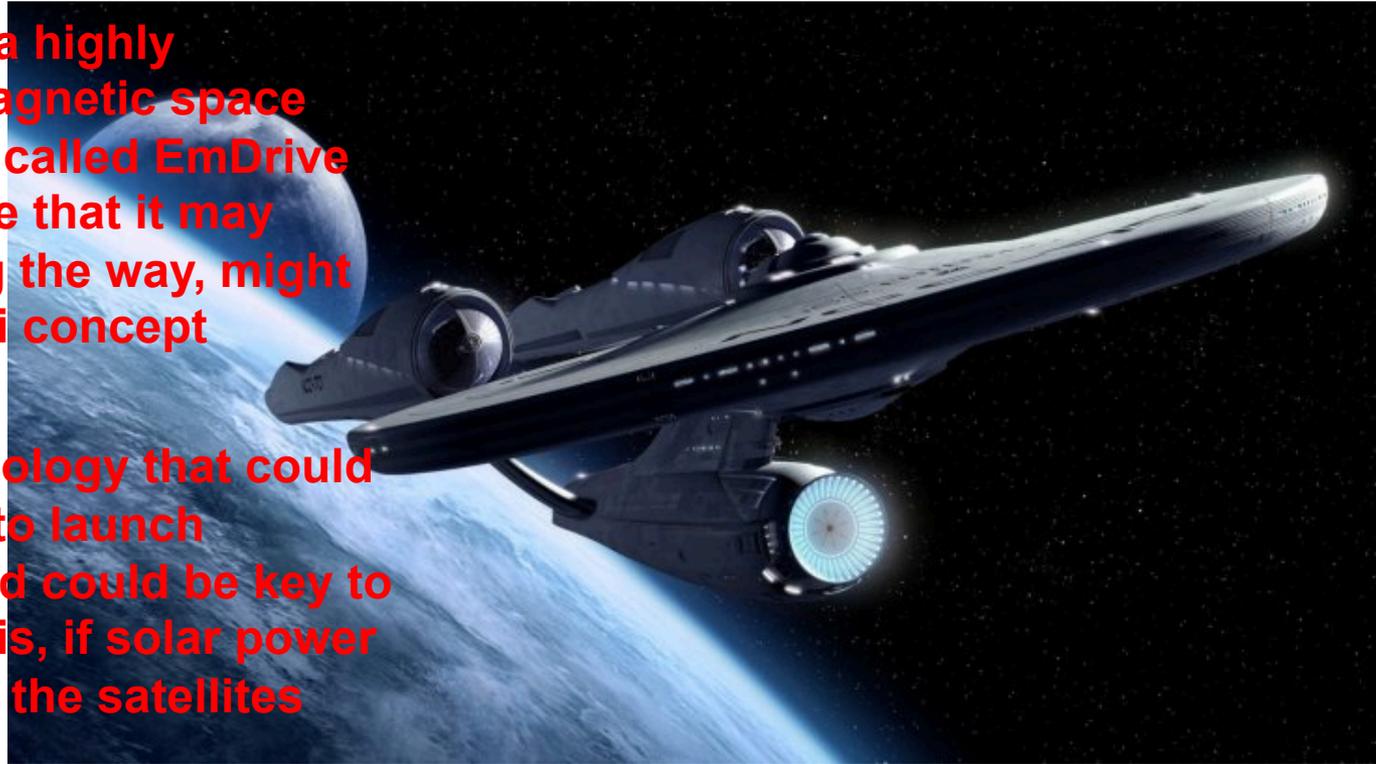
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/tongafrenchpolynesia/11576057/New-Pacific-island-off-Tonga-is-already-disappearing-due-to-rain-erosion.html>

2nd Star from the Left...

Nasa has been testing a highly controversial electromagnetic space propulsion technology called EmDrive and has found evidence that it may indeed work, and along the way, might even have made a sci-fi concept possible.

The EmDrive is a technology that could make it much cheaper to launch satellites into space and could be key to solving the energy crisis, if solar power could be harnessed off the satellites and sent back to Earth.

It was thought up and developed by a British scientist called Roger Shawyer, who spent years having his technology ridiculed by the international space community even though Boeing licensed it and the UK government was satisfied it worked.



<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/nasa-says-emdrive-does-work-it-may-have-also-created-star-trek-warp-drive-1499098>

Welcome, Now Get to Work

An Australian government inquiry is to investigate labor exploitation following revelations of widespread abuse of foreign workers.

Allegations of unethical treatment and underpayment will be investigated by the state government of Victoria.

The report by ABC's Four Corners programme detailed widespread abuses of Australia's 417 visa. The visa is for people aged 18 to 30 years of age who want a working holiday of up to 12 months in Australia.

The investigation uncovered abuses of the popular visa, including what were described as "slave-like conditions" at farms and factories across Australia.

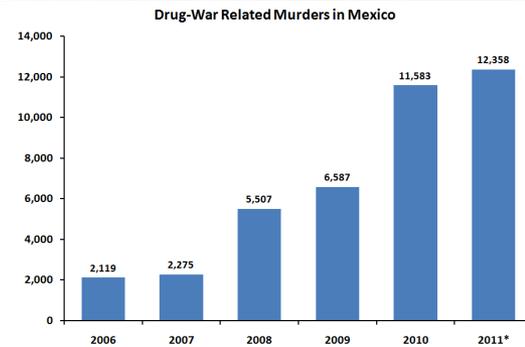


<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-32586779>

The Battle Continues

Mexico has scored dozens of drug-war “wins” over the past several years, with cartel kingpins apprehended anywhere from secret tunnels to bustling restaurants, and paraded in front of news cameras as a sign of progress.

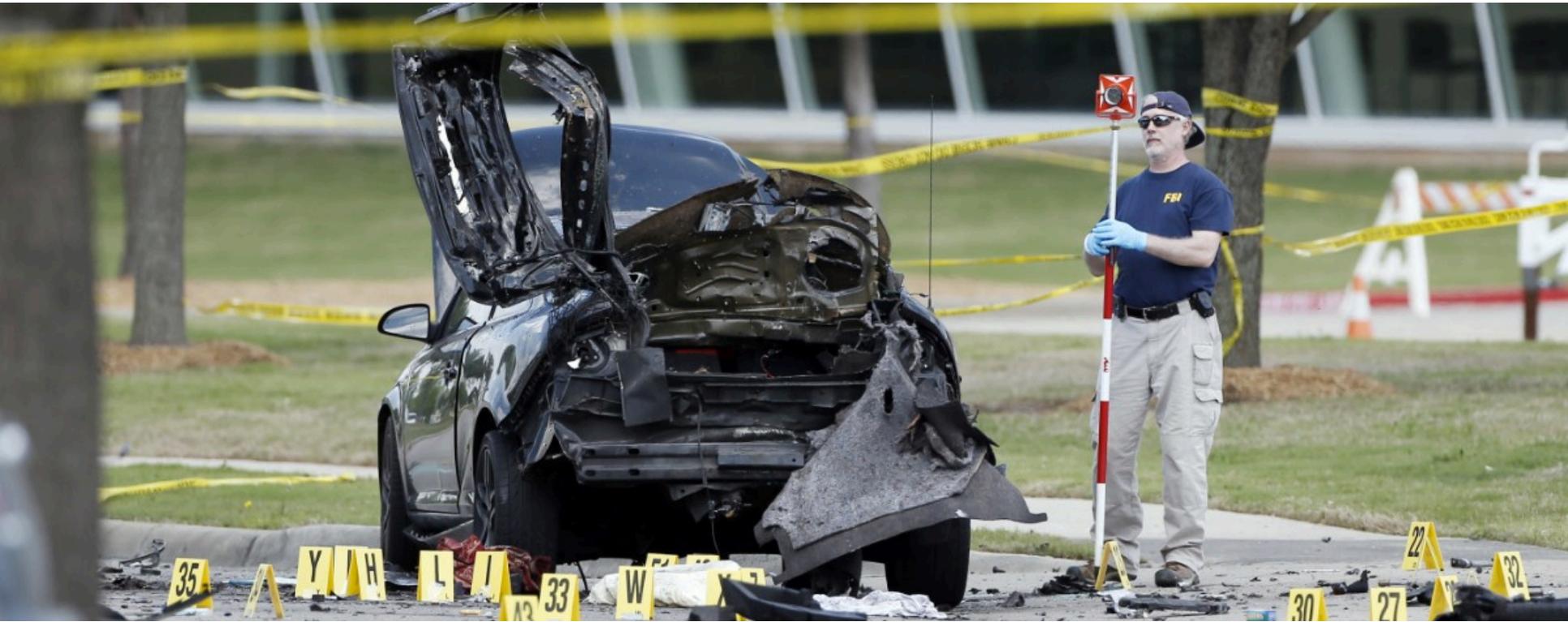
But a confrontation that unfolded in and around the western state of Jalisco last weekend – complete with cartel-manned rocket-propelled grenades and a felled military helicopter – shows that the battle against drug traffickers here is far from won. Violence erupted in 20 municipalities and spilled into four states, killing at least seven people.



* Estimated
Source: Reforma Ejecutómetro, Grupo Reforma

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2015/0506/Does-cutting-off-the-heads-of-Mexico-s-cartels-really-work>

Free or Hate Speech?



Two gunmen were killed and a security guard wounded Sunday outside a "Draw Muhammad" contest organized by a free speech group at a school arena in Garland, Texas, police said.

The attackers drove up and opened fire on the security guard as the event was finishing up about 7 p.m. (8 p.m. ET), said Joe Harn, a spokesman for the Garland police.

Officers at the heavily-policed event returned fire, killing the men.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/shooting-outside-draw-muhammad-contest-texas-n352996>

Trial on the Trail

Erin Stoffel shuffled her 7-year-old son, Ezra, and 5-year-old daughter, Selah, off a pedestrian bridge in Menasha, Wisconsin, after a gunman randomly opened fire, killing her husband and her 11-year-old daughter.

She did this while taking three bullets.

"You can never underestimate the power of a mother to protect her children. To have three gunshot wounds and be able to get off that bridge and save two of her children is incredible to think about," Dr. Ray Georgen at Theda Clark Medical Center in Neenah said Monday.

"It's an amazing story of heroism on her part and certainly of her children."



<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/05/us/wisconsin-shooting/index.html>

Fallout From the Quake

Climbing Mount Everest this season is "almost impossible" because the routes have been damaged by avalanches triggered by last month's earthquake, officials in Nepal say.

They warn that it will take time for the routes to be remade. The government has not announced an official decision.

At least 19 people were killed in the avalanches.

The 7.8-magnitude earthquake is now known to have killed more than 7,000 people and injured more than 10,000.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32581236>