

# New Scientist

WEEKLY 3 August 2024

## WHAT MADE US HUMAN?

How the latest archaeological discoveries are redefining the origins of humanity

WHY IT TURNS OUT NO  
AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL  
IS GOOD FOR YOU

WE ARE ABOUT TO FIND  
THE EARLIEST STARS  
IN THE UNIVERSE

NEW ALZHEIMER'S  
DRUGS: SHOULD WE  
BELIEVE THE HYPE?



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On the podium

AI grabs silver medal at human maths competition **p11**

Growing problem

Biodegradable plastic may actually be worse for plants **p13**

Ancient economics

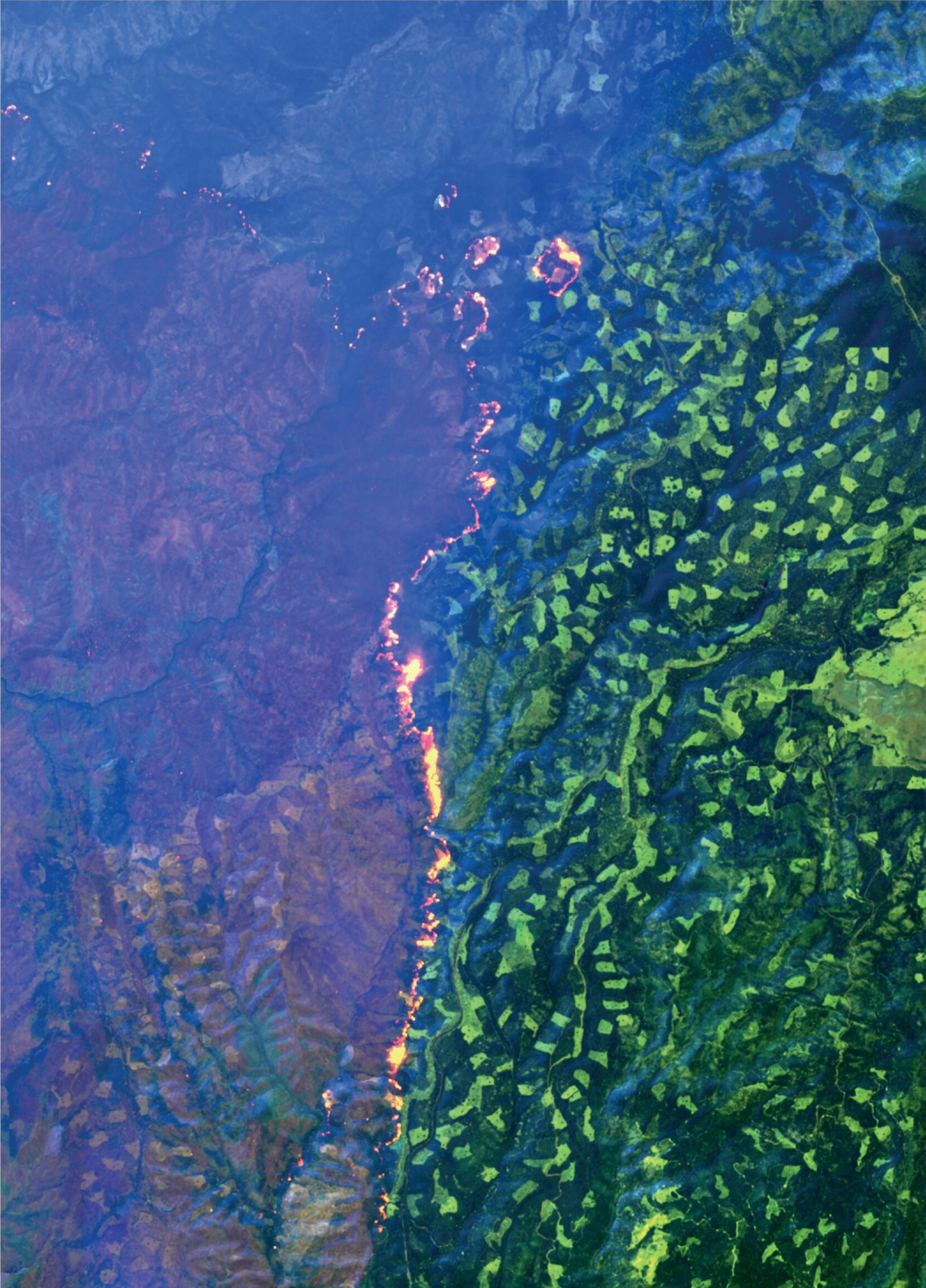
Bronze Age had a “modern” financial system **p16**

Heaviest element

A way to make the hypothetical element unbinilium **p17**

Going deep down

Moon bases may need to be buried to avoid radiation **p21**



Environment

Caught in the line of fire

This searing image reveals a fire front in Butte county, California, captured by the Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellite. Infrared light from the blaze penetrated the smoke and was picked up by the satellite’s sensors, producing this shot. Several counties in the northern part of the state have been battling fires and, as *New Scientist* went to press, these had torn through more than 150,000 hectares, an area bigger than Los Angeles.

EUROPEAN UNION, COPERNICUS SENTINEL-2