

Rising stars

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China's meteoric rise to become the most prolific nation for natural-science publications in the Nature Index is illustrated by its dominance in this supplement's tables (page S18). Of the top 100 fastest-rising institutions between 2017 and 2022, just one – the Technical University of Munich – is outside China.

China's performance sometimes obscures the progress of other countries, however. India, for example, has made impressive gains as the second fastest-rising country in the Nature Index, surpassing Australia to enter the top ten overall in the natural sciences for the first time. As the nation's Moon landing in August attests, it has strong ambitions to raise its global station in science. This presents a timely opportunity for the United States, whose research collaborations with China have suffered amid political tensions. Increasing US–India scientific partnerships might be beneficial to both nations, but there are significant obstacles to overcome, as we explore on page S6.

Elsewhere, we feature individual researchers whose prolific work (see page S9) is helping to propel the success of many rising-star institutions and countries, some of which are building on historic strengths. Denmark, for example, the second-fastest rising nation in the biological sciences, after China, is navigating the unusual challenge of having almost too much research funding, thanks to the success of its pharmaceutical industry (see page S16). China, too, will be keen to solidify its lead in the natural sciences, and might be best served by strategies that aim to foster local capacity while rebuilding ties with the West (see page S14). Whichever direction it takes, China's position as a leader in global science will cause knock-on effects around the world.

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On the cover
 Satellite launch in India.
 Credit: Arun Sankar/AFP
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