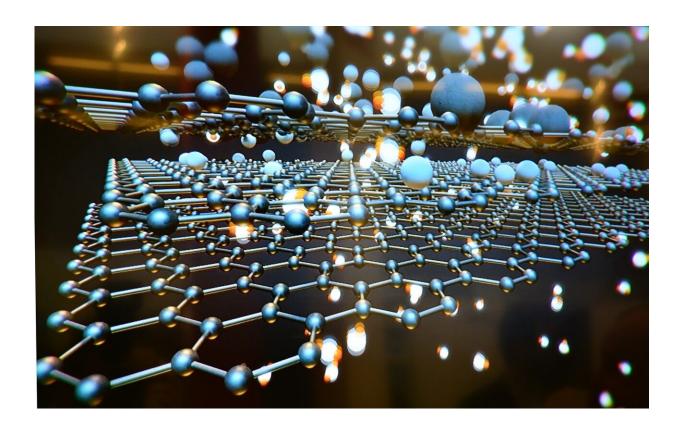
Best of Last Week: Harnessing hidden frequencies, the source of the coronavirus and switching off inflammation

February 10 2020, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for physics, as a team with members from China, Korea, Russia and the U.K. created a new type of optical transistor that unlocked hidden frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum—the

graphene-based device detected and amplified the terahertz waves that sit between microwaves and infrared in the light frequency spectrum. Also, a combined team of researchers from Poland and Australia proved that the Heisenberg limit, as it is commonly stated, is not operationally meaningful, and differs from the correct limit by a factor of π . And a team at the University of British Columbia developed a new quantum switch that turns metals into insulators.

In technology news, a team of researchers from China and the U.S. created a water droplet-based electricity generator with a field-effect transistor-like structure that allowed for high energy conversion efficiency and instantaneous power density—and it was capable of generating 140V of power. And a team at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology developed a concept for 6G communications. Also, a team at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory created an external system that improved phone signal strength 1000 percent without the need for extra antennas. And a team from MIT and Shanghai Jiao Tong University used multiple layers of flat solar evaporators and condensers to create a simple, solar-powered water desalination system.

In other news, a team at South China Agricultural University made headlines when they announced that the pangolin is the No. 1 suspect as the source of the coronavirus. The pangolin, also known as the scaly anteater, is a small mammal covered with overlapping scales—it lives in Africa and Asia. An international team of researchers found new evidence that the 9,900-year-old female skeleton found in a cave in Tulum, Mexico, was distinct from other early American settlers.

And finally, if you, like millions of others around the world, experience chronic inflammation, help may soon be on the way. A team at EPFL in Switzerland claimed to have found a molecular 'switch' that can reverse the type of chronic inflammation that often comes with aging.

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Citation: Best of Last Week: Harnessing hidden frequencies, the source of the coronavirus and switching off inflammation (2020, February 10) retrieved 10 July 2025 from https://sciencex.com/news/2020-02-week-harnessing-hidden-frequencies-source.html

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