

JEFF CHIU/AP PHOTO

Montreal, Canada, establishes standards for energy efficiency and an emissions-offsetting programme that will see the aviation industry invest in projects to reduce emissions in other sectors. The programme could cover an estimated 75% of emissions growth from 2021–35, resulting in 2.5 billion tonnes of carbon offsets — equivalent to more than 6 years of UK carbon emissions. Aviation accounts for 2% of global carbon emissions.

Climate amendment

United Nations delegates meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, are finalizing an amendment to the Montreal Protocol whereby the treaty will target greenhouse gases as well as substances that destroy ozone. The decision to rapidly phase out hydrofluorocarbons — refrigerants that are powerful greenhouse gases — was taken last year, and described as “welcome — and long overdue” by *Nature* at the time (see *Nature* 527, 133; 2015). Delegates are likely to take until the meeting’s final day on 14 October to hammer out the details of the amendment.

BUSINESS

Theranos cuts

Beleaguered blood-testing company Theranos of Palo Alto, California, announced in an open letter on 5 October that



it is closing its clinical labs and laying off some 340 employees — about 40% of its staff. The company had faced huge scepticism over its claims that it could perform hundreds of diagnostic tests using a single drop of blood. In July, US regulators banned its chief executive, Elizabeth Holmes (pictured), from running a lab for two years. Holmes said that the company will continue to develop its miniaturized blood-testing device, miniLab. Further troubles emerged on 10 October, when a shareholder company announced that it would be suing Theranos to recoup its investment of nearly US\$100 million, which it says was secured on the basis of lies.

RESEARCH

Telescope time bias

Female scientists are allocated less telescope time at the European Southern Observatory than are their male colleagues, according to an analysis posted on

arXiv on 5 October (F. Patat Preprint at <https://arxiv.org/abs/1610.00920>; 2016). The study of more than 13,000 proposals and 3,000 principal investigators found that 16% of proposals submitted by women were successful, whereas men had a success rate of 22%. Much of the disparity seems to be because men submitting proposals have more senior positions on average than women, the study says, and astronomers at higher career levels received greater ratings for their proposals during the review process.

AWARDS

Chemistry Nobel

Jean-Pierre Sauvage, Fraser Stoddart and Bernard Feringa shared the 2016 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, announced on 5 October, for their work on creating tiny molecular machines. The three have made molecular knots, shuttles, rotors, chains, pumps, axles, switches, memory devices and even a nanocar — all at the molecular scale. The nanoscale machines are yet to find applications, but researchers hope that their uses could range from delivering drugs to computer memory (see page 152). Separately, Yoshinori Ohsumi, the cell biologist who won the 2016 medicine Nobel, announced that he would use

COMING UP

16–21 OCTOBER

The American Astronomical Society’s planetary-sciences division and the European Planetary Science Congress meet in Pasadena, California. aas.org/meetings/dps48

1–10 NOVEMBER

The first Berlin Science Week brings together academics and institutions from all over the world to discuss science and society. www.berlinscienceweek.com

the 8 million Swedish kronor (US\$940,000) awarded to establish a system to provide support for young researchers over decades.

Research jackpot

A US\$75-million grant for research into coronary heart disease has been awarded to a team led by Calum MacRae, chief of cardiovascular medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. The money is from the One Brave Idea fund, set up by the American Heart Association, Verily Life Sciences (owned by Google’s parent company, Alphabet) and drug firm AstraZeneca to fund research on the most common type of heart disease in the United States. The grant, an unusually large sum for a single team, will be delivered in \$15-million chunks over five years.

CORRECTION

The item ‘Nuclear go-ahead’ (*Nature* 537, 455; 2016) should have said that Hinkley Point C is expected to supply 7% of UK electricity — not energy — demand.

TREND WATCH

Investors fled on 5 October when a drug company focused on RNA-interference (RNAi) therapies announced that it would abandon one of its lead drug candidates amid safety concerns. The drug, revusiran, was in phase III clinical trials to treat a form of amyloidosis. The news sent stock in Alnylam Pharmaceuticals of Cambridge, Massachusetts, plummeting by roughly 50%. Companies have struggled to translate RNAi into therapies, and investors have been lukewarm on biotech stocks this year.

RNAi-DRUG FAILURE SENDS STOCK TUMBLING

Alnylam Pharmaceuticals’ share price crashed by about 50% on 5 October, after the company halted a phase III trial of a drug that uses RNA interference.



SOURCE: GOOGLE FINANCE