

THIS WEEK IN CHEMISTRY

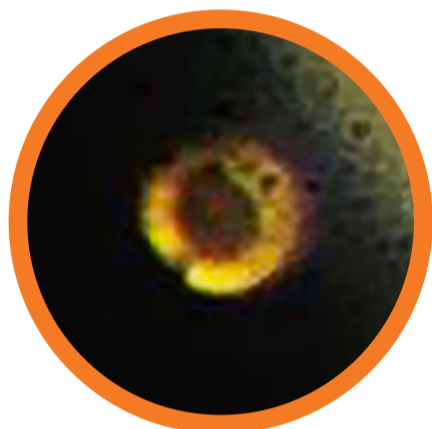
19TH FEBRUARY 2017 – 25TH FEBRUARY 2017

Links to articles & studies for the featured stories are provided at: <https://goo.gl/uBlfVZ>



VX THE PRIME SUSPECT IN KIM JONG-NAM ASSASSINATION

The assassination of Kim Jong-nam, Kim Jong-un's half-brother, was attributed to the lethal nerve agent VX by Malaysian authorities. He was attacked by two different assailants, and it has been speculated two substances could have been reacted to produce the toxin.



METALLIC HYDROGEN SAMPLE LOST DURING FURTHER TESTS

Last month Harvard researchers claimed to have made metallic hydrogen by using diamond anvils to put hydrogen gas under very high pressure. They report that while trying to measure the pressure, one diamond cracked, resulting in the loss of the sample.



PREDICTING THE SMELL OF MOLECULES FROM THEIR STRUCTURES

A crowd-sourced project that got 49 people to categorise the smells of 476 different molecules used this data to produce computer algorithms to predict a molecule's scent. The model could assess 'pleasantness' and 'intensity', as well as some other odour qualities.



NANOPARTICLE-BASED FERTILISER RELEASES NUTRIENTS SLOWLY

A problem with nitrogen fertilisers is that many of their nutrients wash away before plants can absorb them. A new fertiliser attaches urea molecules to nanoparticles of hydroxyapatite, and then releases nitrogen slowly over the course of a week rather than all at once.



ANTIMICROBIAL SUBSTANCES FOUND IN KOMODO DRAGON BLOOD

Komodo dragon mouths contain a number of potentially dangerous bacteria. A new study has found that their blood contains 48 potential antimicrobial peptides. When 8 of these were synthesised, 7 of the 8 were effective at killing lab-grown 'superbug' bacteria.

