**Dubious** democracy: Hong Kong

​The city has the feel of one in the final stages of an election: three candidates vying to be its next chief executive debate each other on television and their faces beam from posters. Yet on Sunday just 1,194 of Hong Kong’s 3.8m registered voters will be handed **ballot** papers. The election committee that gets to make the final pick is supposed to be “broadly representative” of Hong Kong society, but is under no **obligation** to reflect popular opinion. If it were, then the winner might be John Tsang, the current government’s former financial secretary, who is leading in almost every opinion poll. Instead, a majority of the committee is expected to vote for Carrie Lam, a former chief secretary who, crucially, is Beijing’s preferred winner; some may even have been instructed to support her. Many would argue that it hardly deserves to be called an election at all.

Open it up: scientific publishing

​The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will from today pay the cost of putting research it supports in a repository of freely available papers. The announcement follows a policy introduced in January, **stipulating** that research it funds must be accessible to all without charge: so-called open-access publishing. Journals have been the principal means of **disseminating** science since the 17th century, but many still charge **hefty** subscription fees, and it can take years to publish. That keeps others in the field in the dark about new results, slowing scientific progress. The foundation will now direct beneficiaries of its $4bn-a-year largesse towards a repository set up last year by the Wellcome Trust (after Gates, the world’s second-largest medical-research charity), which puts publications in public view during the editorial-review process. That will add great weight to the open-access effort, and contribute to a future for scientific publication that, if not completely journal-free, is likely to be “journal-lite”.