Viral Cure for Brain Tumours?

OME viruses might emerge as potent agents in the treatment of the malignant glioma, a devastating type of brain tumour that is incurable through conventional therapy.

Recent work by American scientists may have paved the way for the use of a geneticallyaltered virus to destroy tumour cells without doing harm to normal parts of the brain.

Earlier studies involved the use of either wild type or attenuated viruses to treat both animal and human tumours. The present work is the first attempt at testing the potential of genetically engineered viruses to destroy tumours.

The tests were conducted only on tumour cells growing in test tubes and in laboratory mice, but scientists say their results are encouraging enough to warrant further exploration of these viruses as a treatment for malignant tumours. The research conducted by

UBLIC health authorities in the impoverisheti Himalayan kingdom of Nepal used to have to worry mainly about infectious diseases that killed babies by the thousands. Now, they have another headache - AIDS.

Trans-border prostitution and a complete absence of public awareness about the disease has made acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) a serious threat even in countries like Nepal which till a few decades ago were cut off from the outside world.

"Given the lack of active surveillance, AIDS might sweep the hills of Nepal without being noticed," says Shanta Dixit, a Nepali epidemiologist. "So far, the cases have been identified only on an accidental basis."

An estimated 100,000 young Nepali women are currently working in Brothels in big Indian cities such as

a five-member team of scientists at the Harvard Medical School in the United States involved the use of genetically engineered strain of the herpes simplex virus (type-1) to treat the tumours.

Gliomas are the most common among primary tumours that develop in the human brain and glioblastomas are the most malignant of the gliomas. Most glioblastomas develop with in the cerebrum, the main mass of the brain.

They are almost always fatal and have a five year survival rate of about five per cent. Despite years of attempts to deal with these tumours by surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy, neurosurgeons and cancer specialists consider them as incurable.

Studies has shown that some strains of the herpes simplex virus can reproduce only in cells that are dividing. and cannot replicate in nondividing cells. For their experi-

ments, the Harvard scientists chose a genetically-altered virus which is unable to produce an enzyme called thymidine kinase because the gene that encodes for this enzyme is missing from its genetic struc-

To study the effect of this genetically-engineered virus denoted as disptk in treating intracebral gliomas, the scientists injected tumour cells into the brains of laboratory mice, the tumour injection large enough to kill the mice within

Ten days after the tumour inoculations the mice were divided into three groups. Mice in the control group received no virus, while mice in each of the other two groups received different doses of the disptk virus, injected directly into the tumours that were growing in their brains.

In the seventh week, all six mice in the control group

were dead, 43 per cent of the group which received the lesser dose of the virus were still alive and 57 per cent of the mice receiving the higher dose of the virus remained

But by the fourteenth week, only two of the mice from the higher dose group remained alive, healthy and neurologically normal. Scientists found no trace of the tumours in these mice when their brains were microscopically exam-

Reporting their work in the US journal Science, the scientists said disptk is capable of destroying human glioblastoma cells both in cell culture and in mice. The scientists concede that one concern about the use of such a virus in therapy is its potential for destroying other dividing cells such as those of the endothelium, a layer of cells that line blood vessels, of the brain vessels or other sites in the body if it

But clinical studies indicate that even wild type herpes simplex virus type one generally neither spread far from the site of the initial infection. nor cause serious systemic disease in immune competent individuals, they said in their

Although the antiviral drug acyclovir cannot control the mutant strain which lacks the thymidine kinase virus, the scientists showed that this disptk strain is just as sensitive to two other drugs, vidarbine and foscarnet, as the wild type of the virus.

The researchers said the next steps could be aimed at genetically altering the virus to increase its specificity, decrease neuropathogenicity or provide alternative mechanisms for tumour cell killing. They are worthy of further exploration as novel means for therapy for tumours that do sent back to his own country. not respond to conventional treatment, they said.

- G.S. Mudur (PTI)

AIDS Spectre in the Himalaya

Bombay and Calcutta. Most recent projections show that 25 per cent of total AIDS cases in the world could be in India by the year 2000, and the World Health Organisation says India may already have up to 400,000 HIV carriers.

An increasing number of Nepali men are also visiting Thatland, where Who figures show the number of HIV-infected individuals has exceeded 300,000.

"The Asian drama of AIDS is unfolding. We are sitting on top of a volcano," warned Indian AIDS expert Vulimiri Ramalingaswami at an international AIDS conference in Florence in June.

Many Nepali prostitutes become AIDS "time bombs" when they return to Nepali. where there is nearly no surveillance

and hardly any awareness about the disease. The women are not screened for AIDS when they return to their villages in. the mountains of Nepal.

Expert say the rising incidence of heroin abuse in Kathmandu, prostitution, unscreened blood banks and even the government's immunisation drives (where needles are often not properly sterilised) is spreading AIDS.

Random tests of blood samples by the government's AIDS control and prevention programme has shown 24 HIV carriers. Experts like Dixit say this is "only the tip of the epi demiological iceberg".

At present, an average of one HIV-positive individual is found each month at a blood bank in Kathmandu. The bank hopes to increase HIV tests of

all blood samples by March

With help from the United Development Nations Programme (UNDP), the Nepal government is turning its attention to AIDS prevention and the first line of defence - public awareness.

The sexual taboos that have so far helped control the spread of the disease are eroding. But sociologists say this may not be a bad thing, since sexual tolerance also helps more open debate about sexually transmitted diseases.

Television and radio documentaries about AIDS here are still squeamish about explicitly citing the main causes of AIDS.

When Vijay Lal Guruacharya, who heads Nepal's AIDS control and prevention programme, was asked at a recent

seminar about what his agency was doing to spread public awareness about AIDS, he replied that informing the public about the disease could "create panic".

But younger Nepali public health experts disagree. Says Dixit: "Not spreading the word will lead to bigger problems ahead.

Women's groups in Nepal are also concerned that AIDS is striking women who already have a disadvantaged position in family and society.

"Women's are concentrated at the bottom of the ladder in terms of opportunities and access to health care, education and employment," says Ava Shreastha, an anthropologist at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan University.

Let's Talk About AIDS

Md. Ariff & Fedai Mowla

ETS talk about AIDS. So far we have not talked much thinking it to be a only problem of the western African and developed nations. Whenever an individual or an organization tried to make a point out of AIDS - they were asked just to ignore it by some very special quarters. They diseases. even played tricks to hide an AIDS patient detected in Bangladesh in 1990.

However, the people of Bangladesh till now know little about AIDS and its prevention. But in 1991 we can't say that AIDS is not our problem. So far one AIDS patient died in Bangladesh. His wife now carries AIDS virus. One Spanish citizen with AIDS virus was in Dhaka central jail but was later

Besides five persons have been found carrying AIDS virus. When the news of AIDS reached our land it was not received with much importance as if it would not affect us soon. It was not even appreciated if anyone tried to say something about AIDS. From the very beginning the approach was

wrong. The more we discuss about AIDS - the less we become panic-stricken. Because AIDS is a disease and we got to know about it. The more we know the better it is for prevention. So, let's talk about it now and try to know what AIDS is and how it affects peo-

What is AIDS? A=Acquired |=|mmune D=. Deficiency S=Syndrome

HIV (Human immure deficiency virus) is a virus which causes AIDS. As it enters our body it kills the immune system of the body and as a result the body cannot fight back when it is attacked by any other virus or germs. One may carry HIV without having any symptom of AIDS. One may carry HIV and still remain healthy an unwittingly spread

the particular virus among

There is no treatment or medicine available for the prevention of AIDS. People with AIDS develop skin cancer or pneumonia and dies within a year or two as the immune system fails to prevent those

According to recent statistics people having AIDS are be-ing doubled every year.

You may contact HIV through the following activi-

If you have sexual intercourse with a person having AIDS and come in contact with sperms or blood - it is applicable for both men and

If infected blood enters your body in any process. c) if infected instruments are shared while using

Virus infected pregnant women may transfer the virus to their offsprings during their birth.

The virus may spread only through above activities. All other social activities are said

Let's see the situation in Asian countries - till 3rd May. 1991 WHO estimated AIDS patients in different countries as Thailand-94, India -60, Malaysia-26, Pakistan-14, Ind onesia-11, Sri Lanka-8, Nepal-4 and Bangladesh-1. Moreover we know that one AIDS patient had died in Bangladesh. Lastly it was reported that 47 AIDS patients died in India. It is quite alarming that the number of HIV carrier in Sri Lanka has risen to 1010 as

compared to 4 in January '90. According to WHO, the number of people carrying HIV in the developing countries will be few times more than the western nations due to lack of awareness. It may be mentioned here that the first HIV carrier in the sub-continent was detected in a brothel

Palestinians reap empathy,

of Calcutta. After detection she left the brothel and later she could not be found out.

If we look into the world there are about 15,00,0000 HIV carriers including 50,0-000 children. According to WHO by the year 2000 about 4 crores of people will carry HIV while 15,00,0000 will have AIDS. Ultimately those HIV carriers will have AIDS. Moreover 1,50,00,000 children will lose their mothers due to

is there any treatment for HIV carriers or AIDS patients? The answers is "NO". Anybody carrying HIV gets the disease within five to ten years and dies. Till today there no vaccine has been developed for the prevention of AIDS. What we can do best is to know about AIDS to be cautious about

Things to remember: This particular virus

does not spread easily. You cannot have it through normal day to day activities. You must be sure of

your sex partner - male or female. Men should always use condom during sexual activi-

Before visiting a for eign land you should take information about AIDS in that particular country and take precautions accordingly. One should be sure of

the needles used in hospitals. Blood transfusion should be performed with caution. Be careful of those

non-medical persons who pierce ears and noses with needles. Do not inject any

drugs into your body without proper consultation of a physician. If it is a necessity, please avoid used syringes, needles

Regarding AIDS if you have any query please contact VHSS, 273-274, Baitul Aman Housing Society, Adabar. Shymolt, Dhaka.

Focus on ME talks

US, USSR to press for 2nd phase of Arab-Israeli talks outside ME

AMMAN, Nov 5 : Washington and Moscow will press for a second phase of Arab-Israeli peace talks to resume outside the Middle East in two weeks' time, Jordan's Prime Minister said on Monday, reports

Israel and its Arab enemies, meeting in historic peace talks in Madrid, have appeared to be at an impasse over where the next round should be held. israel has insisted on holding them in the Middle East while Arab states believe it is too early for such a gesture of confidence.

"The co-sponsors (the United States and Soviet Union) would resolve that," Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri said in an interview when asked about the deadlock.

They have already given asably two weeks' time someagency Visnews.

Masri condemned Israeli's continued building of settlements in the occupied territories saying an immediate halt to the policy was necessary to comply with international law.

But he left open the possibility that such action demanded by all Arab states would be rewarded.

surances they will do such a thing and the bilateral negotiations would resume after probwhere other than Madrid, not the Middle East," he told Reuter and the television news

We (would) welcome such a step and may be we will be talking with the Israelis on something to be done to help the negotiations to continue

and to reciprocate, he said.

The PLO has threatened that Palestinians may walk out of negotiations if Israel does not stop building settlements on seized Arab lands. Three Israeli cabinet minis-

ters helped start a new settlement for Soviet Jews on the occupied Golan heights on

Masri said the Arab states had agreed not to sign final agreements of any kind with Israel until there was substantial progress on an Israeli pullout from the occupied territories, the bases on which the peace talks have been convened.

There will be no separate agreements. Masri said when asked whether would sign deals it badly wants such as water pacts with Israel without a solution to the Palestinian problem, what I said on all fronts stands here and we in Jordan are committed to such a thing."

Palestinian officials had said Jordan might reach agreements with Israel on issues such as water by ending its state of war with the Jewish state but stopping short of normalising ties.

USSR made Madrid confce

MOSCOW, Nov 5: The Middle East peace conference in Madrid could not have gone ahead if the Soviet Union had not used its influence. Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin told a meeting of senior foreign ministry officials here Monday, reports AFP.

Pankin told the officials of the Soviet Union's role in or ganising the conference, particularly during the closing phases of preparations for the meeting in the Spanish capital Tass reported.

The Madrid conference was jointly sponsored by the U.S. and Soviet Presidents, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev.

MADRID (Spain), Nov 6

The Palestinians are taking a new realistic approach to the Middle East conflict that has drawn public praise from Washington and empathy from much of the world, reports AP. As Israel and Syria traded harsh words at the first phase

of the Middle East peace conference, the Palestinians were making impassioned appeals for peace and coexistence among the peoples of the region. They projected themselves as a voice of reason in a turbulent region.

That contrasted sharply with the hard-line stands the Palestine Liberation Organisation pursued in past decades, marked by airline hijackings, terrorist bombings, assassinations and calls for Israel's destruction.

The evolution— though set back by PLO support for last year's Iraqi invasion of Kuwaitbegan after the PLO's ouster from Lebanon and the loss of its power base in Israel's 1982 invasion. The changes have accelerated because of the international changes brought on by the end of the Cold War.

Israel may agree to venue outside Middle East

JERUSALEM, Nov 5: Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir hinted on Monday that Israel might agree to a second phase of Arab-Israeli peace talks taking place outside the Middle East, reports Reuter.

Israel has demanded the talks alternate between the peace in the region and for the Jewish state and its Arab neighbours, saying this will show Arab recognition of its existence. Arabs want to withhold recognition until Israel returns captured land.

Washington is very far, said Shamir but he did not rule it out.

Face of ME will change only when Israel signs peace treaty: Shamir

acclaim at conference Spurned by supposedly loyal Arab allies and the West, and deprived of the staunch backing they enjoyed from the East. Bloe before the collapse of communism, the Palestinians have had to change internal

and external strategy. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the old guard leadership in exile have had to take a back scat, helping map out strategy, write speeches and coordinate with Arab governments, but allowing new blood to present the Palestinian case to the historic Middle East peace forum.

The Palestinians were represented by a group of US-educated university lecturers, political scientists and businessmen in Western garb appealing for peace. Not guerillas in khaki battle fatigues, making belligerent statements.

"I have to tell you that I think that a lot of what the Palestinian representatives had to say at the conference was well received in many places around the world," US Secretary of State James A Baker III told a news conference Sunday.

In another speech, he paid special tribute to Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi, the two Palestinian activists who negotiated with Baker over eight months leading up to the conference.

Nabil Shaath, an adviser to Arafat who monitored the talks in Madrid, said the delegation's "performance was excel-

He said of the new faces, We are delighted... to see our new players take the field, and we enjoyed every minute the

spotlight was on them." llis comment reflected a new diplomatic stature for the Palestinians. Israel's agreement to meet separately in future talks with their component of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation gives them parity with the states of

Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Shaath said the PLO strategy had shifted focus to the occupied territories four years

ago after the outbreak of the intefadeh, or uprising. Even Israeli officials privately admitted that they had

not expected such a perfor-

Fahd satisfied with ME peace confce

mance."

JEDDAH (Saudi Arabia), Nov 5: Saudi King Fahd on Monday expressed satisfaction with the first stage of the Middle East peace conference and urged the international community to continue its efforts to restore peace and stability in the region, reports AFP.

"We would like to see the Arab and international community continue their efforts for a comprehensive and just Palestinians to recover their legitimate rights," King Fahd

He told a weekly cabinet meeting that this should be achieved on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which stipulate a land-for-peace settlement in the region.

The Saudi monarch also praised the roles played by American and Soviet presidents, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, whose countries co-sponsored the peace conference which opened Wednesday in Madrid.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), of which Saudi Arabia is an influential member, was represented at Madrid by an observer.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to take part in multilateral talks on regional issues which were expected to take place two weeks after the opening of the peace forum.

The second state of the conference, bilateral talks, opened on Sunday.

We have said what we want.

during Arab-Israel talks

MADRID (Spain), Nov 5 : Here is a brief summary of the main achievements and remaining obstacles following Israel's bilateral talks with Arab delegations at the Middle East peace conference, reports

Israel and the Jordanian-

Palestinian delegation: Agreed to meet again at an undetermined time and place. Agreed to maintain direct contacts in the meantime. Agreed to "two-track" approach in which israel would negotiate separately with Jordan and the Palestinians.

The Israelis committed themselves to negotiate an interim period of self-rule for the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. to be followed by talks on the permanent status of those lands. Israel agreed to allow freedom of movement for Palestinian negotiators in Israeli-controlled territory.

over the Differed Palestinians' demand for a freeze on Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and on Israel's request to hold future talks at least partly on Israeli territory.

registered as displaced.

The UN figure includes

"Jordan will depend on UN

"Isarel and Lebanon:

undetermined time and place. Did not report any progress on Lebanon's demand for an end to Israel's control of a selfproclaimed security zone in south Lebanon.

Israel and Syria:

ing the negotiations.

Resolution 194 in dealing with the refugees of 1948" Irsheid

Resolution 194, passed in 1948, says Palestinians anywhere have the right to return for be compensated for lost property.

Arafat optimistic after positive talks in Madrid

WASHINGTON, Nov 5 Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), indicated Monday he was feeling optimistic after "very positive" talks in Madrid to settle conflicts in the Middle East, re-

ports AFP. "Until now we consider it as ... going in a very positive way. And we hope that this will continue in the next stage, Arafat said in an interview with the US television network

Asked about the location of

future bilateral talks between

Israel and its Arab neighbours,

the PLO Chairman said he

preferred Washington, Moscow

JERUSALEM, Nov 5: Only

when Israel has signed peace

treaties with its Arab nations

will the face of the Middle East

really change Israeli Prime

Minister Yitzhak Shamir said

delegation to the Middle East

peace conference returned

home from bilateral talks with

Syria, Lebanon and a joint

Palestinian-Jordanian delega-

The talks are expected to

tion.

He was speaking as israel's

here Monday, reports AFP.

or an Arab capital.

TUNIS: Yasser Arafat, PLO leader makes victory sign at the opening of the Palestinian Human Rights conference November 3. (R-L) Hamed Karoui, Tunisian Prime Minister, Yasser Arafat, Moncef Marzouk President of

Human Rights Tunisian League. -AFP/UNB photo

resume when a dispute over a East peace conference which venue is worked out among the participants. The Middle East is still the same, Shamir told Israeli television. "Certainly it has emhis country would have en-

barked on a historic path. But if the process is maintained and we conclude peace treaties with the (Arab) states of the region then yes we will be able to say that the Middle East has changed, the Israeli Prime Minister said.

He described the Middle be every honourable, Shamir

opened Wednesday as a historic event because it gave the (peace) process a chance. Shamir also stressed that

gaged in bilateral talks with Lebanon and a joint Palestinian-Syrian delegation even if Syria had refused to begin the talks. In such negetiations if success is achieved with only two

it in 1981. parties the results would still

tions took place as planned Sunday but they were delayed by several hours and Israeli officials later accused the Damascus delegates of wanting to discuss only withdrawal from the Golan heights.

Israel occupied the strategic Golan in 1967 and annexed

Shamir also called for an end to the nearly four year old Palestinian uprising and said

an end to the anti-Israeli The Syrian-Israeli negotiaprotests was more essential than a halt to Israeli settlements in the occupied terri-

> The United States which co-sponsored the conference with the Soviet Union has repeatedly said Israel's settlement policy was an impediment to peace and Soviet Foreign Minister Wednesday urged Israel to stop the colonisation.

We prefer to carry out the bilateral negotiations in the region or at least not far from it," Shamir told Israel television late on Monday. Israel and Arab states are at

an impasse over where the next round of talks should take place. Israel radio earlier quoted

unnamed government sources as saying Israel would have to give up its demand.

Jordan to seek return of Palestinians to West Bank AMMAN, Nov 5: Jordan said during the third phase of yesterday it would insist that peace talk which will also more 500,000 Palestinians cover other regional matters who have lived in the kingdom such as arms control and water since the 1967 Middle East war return to the West Bank as

"Regarding those who bepart of any peace deal, reports came displaced in 1967, Reuter. Jordan will insist that they re-The kingdom, home to turn to the West Bank to join nearly one million Palestinian the new political situation that refugees from two Arab-Israeli will emerge there at the end of wars, also pledged to press for the peace talks," Irsheid, compensation for itself and Jordan's top refugee official those Palestinians who had lost told Reuter in an interview.

property during the creation of Israel in 1948. 340,083, official refugees who Adel Irsheid, head of the fled their homes in areas on Foreign Ministry Palestinian came to Jordan during the Affairs Department, said the 1067 war when the West Bank fate of 960,212 Palestinians was under Jordanian rule, are

registered with the UN as be-

ing in Jordan would be tackled

Achievements, differences

Agreed to meet again at an

Agreed to meet again at an undetermined time and place. Differed over Syria's demand for Israel to relinquish the captured Golan Heights, as well as other occupied territory. Differed over Israel's requests to establish direct contacts, to adopt the mutual goal of a peace treaty, to agree on refraining from violence dur-

possible: Pankin