



The Royal family

Nobel — the highly explosive man!

Old technology that is still valid

EVERY autumn, when the Nobel Prizes are awarded, the world is reminded of this remarkable man. His invention of dynamite gave him fame and wealth during his lifetime.

Alfred Nobel was born in 1833 in Stockholm. When he was nine years old, his parents moved to St. Petersburg, the former capital of Russia. Later he lived in so many places that he regarded himself as a "citizen of the world". He inherited his interest in explosives technology from his father, an industrialist. Alfred Nobel's epoch-making discovery of dynamite occurred in Hamburg during the 1860s. He got 355 patents on his inventions and established factories around the world.

The Nobel Foundation was established in 1896, one year before his death. Its annual income is used for funding five international prizes. They are awarded for outstanding contributions to physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. In 1968, on its 300th anniversary, The Bank of Sweden established a prize in economic sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel.

In 1998 the six prize were each worth SEK 7.6 million. Two Bengalis, Tagore (Literature) and Amartya Sen

(Economics) have so far been awarded for the Nobel Prize.

The prize winners in physics, chemistry and economic sciences are selected by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The medicine prize winner is chosen by the Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. The

Swedish Academy selects the literature laureate. The Peace Prize is awarded by the Norwegian Nobel committee.

According to the statutes of the Nobel Foundation, the prizes are to be awarded to those who, in each respective field, "during the preceding year, shall have conferred the great-

est benefit on mankind." Scholars and scientists at numerous institutions of learning around the world are entitled to nominate candidates for the prizes. The Prizes are presented at ceremonies in Stockholm and Oslo on December 10 each year, the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel.

Swedish International Development Co-operation

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health service to mainly women and children, offering them a client-based basic health service. The programme is a basis for the structural reforms that are necessary to reach the poor in the rural areas. An immunization programme has contributed to a reduction in the mortality rate for children under the age of five.

Women and children: An increased equality between men and women is a prerequisite for decreased poverty. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for women to achieve an enforced social, economic and legal position in the society. Many of the programmes that Sida supports are directed to women.

Rural development: Sidas

development cooperation within the rural development sector has been conducted through the so called Rural Employment Sector Programme, RESP, during the last 15 years in five thanas in the Faridpur District. The activities have been concentrated to develop the infrastructure through building roads,

bridges, culverts and market places and to increase the possibilities for commerce, production and transport. Within the programme efforts have been made to organise poor women and men through micro-credits, education and income generating activities. A new programme with the aim of supporting local governance and

economic development is under preparation.

Human rights and Democracy: The Swedish programme for human rights and democracy is meant for consolidating respect for human rights and democratic development in Bangladesh. This support is being channelled through national NGOs. The support to Bangladeshi NGOs aims at supporting human rights activities, increasing the awareness of women's rights and the principles established by international conventions, to ensure legal rights and access to justice, advocacy for legal reform and to enforce existing laws to establish social and gender justice.



A modern country with an ancient history

SWEDEN is one of the oldest continuously existing states in the world with a history of more than 1000 years. During all this time Sweden has been and still is a monarchy, although the king today has mainly ceremonial functions as Head of State.

Sweden is a parliamentary democracy with members of parliament directly elected through proportional representation. Terms are for four years and Sweden has universal suffrage from the age of 18. Voter turnout was 81.4 per cent in the last election in 1998.

The Social Democratic Party

has held power alone or in coalitions during the periods 1932-1976 and 1982-1991 as well as from 1994 and onwards. After the 1998 elections, the Social Democrats formed a minority government with 131 of the 349 seats in Parliament.

The 10 ministries are mainly concerned with preparing new government bills. Enforcement of the law is handled by 100 or so relatively independent central administrative agencies and the 21 country administrations. Each country has a popularly elected council that is entitled to levy income taxes and have the re-

sponsibility for health care.

Below the councils are the 289 municipalities (local governments) in Sweden. Each has a popularly elected council which collects taxes and operates public services as schools, child and elderly care utilities, housing and cultural and leisure activities.

Protecting the rights of individuals in their contacts with authorities is fundamental to the process of law in Sweden. In this context the Swedish ombudsman system, established in 1809, is an internationally well known guarantee against oppressive measures and misgov-

ernance in the judiciary and public administration.

Viking country

Sweden is situated on the Scandinavian peninsula in northern Europe. Sweden played a leading role in European history during Viking times (900-1200 AD) as well as in the seventeenth century, when Sweden — then comprising also Finland, Estonia, Latvia and part of northern Germany — was one of Europe's great powers.

In size Sweden has an area of 450 000 square kilometres, roughly three times as big as Bangladesh. Half of the land is covered by forest. Less than 10 per cent is farmland and nearly 100 000 lakes do the countryside. A long mountain chain in the Northwest reaches heights of up to 7000 ft and along the coastline lies thousands of islands.

With a population of just below 9 million inhabitants Sweden is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe. Swedish cities are largely shaped by nature instead of taming and dominating it. Stockholm is the capital and the largest city with approximately 1 million inhabitants.

Long known for its strict policy of neutrality, Sweden became a member of the European Union in 1995. Sweden's chairmanship of the EU in 2001 will be a new milestone in the country's EU-involvement.

Sweden: a wireless kingdom

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efficiency and to increase competitiveness forced Swedish suppliers to meet the highest standards in quality, features and service. Since programmes must be able to be used in several markets, in various nations with different languages and regulations, companies from the very beginning have been forced to develop products for the world market.

Competitive telecom market

Sweden's telecommunication networks are also technology and applications leaders. In 1993, Sweden became the first

nation in Europe to fully deregulate its entire telecom market. This helped to promote keen competition, more and new advanced services, and lower prices, which, in turn, stimulated IT applications and usage. More than 40 telecom operators — both Swedish and foreign — are active in the market.

Progressive academic efforts

Sweden has a strong competence base established within the large technical universities. The Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Lund, Linköping and Göteborg and all world-renowned.

Sweden also has a strong engineering and invention tradition. For instance, Sweden holds more patents in force per capita than any other country in the world. As the home of the Nobel Prize Foundation since its founding over 100 years ago, there is a natural focus on scientific achievements.

Swedish universities are highly adapted to new industry requirements and a number of initiatives demonstrate how tertiary education is increasingly IT-focused. For instance, the Royal Institute of Technology is opening an IT-oriented satellite campus in Kista, projected to have 10,000 students within 5 years.

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