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A Swede, 2 Americans share Nobel Medicine Prize

Their discoveries helped develop drugs against Parkinson's Disease, Schizophrenia

STOCKHOLM, Oct 9: A Swede and two Americans won the 2000 Nobel prize for medicine today for studies on how messages move around the nervous system, making it possible to develop drugs against Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia, reports Reuters.

Arvid Carlsson of Sweden and Paul Greengard and Eric Kandel of the United States share the first Nobel prize of the millennium, worth nearly one million dollar for their discoveries. Sweden's Karolinska Institute said.

"These discoveries have been crucial for an understanding of the normal function of the brain and how disturbances in this signal transduction can give rise to neurological and psychiatric diseases," the institute said.

Messages between nerve cells in the brain, which number more than 100 billion, are carried by chemical transmitters, with messages transmitted at special points of contact between the cells called synapses.

One of these chemical messengers is a hormone-like substance called dopamine, which when present in certain quantities allows the brain to function normally.

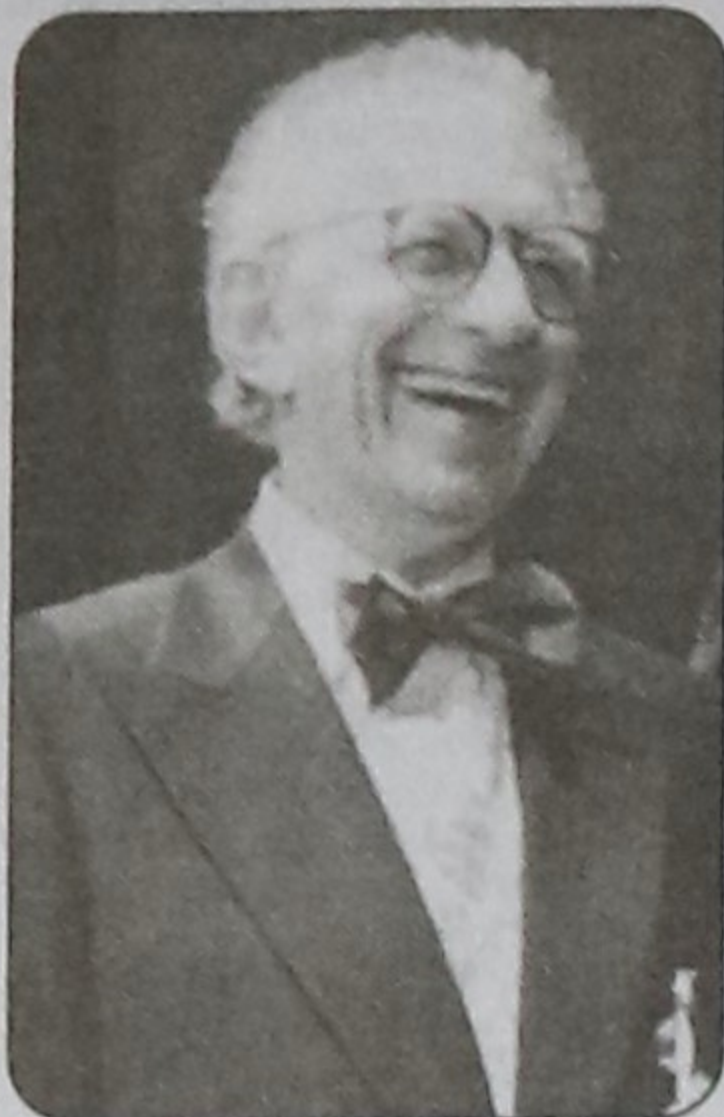
Carlsson, 77, former professor of Pharmacology at the University of Gothenburg, is rewarded for his pioneering studies going back to the 1950s that dopamine is an important transmitter in the brain, the institute said.

His research led to the realisation that Parkinson's disease, in which the victim loses control of body movements, is caused by a lack of dopamine in certain parts of the brain and that an efficient remedy, called L-dopa, could be developed.

Carlsson, the first Swedish Nobel laureate since 1982, made several other discoveries further clarifying the role of dopamine in the brain, showing how drugs that can be used to treat schizo-



Arvid Carlsson



Eric Kandel

phrenia work.

Ralf Pettersson, chairman of the Karolinska Institute's Nobel committee, hailed Carlsson's works as 'magical', relieving the suffering of millions.

"Parkinson's used to be a disease of which people would die, a horrible death, often by suffocation," Pettersson said.

"There are millions of Parkinson's patients around the world. These people now can get acute symptoms treated with L-dopa... That's almost a magical thing."

Greengard, 74, and head of the Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience at Rockefeller University, New York, is rewarded for his discovery of how dopamine and a number of other transmitters act on the nervous system, the institute said.

Greengard studied the way chemical signals operate in something called "slow synaptic transmission" which is important for alertness and mood. Slow synaptic transmission also controls fast synaptic transmission which makes speech, movement and sensory perception possible.

Greengard's work increased understanding of the action of several drugs and is important for the way anti-psychotic drugs work, said psychiatry professor Marie Asberg.

"This made it possible for the pharmaceutical industry to discover drugs that work in this way and don't do a lot of other things too," she said.

Austrian-born Kandel, 70, director of Columbia University's Center for Neurobiology and Behavior, is rewarded for his discoveries of how the efficiency of synapses can be modified, and how changes affect learning and memory, it said.

His work derives from his research into the way a sea slug, which has far fewer nerve cells than a mammal, develops certain reflexes, which is a form of learning.

Building on Greengard's research into the action of proteins in synaptic transmission, Kandel demonstrated where memory is located and how it is lost, making it possible in future to develop new drugs for dementia diseases such as Alzheimer's.

Floods in south-west region Tk 30cr plan to recoup agricultural losses

By Shehab Ahmed

The government has taken up an emergency plan involving Tk 30 crore to recoup agricultural losses caused by the current floods in the south-west region of the country.

A highly placed source said this following an inter-ministerial meeting on disaster management yesterday at the Secretariat.

Chaired by State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Talukder Abdul Khalek, the meeting reviewed the situation in the flood-hit region, improving mainly upstream but deteriorating in Sathkira district.

A bridge at Chuknagar in Sathkira on the highway linking the district with the capital via Jessore was washed away by flood waters on Sunday night, the meeting was told.

The authorities have instructed the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) to 'replace' the bridge.

The plan to recoup loss of Aman crops envisages cultivation of wheat and maize and fresh cultivation of vegetables which were badly damaged by the floods.

The money would be disbursed through the Krishi Bank, sources concerned said.

The affected people would also get help to rebuild their damaged houses.

For this, a plan would be chalked out in cooperation with the NGOs, the meeting decided.

The meeting was told that the floods affected an estimated 500,000 families or 2.5 million people and they also face the threat of diarrhoeal diseases. The departments concerned have been asked to take anti-epidemic measures.

The Public Health Department has been instructed to ensure availability of safe drinking water. See page 11 col 5



Fire from a short circuit gutted five electric and scrap shops at Haji Lal Mia Market at Dholaikhal in the city yesterday. Fire-fighters doused the fire in about an hour. No casualty was reported. -Star photo.

Swiss FM due October 13

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Minister of Switzerland Joseph Deiss will arrive in Dhaka on October 13 on a three-day official visit.

He will be the first foreign minister of a leading European country to visit Bangladesh in a long time.

During his trip to Dhaka, he is expected to sign an agreement with Bangladesh on the promotion and reciprocal protection of investment.

The visiting Swiss foreign minister will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart and also make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Switzerland is one of the major European development partners of Bangladesh and has contributed substantial development assistance since Independence. It has funnelled most of the assistance through the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

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Pop singer shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

Miscreants shot a pop singer at Doshdana of central Bashabo in the city yesterday morning.

Dorodi Bulbul, of 'Yellow Band', son of Habibur Rahman was shot by the gang led by Apu and Faruq near his residence at about 11:30 am.

The singer was shot by the gang when he refused to perform at a function organised by the miscreants, police said.

Relatives of the victim rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Two terrorists chopped

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 9: Two terrorists were chopped by their rivals at Fatullah here today.

Local miscreants Shamim, 25, Hossain, 22, Azhar, 20, and Jhony, 20, attacked Amanullah, See page 11 Col 2

Jayalalitha jailed for 3 yrs

MADRAS, Oct 9: A special court in the southern India state of Tamil Nadu sentenced one of the country's most powerful regional leaders, Jayalalitha Jayaram, to three years in prison today for corruption, reports AFP.

The sentence will effectively ban Jayalalitha, a 52-year-old former movie star, from contesting any election for seven years, unless the ruling is admitted under appeal.

Dubbed by critics as India's Imelda Marcos because of her extravagant tastes, Jayalalitha is a top opposition leader and heads the regional AIADMK party, a dominant political force in Tamil Nadu, a sprawling coastal state of 60 million people.

The sentence handed down Monday by Judge P. Anbazhagan related to charges that Jayalalitha, during her rule as chief minister from 1991-96, purchased a large tract of govern-

ment land for a fraction of its true value.

Judge Anbazhagan also gave Jayalalitha a two-year jail term in a separate case, but ordered the two sentences run concurrently.

Jayalalitha received a one-year

jail sentence for corruption in February, but has yet to serve any time after bogging the case down in India's lengthy appeals process.

Even if she manages to do the same with the latest ruling, her political career looks like being irreparably damaged, with state elections due early next year.

Existing legislation states that anyone sentenced to prison for a period exceeding two years will be banned from contesting elections for a minimum of six years.

In Jayalalitha's case, the period will last seven years, unless she manages to have the verdict taken under appeal.

The Election Commission has, in recent years, enforced this provision by mandating all prospective candidates to sign a declaration that they had not been convicted for any offence, while filing their nomination papers.



Jayalalitha

Boral Murder Case transferred to CID

BAGERHAT, Oct 9: Police headquarters transferred the Adv Kalidas Boral Murder Case to CID, today reports UNB.

ASP of CID Ranjit Kumar took over the charge of the case from Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Shahidul Islam today.

Police sources said the case was handed over to the CID at a time when police were about to submit the charge sheet of the case.

Meanwhile, district Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad and District Puja Celebration Council resented handing over of the Adv Boral Murder Case to CID.

General Secretary of District Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad Shambhu Krishna Mondal said they would announce action programmes within a couple of days to force the government to cancel the decision.

BNP protests renaming of Osmani Stadium

By Staff Correspondent

BNP yesterday urged the government not to rename the under-construction Bangabir Osmani National Stadium at Fatullah in Narayanganj.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, city BNP President Sadek Hossain Khoka MP said the Prime Minister and Awami League chief while inaugurating the stadium recently renamed it after Khan Shaheb Osmani Ali, grandfather local AL MP Shamin Osman.

This is utter disrespect to General MAG Osmani, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces during Liberation War and a great son of the soil. This is also a "naked" exposition of naming things after AL men and their families.

He demanded restoration of the original name. Otherwise, freedom fighters and people will do it, he added.

Last year also, the AL government attempted to construct another conference centre at Osmani Uddayan in the city and planned to name it after Sheikh Mujib to undermine General Osmani. But it had to abandon the plan in the face of a mass protest, the BNP leader said.

Khoka said the AL government also tried to show that it constructed the stadium at Fatullah.

BNP government in fiscal 1994-95 took up a Tk 16.26 crore project to construct the Bangabir Osmani National Stadium at Fatullah and allocated Tk two crore in the same year and Tk 5.95 crore in the next fiscal, Khoka said.

He said the AL government in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 ADPs allocated Tk four crore, Tk four crore, Tk five crore and Tk 8.86 crore respectively. See page 11 col 6

2 Harkatul Jihad members arrested in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 9: Police arrested two alleged members of the Harkatul Jihad from Garzania Bazar in Ramu upazila here today, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Nurul Islam, 32, and Noor Ali, 35, hailed from Sangu thana of Arakan province of Myanmar.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the bazar this evening and arrested them when they came there for shopping.

While being interrogated, the fundamentalist group members to police that they have 10 arms depots in the deep forests of Naikhangchhari upazila.

They have a stockpile of various firearms, including AK-47, G-3 rifle, M-16 LGM, rocket launcher, grenade launcher, sten gun and anti-aircraft gun in the depots, they told the police.

3 tribal youths kidnapped in Rangamati

CHITTAGONG, Oct 9: Gunmen kidnapped three tribal youths and shot mother of two of them at a remote village in Rangamati early today, reports UNB.

Ratan Sen Chakma and Binoy Chakma, son of Rangini Chakma of Ruisyabill village, and their neighbour Dewan Tongchonga were abducted from their homes by an armed tribal gang at 4 am.

They shot Rangini Chakma as she tried to resist the gunmen. She was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police sources suspected anti-peace accord tribesmen led the abduction.

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BNP rallies in city today

BNP will hold rallies and stage demonstrations at all the thanas of the city today in protest against obstructing relief operation by its chairperson Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

City BNP president Sadek Hossain Khoka and acting general secretary Chowdhury Alam called upon the leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations to make the programme a success.

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