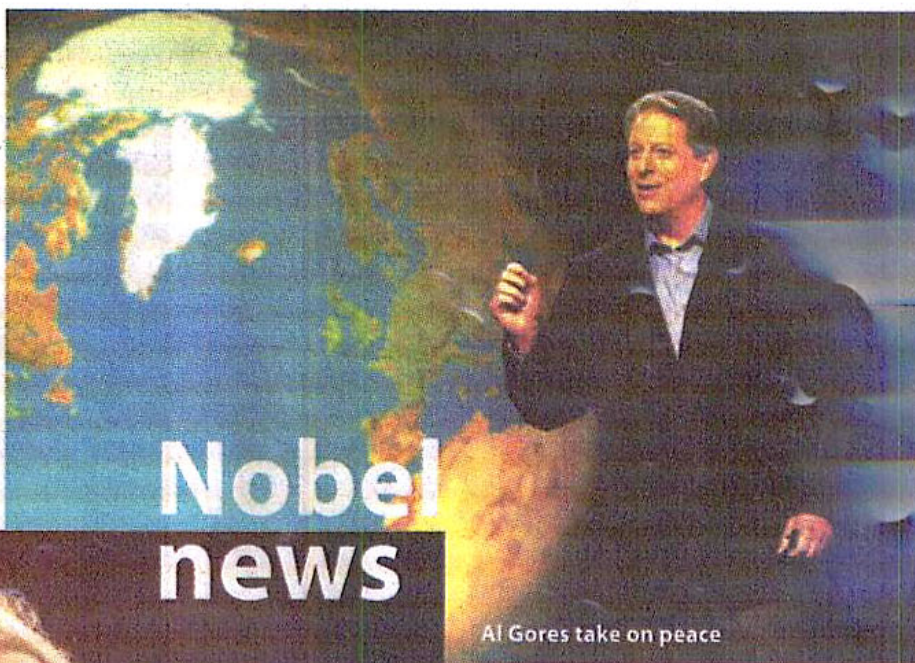


In December this year, eleven people and an international organisation will officially join the distinguished ranks of Nobel Laureates, now numbering at 797, with 777 individuals and 20 organisations. The Laureate's works range from sub-atomic discoveries to the monitoring and publicising of global risks.

Medicine: can you imagine a world where deceased organs are regenerated, and it's not Doom 3 or any other science-fiction based book or movie? Well the work accomplished by this year's Nobel Laureates for Medicine has brought us just that much closer to it. The award is for the discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells. Stem cells are undifferentiated cells which have the potential to specialize into any kind of tissue. The implications of this work are enormous if you think about it in terms of curing cancer and

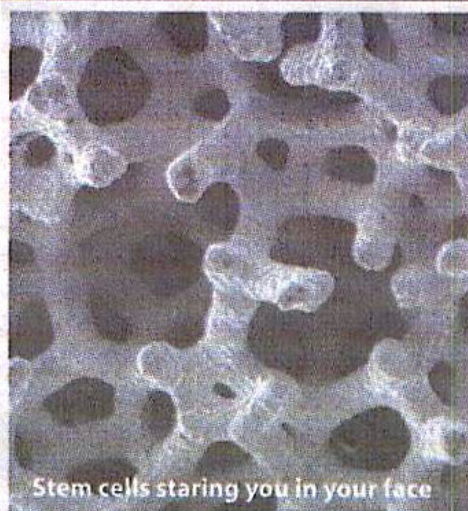


Nobel news

Al Gores take on peace



Doris Lessing for literature



Stem cells staring you in your face

genetic disorders. The laureates are Mario R. Capecchi, from the University of Utah, Sir Martin J. Evans, from Cardiff University and Oliver Smithies from the University of North Carolina. The prize will be split three ways.

Physics: this year the prize for physics is being awarded jointly to Albert Fert, of Unité Mixte de Physique CNRS/THALES, Université Paris-Sud, Orsay, France, and Peter Grünberg, of Forschungszentrum Jülich, Germany, for the discovery of Giant Magnetoresistance, or GMR. GMR is the reason that it has been possible to miniaturise hard disks so radically in recent years. Information is stored in the form of microscopically small areas magnetised in

different directions and is retrieved by a read-out head that scans the disk and registers the magnetic changes. A read-out head based on the GMR effect can convert very small magnetic changes into differences in electrical resistance and therefore into changes in the current emitted by the read-out head. The current is the signal from the read-out head and its different strengths represent ones and zeros. In 1997 the first read-out head based on the GMR effect was launched and this soon became the standard technology. Even the most recent read-out techniques of today are further developments of GMR. Their discovery completely revolutionised data storage. No matter how small your ipod gets, you owe it to

these guys!

Chemistry: The Nobel Prize in Chemistry is being awarded this year to Gerhard Ertl of, Fritz-Haber-Institut der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Berlin, Germany for his research on chemical processes on solid surfaces. This science is important for the chemical industry and can help us to understand such varied processes as why iron rusts, how fuel cells function and how the catalysts in our cars work. Chemical reactions on catalytic surfaces play a vital role in many industrial operations, such as the production of artificial fertilisers. Surface chemistry can even explain the destruction of the ozone layer. Gerhard Ertl has founded an

experimental school of thought by showing how reliable results can be attained in this difficult area of research. His insights have provided the scientific basis of modern surface chemistry: his methodology is used in both academic research and the industrial development of chemical processes.

Literature: The Nobel Prize in Literature for 2007 is awarded to the English writer Doris Lessing, quoted as being "that epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny". Doris Lessing is only the eleventh woman to win the prize in its 106-year history, and also the oldest person ever to receive the literature award. She declined damehood, but accepted a Companion of Honour at the end of 1999 for "conspicuous national service". The Royal Society of Literature has also made her a Companion of Literature.

Peace: In what appears to be the most controversial Nobel Prize award this year, the Nobel Prize for Peace was given to former vice president of America, Al Gore and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as quoted by the Nobel prize committee, "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change". "A prerequisite for winning the Nobel Peace Prize is making a difference, and Al Gore has made a difference," Conservative Member of Parliament Boerge Brende, a former minister of environment and then of trade said. He also said, "I think climate change is the biggest challenge we face in this century." However, a lot of people think that Gore hasn't even been able to convince his country with his documentary, let alone the world, and therein lays much controversy as to why he received the prize. His documentary, An Inconvenient Truth, also won two Academy Awards, for best documentary and best original song.

Economics: The Nobel Prize for Economics this year is spread three ways between Leonid Hurwicz, of University of Minnesota, Eric S. Maskin, from Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and Roger B. Myerson, University of Chicago for having laid the foundations of mechanism design theory. The theory allows us to distinguish situations in which markets work well from those in which they do not. It has helped economists identify efficient trading mechanisms, regulation schemes and voting procedures. The gap between buyers and sellers, information asymmetry, is one of the most widely studied aspects of economics. The theory helps to construct rules that attempt to avoid the disparity of information between groups of buyers and sellers.

By Ahsan Sajid

'Constipational' Hazards: Eid Trauma

THE worst that can happen to you in the course of surviving Eid, other than lecherous uncles who refuse to let you go when in that age old embracing tradition (kola kuli) is constipation. The food extravaganza that sweeps the nation on Eid, the result of a strenuous month of not eating, can leave devastating results in terms of the gastronomic. The stomach, used to moori and piyajus protests the considerably larger intake of food during the day; you can't blame the poor organ, I mean the thing was probably geared up to eat at the sound of a certain Azan, eating breakfast again, especially heavy breakfast like shemai and what not, probably baffled the belly, mostly because its forgotten how to digest breakfast.

You survived the numerous uncles and the sweaty aunts (who incidentally love taking huge chunks out of your cheeks while they delightedly exclaim that you've grown over the past year... it's amazing how you never see them throughout the year while you were doing the growing up) but the thing that conquers you comes from within and that's your rebellious stomach. Roast beef and chicken, no matter how tasty they are, do have side effects, just like sleeping pills. Take too many of them and they do all the wrong things.

Imagine yourself, just out of the complex circle of relatives (some of whom you don't even recognize) on your merry way to meet up with old friends and it's just after Eid, too, and you're all chip and dandy. The world seems fresh, and the quite empty Dhaka invites you to explore it without traffic constricting the expeditions into the jungle of concrete. And there they are, your loyal friends, ready to take up the mantle of exploration with you, yelling out the happy old slogan of all explorers past which is in this case a little bit

different: 'To Old Dhaka and beyond!' And you set off too on rickshaws and daddy's car. And it's when you're halfway there with all the shops on either side closed when the treachery begins.

Constipation strikes with added acidity in the mix to jar all the chemical reactions. Ouch.

It's harsh the way these things tend to undermine important things. There you are sitting there serenely taking in the sights and life around you and the suddenly you can't sit still because there's a problem with the downward shaft in your gut. The only time you realize the futility of life is when you stand in a line (which has absolutely nothing to do with this article but I like enlightening my readers) and when you realize that you really need to

Eid these days is all about clothes and food, lots of food. No matter what you do the first agenda on everybody's mind is all about eating, even yours.

take a squat and there's no toilet near by. It's very depressing really, to have the hard truth hit home so brutally, that no matter what you do, life is really going to make it hard going to the toilet in the end (and paying your bills due to long lines... but I'm rambling again... okay).

Eid these days is all about clothes and food, lots of food. No matter what you do the first agenda on everybody's mind is all about eating, even yours. Wake up, prayers and come back home to food. Escape family long enough to go out with friends and end up at some eatery yet again to eat. Go to some friend's place to check out his new Eid PS3 and after fiddling around with it, eat some more. So much food being eaten and its not even

evening, its no wonder the stomach revolts.

And it's on the days after that the after effects take place like it was just aforementioned. Sometimes it's worse. Like on the first date right after Eid (and don't fool yourself, the girl is not going to understand the predicament, girls don't eat on Eid due to 'ahem', the waistline, it's only the boys who suffer from the jaws of indigestion). You sit there in yet another restaurant and you order some more food and try and talk without trying to run to the men's room. And when the food arrives you grimace like you smelt something bad that the dog brought in. In all that time you don't pay much attention to the girl. Yeah, you get the idea.

Then for those of us who unfortunately go to private tuitions, life tends to be a tad bit more difficult. Since the teachers have no conscience they only tend to give you a few days leave before starting work on that grindstone again. When you return to classes with your bloated stomach the first thing on your mind is not Core Mathematics 4 but the washroom. And teachers with that vindictive pleasure they all derive from teaching would obviously refuse to let you go. Those two hours normally turn out to be something akin to hell. Then there are people who have to go back to jobs. Repeated visits to the bathroom mean that at the end of the day no work is done. And that's not a good way to get that promotion.

In the end it's all about food and since its Eid it's all about eating. The only possible outlet for the poor digestive tract is to go on strike and then you end up thrown out of class, without a job and to put the icing on the cake, you get dumped to for being an insensitive brat. You can't help yourself, I know.

By Tareq Adnan
(da.phat.one@gmail.com)

Teen age now from a different angle

FROM PAGE 3

And if you aren't on good enough terms to talk about responsible sexual behaviour with your little brother or sister, it's high time you got on good terms.

Kids, or people, grow up. That's the rule of the world. Even though you know little of the evils of the world, it's your duty as older siblings to warn them about any and/or all, troubles they may face.

Don't try to put them on a leash it didn't work with you when your parents tried it and it won't work now and don't force your ideologies on them.

As Dumbledore once said, "Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels, but old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young." I don't mean to say that we are old and all knowing. I'm merely saying that we should learn from our past.

Help your brothers and sisters, keep an eye on them and look out for them, but above all, be their friend. At least it's good practice for when you become a parent.

By Kazim Ibn Sadique

Rising Stars invites reader opinions on this issue regarding siblings. We would like to know what you feel regarding older siblings. Mail in your thoughts, advice and frustrations even. ~ RS Desk