

Scientists find key to drought resistant crops

ANI, Washington

Scientists have determined precisely how the plant hormone abscisic acid (ABA) works at the molecular level to help plants respond to environmental stresses such as drought and cold, which could lead to the development of drought resistant crops in the future.

VARI (Van Andel Institute) scientists have determined the structure of the receptors that plants use to sense ABA, a hormone that keeps buds dormant and keeps buds from sprouting until the climate is right.

Locating these receptors and understanding how they work is a key finding - one that has eluded researchers for nearly a half-century.



PHOTO: AFP

This Television grab taken from the Central Television of China (CCTV) channel news yesterday shows one of seven defendants (R) next to security officers during a trial over July's ethnic unrest at the Urumqi court, in northwest China's Xinjiang region. The court in restive Xinjiang sentenced three more people to death on Friday for their roles in July ethnic violence, state media said, raising the total number of people condemned to death or executed to 17.

Court refuses Laden's son entry to UK

AFP, London

A bid by one of Osama bin Laden's sons to visit Britain was rejected by an immigration tribunal on Thursday amid questions about his proposed marriage to a British woman and his attitude to his father.

Omar bin Laden, 28, lost his appeal against Britain's refusal in April 2008 to allow him to move here with British-born Zaina Alsabah, 54, who he claimed to have married in his homeland of Saudi Arabia in 2007.

The deputy president of the asylum and immigration tribunal, Mark Ockelton, said their union "was not to be regarded as valid in English law", partly because they were both married to other people at the time.

Russia, China closer to okaying Iran sanctions

AFP, Paris

Iran's defiant pursuit of its nuclear programme has tested the patience of Moscow and Beijing and increased the chances that they might support sanctions against Tehran, analysts said yesterday.

After President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's latest provocation -- a vow to build 10 more uranium reprocessing plants -- diplomats in Western capitals now dare to hope that the US Security Council could unite behind a plan of action.

But experts in Moscow and Beijing warn their governments remain unwilling to support the kind of severe financial embargoes and targeted trade restrictions favoured in Washington, Paris, London and Berlin.

"In 2009 the Iranians weren't able to find positions that might divide the Group of Six," said one analyst, speaking

on condition of anonymity and referring to Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

According to the Paris-based official, this contact group of world powers set up to negotiate with Tehran is "all agreed that Iran should not get a nuclear weapon" while some "are actively drawing up new sanctions".

Iran's regime, now under pressure at home from a newly vocal domestic opposition movement, has refused a UN-mediated offer to send its uranium stockpile to Russia and France to be refined for use in a medical reactor.

This refusal -- which increased international fears that Tehran's true intent is to create weapons grade fuel -- led last week to members of the UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) voting to censure Iran.

Russia, usually an ally of Iran, co-sponsored the censure motion and

China, traditionally a staunch defender of national sovereignty over international oversight, voted to support it.

"Russia supports the idea of sanctions against Iran," said Fyodor Lukin, editor of the Russian foreign policy journal Russia in Global Affairs.

"The real question will be 'what kind of sanctions?' There will be deep disagreement, and Russia will not support very tough sanctions like those sought by the United States," he warned.

In the West, Russia's vote was nevertheless seen as a breakthrough that could clear the path for tougher United Nations economic sanctions against Iran in the New Year.

"The real break with Russia came in September when Washington, Paris and London revealed Iran was building a secret new enrichment plant," said one Western diplomat, pointing to new tensions between Tehran and Moscow.

EU to begin Myanmar political dialogue

Top court agrees to hear Suu Kyi appeal

AFP, Yangon

The European Union will begin "sustained political dialogue" with Myanmar following the thawing of relations between the junta-led nation and the US, the regional bloc's ambassador said Thursday.

Ambassador David Lipman spoke to reporters in Myanmar's main city Yangon after meeting with the country's leader Senior General Than Shwe to obtain diplomatic credentials in the remote capital Naypyidaw yesterday.

"We had a good discussion about future relations between the European Union and Myanmar and we are

looking forward," Lipman said of the 30-minute meeting.

"I think the government would like to engage with the European Union. They are already engaging with the United States," he said.

Last month US President Barack Obama signalled a new approach with Myanmar when he met Prime Minister Thein Sein along with other leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in Singapore.

The US and EU have sanctions against Myanmar because of its human rights record and detention of Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Lipman said future engagement would follow three

tracks -- general humanitarian assistance, the giving of financial aid through non-government organisations, and now political discussion.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's Supreme Court agreed yesterday to hear an appeal against the extended house arrest of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, as the European Union said it wanted sustained dialogue with the ruling junta.

Nobel laureate Suu Kyi, 64, was ordered to spend another 18 months in detention in August after being convicted over an incident in which a US man swam to her house. A lower court rejected an initial appeal in October.

India for revival of Lankan political process

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

India Friday said it wanted a revival of the peace process in Sri Lanka and has been assured by Colombo that all people displaced by the two-decade-long civil war would be resettled by the end of January 2010.

"Government is keen to see the revival of political process in Sri Lanka which will meet the legitimate interests and aspirations of all communities, including Tamils and Muslims, within the framework of a united Sri Lanka," Minister of External Affairs SM Krishna said in the Rajya Sabha.

"Revival of such political process and an inclusive dialogue would help bring the

minority communities (come) into the political mainstream," he added.

In making the suo moto statement, the government avoided the calling attention motion, which some MPs from the southern states had submitted.

Bharatiya Janata Party leader Venkaiah Naidu had objected to this move just before Krishna got up to read the four-page statement.

Krishna also said India had continued to emphasise to the Sri Lankan government 'to put forward a meaningful devolution package that could go beyond 13th amendment. We will remain engaged with them through this process of transition and reform'.



PHOTO: AFP

Relatives of one of the slain journalists mourn over the coffin during the funeral in General Santos City, south Cotabato yesterday. Eight of the thirty slain journalists were buried as Philippine troops wearing body armour and carrying assault rifles stormed a compound containing the homes of a powerful clan linked to the election-linked massacre that left 57 people dead.

US envoy set for North Korea talks

No breakthrough likely

AFP, Seoul

US President Barack Obama will use his trademark direct diplomacy next week on a problem, which plagued his predecessors for two decades -- North Korea's dogged drive for nuclear weaponry.

Special envoy on North Korea Stephen Bosworth, set to arrive Tuesday in Pyongyang, will try to persuade the isolated country to return to the six-nation nuclear disarmament talks it angrily quit in April.

The trip will mark the first direct talks between the Obama administration and the hardline communist

regime.

But hopes of a breakthrough are low, given the North's missile and nuclear tests earlier this year and the US preoccupation with other foreign policy challenges such as Afghanistan and Iran.

"I don't expect much from the first visit to the North," Bosworth himself was quoted as telling South Korea's Yonhap news agency in London Thursday. Analysts agree.

"At best, the North might announce its return to the nuclear talks, but I wouldn't count on it," said Peter Beck, a North Korea specialist at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific research centre.

Putin praises achievements of Stalin

ANI, Moscow

Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who sent millions to their deaths during his nearly three decade long reign of terror, is closer to being rehabilitated, thanks to incumbent Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

Praising Stalin's achievements openly, Putin said he must be given credit for making the Soviet Union an industrial superpower, and for defeating Hitler in the Second World War.

According to The Times, Putin declared that it was "impossible to make a judgment in general" about the man who presided over the Gulag slave camps.

India, Nepal resume security talks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Kathmandu

India and Nepal resume talks in security cooperation in Kathmandu Friday to review the progress of the high-level commitments made between the two governments during Nepali Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's official visit to India in August.

The three-day talks, delayed Friday due to the widespread excitement about the Nepal cabinet's historic meeting at the foot of Mt Everest, are led by Satish

Mehta, joint secretary at India's external affairs ministry, and his Nepali counterpart Khaganath Adhikari.

Officials from the ministries of defence, home affairs and foreign affairs as well as security forces and Nepal's National Intelligence Department are participating in the talks that will focus on sharing information to combat cross-border terrorism more effectively.

The two sides will also discuss providing training to Nepal Army in India as well as non-lethal military hardware.

Israel illegally annexing east Jerusalem: EU

AFP, Jerusalem

In a confidential report obtained by AFP on Thursday, the European Union accused Israel of actively pursuing the annexation of Arab east Jerusalem and undermining hopes for peace with Palestinians.

The annual report drafted by the EU heads of missions in Jerusalem accused Israel of implementing in 2009 an intricate policy which

includes expanding Jewish settlements and demolishing Palestinian homes in east Jerusalem.

"Developments in east Jerusalem in 2009 were marked by the continued expansion of Israeli settlements and a considerable number of Palestinian house demolitions and eviction orders," said the report, published first by Israel's liberal Haaretz daily.

Israel occupied and

annexed east Jerusalem in 1967 and considers it its "eternal indivisible capital" in a move never recognised by the international community.

"Israel is, by practical means, actively pursuing its illegal annexation of east Jerusalem by weakening the Palestinian community in the city, impeding Palestinian urban developments and ultimately separating east Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank."

**Embassy of Denmark, Dhaka**

**Career Opportunity**

**Programme Officer, Trade Section**

Deadline for application: Monday, 14 December 2009

The Embassy of Denmark, Dhaka invites qualified applications for the position of Programme Officer for Trade Section to be filled as soon as possible.

Interested qualified candidates will find the job description and the information on how to apply in the following web link:

<http://www.ambdhaka.um.dk/en/menu/TheEmbassy/Job+Opportunities/>

A one page application together with an updated resume (CV) and a recent passport size photograph must reach the Embassy of Denmark, GPO Box 2056, Dhaka 1000 or dacamb@um.dk by 14 December 2009 before noon. Receipt of applications will not be acknowledged, but applicants called for interview will be notified.

UN to probe climate change cover-up

AFP, London

A top UN panel is to probe claims that British scientists sought to suppress data backing climate change sceptics' views, its head said yesterday ahead of the landmark Copenhagen summit.

Rajendra Pachauri, head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said the claims -- which led a top expert to leave his post temporarily this week -- were serious and needed to be investigated.

Professor Phil Jones has stood aside as head of the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, after emails allegedly calling into question the scientific basis for climate

change fears were posted online.

Hackers penetrated the centre's network and posted online thousands of emails from researchers, including Jones, ahead of the Copenhagen summit, which starts Monday.

The CRU at the university in Norwich, eastern England, is a world-leader in the field.

Pachauri, head of the Nobel Prize-winning UN panel since 2002, told BBC radio: "We will certainly go into the whole lot and then we will take a position on it."

"We certainly don't want to brush anything under the carpet. This is a serious issue and we will look into it in detail," he added.

Nurul Islam's family

FROM PAGE 16

residence of Nurul Islam at Lalmatia on December 3 in 2008, killing his son Tamohar Islam, 35, on the spot. Nurul Islam who was seriously injured in the fire died 36 hours later.

"Had the CID given more attention to the investigation, the case would have progressed. But they did not do it though they have the capability," said lawyer Rubi Rahman, wife of Nurul Islam.

Primary investigation by fire service and civil defence concluded that the fire broke out from the electric short circuit. But Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) in its report on December 22, 2008 ruled out any possibility of the fire originating from electric short circuit, as the circuit breakers were intact, said Moutushi Islam, daughter of Nurul Islam.

She said as the refrigerator had remained out of order for three years before the fire incident and the flat was equipped with circuit breaker, there was no chance of electric short circuit in the cable of the fridge that the fire brigade

mentioned in their probe report.

The fire was mysterious as it was limited to a very short place but did not burn many flammable items like books, papers and plastic items, she said.

Moutushi said there was no sign of burn on the bodies of Nurul Islam and Tamohar, said Moutushi.

Police recovered two cell phone sets of Nurul Islam, which was lost from his house, but they did not find any person involved in giving threat to Nurul Islam, she said.

Moutushi said before the fire incident her father talking to electronic media had said that he and his son were being threatened by unidentified persons for long.

Her father also mentioned the involvement of fundamentalists behind the incident at that time, she alleged.

Responding to a question, Rubi Rahman said the present government seems to have taken the issue seriously and they hoped that the government would do proper investigation and ensure punishment of the culprits.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Development Branch Building 3, Room 241, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka 1000				
Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)				
1	Ministry	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare		
2	Agency	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare		
3	Procuring entity name	Joint Secretary (Development & Medical Education) and Line Director (Physical Facilities Development) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)		
4	Procuring entity code	2703 (MoHFW)		
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka		
6	Expression of interest for selection of	Audit firm for the Procurement Audit Services of the HNPSP for FY 2005 - FY 2008		
7	EOI Ref. No.	MOHFW/Pur & Pro/Proc. Audit-18/2009/239		
8	Date	2 December 2009		
9	Procurement method	QCBS		
10	Budget and source of funds	HNPSP Cr. 4052-BD/TF05610 (IDA Credit No. 4052 BD)		
11	Development Partners	IDA Pool Fund		
12	Project/Program code	2703 (MoHFW)		
13	Project/Program name	Procurement of Audit Services for the MoHFW under the HNPSP		
14	EOI closing date, time and place of submission	Close of Business on 21 December, 2009 c/o Team Leader, Management Support Agency (MSA), House # 15, Apt. 502, Road # 128, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh		
15	Brief description of assignment	Provide professional opinions on the procurement and contract management processes and prepare checklist of critical procurements to be audited (Goods, Works, Consultancy and Non-consultancy services) that are essential for the provision of HNPSP operations. Examine the eligibility and correctness of financial transactions under the review period and fund balances at the end of the period Report whether the proper procurement and contracting procedures and processes were followed for procurements under the HNPSP as stipulated in the Development Credit Agreement (DCA). Physical verification and verification of the operational compliance and state of completion/non-completion Analyze the competitiveness of the contracts given out		
16	Experience, resources and delivery capacity required	Minimum 10 (ten) years experience on procurement, financial and services auditing and should have adequate staffing and logistical capacity to deliver the intended results.		
17	Other details	Interested firm(s) are invited to provide the following information: 1. Background with brochures and area of expertise 2. Description of similar assignment with documents 3. Supporting documents of experience of the last 5 years and spell out professional capacity of staff and adequate and appropriate resources to carry out the assignment 4. Technical and Managerial organization of the firm. Shortlisted qualified firms will be invited to submit proposals. Shortlisting and selection will be subject to the availability of funds the firm will be selected in accordance with the PPR 2008. Request of Expression of Interest for above mentioned assignment to be clearly marked on the top cover. The procuring agency reserves the right to reject any or all of the EOIs.		
18	Association with foreign firm is	N/A		
19	Ref No.	Phasing of services 1. Pre-planning 2. Auditing 3. Follow-up 4. Final report	Main Location (but extensive field travel needed) 1. Dhaka 2. Dhaka 3. Dhaka 4. Dhaka	Period 1. Two weeks 2. Ten weeks 3. Two weeks 4. Two weeks
		1. Award of contract 2. Contract start 3. Submission of work plan 4. Submission of reports 5. Submission of final report	Dhaka Dhaka Dhaka Dhaka Dhaka	Feb 2010 Feb 2010 Within two weeks Monthly End of contract
20	Name of official inviting EOI	Abu Taher, Joint Secretary (Development and Medical Education) and Line Director (Physical Facilities Development), MoHFW		
21	Designation of official inviting EOI	Joint Secretary (Development and Medical Education) and Line Director (Physical Facilities Development), MoHFW		
22	Address of official inviting EOI	c/o Team Leader, Management Support Agency (MSA), House # 15, Road # 128, Apt-502 (3rd floor), Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212		
23	Contact details of official inviting EOI	Tele: 880 2 7164926		Fax 880 2 9559216

**ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**

সিস্টেম এন্ড অপারেশন ডিভিশন

প্রধান কার্যালয়ঃ ১৮ দিলকুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা।

**গাড়ী বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

নিম্নোক্ত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে "চালু অবস্থায়/যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে" ভিত্তিতে ব্যাংকের ব্যবহৃত নিম্নে বর্ণিত পুরাতন গাড়ীগুলি বিক্রয়ের জন্য অগ্রাহী ক্রেতাদের নিকট থেকে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

১। ব্যাংকের অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার/ডিম্যান্ড ড্রাক্ট আকারে উল্লেখিত মোট মূল্যের ১০% আনুমানিক (ফেরৎযোগ্য) অবশ্যই প্রত্যেক দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। প্রত্যেকটি গাড়ীর মূল্য পৃথকভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। কৃতকার্য দরদাতাগণ যথাসময়ে মূল্য পরিশোধ করে গাড়ী ডেলিভারী নিতে বাধ্য হলে আনুমানিক বাজেয়াপ্ত হবে।

২। দরপত্র প্রধান কার্যালয়ে ৭ম তলায় রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে আগামী ২১/১২/২০০৯ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে দাখিল করতে হবে এবং উক্ত তারিখে টেন্ডার দাখিলের সর্বশেষ সময় অতিক্রমের পরেই উপস্থিত দরপত্রদাতাদের সামনে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।

৩। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ না দর্শিয়ে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

৪। গাড়ীগুলির বিস্তারিত বিবরণ নিম্নে দেয়া হলোঃ

ক্রমিক নং	গাড়ীর বিবরণ	রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর	মডেল	পরিদর্শনের স্থান
০১।	টয়োটা, মাইক্রোবাস, সিসি-১৫০০	ঢাকা-মেট্রো-৮-৫১-০৮১৩	১৯৯৩	প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা
০২।	টয়োটা মাইক্রোবাস, সিসি-১৫০০	ঢাকা-মেট্রো-গ-১৪-৬৫০৭	১৯৯৭	প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা

সিনিয়র ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট  
সিস্টেম এন্ড অপারেশন ডিভিশন