DNA Anchor Nobel laureates who are in Gujarat to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit visit educational institutes

Students get rare chance to interact with best and brightest minds

Prof Harold Varmus and prof Randy Schekman talk about their subjects at IITG on Wednesday

Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, hosted two Nobel laureates at its Palej campus on Wednesday. Professor Harold Varmus and professor Randy W Schekman, who received the Nobel prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1989 and 2012 respectively, spoke about their areas of expertise.

While talking on ‘How cells become cancers and what to do about it,’ professor Varmus said after his mother was detected with breast cancer, he wanted to study about its origin and history. He spoke about targeted therapy in cancer and the importance of cure, especially in India. He said instead of focusing on controlling the cell division to treat cancer, researchers should work towards understanding the cause of cancer to the level of DNA to design specific therapies for different types of cancers.

“There are good vaccines for Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus which are non-toxic, only a couple of states in India use it productively,” he said.

Lauding former US president Barack Obama, Varmus showed a video clip to the audience where Obama talks about his precision medicine initiative. He said, “President Obama was highly positive and supported medicine and research, prime minister Narendra Modi is also supporting scientists and research.”

Rashmi Bhakuni, a research scholar in the area of biological engineering at IITG, said, “Even though what they spoke is already out there in books and other sources, it was very motivating to hear them talk about it and help develop more interest in science and research.”

Professor Schekman delivered the second talk on ‘How cells export proteins and peptides: childhood curiosity for understanding the unknown led him to persistently pursue his parents to buy him a microscope, which he has now donated to the Nobel museum in Sweden.’

He further narrated how he along with his many graduate students have over the past three decades virtually deciphered the fundamental features of eukaryotic secretory membrane traffic using a genetic and biochemical approach.

Will talk to Modi about this, says Ada Yonath about the absence of Indians in nomination list

das correspondent aishwarya

Ahmedabad: A little before her lecture on ‘Towards a New Generation of Antibiotics’ on Wednesday, dna caught up with Ada Yonath, the first Israeli woman to have won a Nobel Prize in Chemistry at Cambridge University. Excerpts from the interview and lecture:

Antibiotics affecting the environment

In a lot of lectures and sessions, Yonath has openly spoken against non-degradable antibiotics. Today was no different. “The antibiotics are non-degradable and their residue gets passed to the sewage water, which then mixes with the ground water and cattle later on graze on this ground. The cattle are then milked, by default, humans are consuming antibiotics,” she added. She said she would be dialogue with big pharmaceutical companies who can help in producing environment-friendly antibiotics.

No Indian nominated for Chemistry

Being the only and the first Israeli woman to have won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Yonath spoke about how there were no nominations from India as of now for Chemistry. She asked if there were enough students opting for science, or having a rewarding research, the audience, she immediately replied, “Then there are issues with government grants. If there is no support, students with degrees in Chemistry will get it,” she said. When asked if there could be done about it, she said, “It will take莫