Critical book wins Nobel Literature Prize

STOCKHOLM. Sweden (AP) — V.S. Naipaul, a writer of aching humor and grim reality, won the Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday for his "incorruptible scrutiny" of postcolonial society and his critical assessments of Muslim fundamentalism.

Naipaul, 69, a British novelist and essayist born in Trinidad to parents of Indian descent, started with the West Indian island as his first subject. He extended his writings to include India, Africa, "America from south to north," England and the Islamic communities of Asia.

The Nobel Literature Prize, first awarded to French author Sully Prudhomme in 1901, is worth \$943,000 in this centennial year.

"I am utterly delighted. This is an unexpected accolade," Naipaul said in a statement issued by publishing agency Colman Getty. "It is a great tribute to both England, my home, and to India, home of my ancestors."

The 215-year-old Swedish Acad-

emy singled out his 1987 autobiographical novel, "The Enigma of Arrival," saying the author created an he said. "unrelenting image of the placid collapse of the old colonial ruling culture and the demise of European neighborhoods."

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul left Trinidad at the age of 18, when he traveled to England to study at Oxford. Naipaul, whose other famous books include "A House for Mr. Biswas" and "A Bend in the River," writes in English

The prize committee also pointed to his travel books and documentary works in which he criticizes Muslim fundamentalism in Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan in "Among the Believers" (1981) and "Beyond Belief" (1998).

Academy head Horace Engdahl conceded this year's choice might be seen as political in the wake of terror attacks in the United States and the a tough-minded, misanthropic man American retaliation.

make room for a more muted reaction,"

"I don't think we will have violent protests from the Islamic countries and if they take the care to read his travel books from that part of the world they will realize that his view of Islam is a lot more nuanced."

'What he's really attacking in Islam is a particular trait that it has in common with all cultures that conquerors bring along, that it tends to obliterate the preceding culture," he said.

At a reading in London last week, Naipaul condemned what he called the "calamitous effect" of Islam and compared it to colonialism.

"To be converted you have to destroy your past, destroy your history. You have to stamp on it, you have to say 'My ancestral culture does not exist, it doesn't matter," he said.

Naipaul has the reputation of being

ing blurbs for his peers. In "Sir Vidia's Shadow," a highly unflattering book published in 1998, former friend Paul Theroux wrote that "he elevated crankishness as the proof of his artistic temperament."

In recent remarks, Naipaul mocked E.M. Forster, author of "A Passage to India" and other novels. "He just knew the court and a few middle-class Indians and a few garden boys whom he wished to seduce," Naipaul said in an interview with the Literary Review. He also took on James Joyce's "Ulysses," saying that "Joyce was going blind and I can't understand the work of a blind writer."

In fiction and nonfiction, Naipaul has described the upheaval of newly independent nations and the people who live with one foot in the remnants of their ancient culture and one in the culture of their colonial masters.

"The history I carried with me, towho does not engage in such literary gether with the self-awareness that had Fo and Germany's Guenter Grass are on Friday in Oslo, Norway

"The present situation perhaps will rituals as publishing parties and flatter- come with my education and ambition, other recent winners with strong politihad sent me into the world with a sense cal views. of glory dead," Naipaul wrote in "The Enigma of Arrival."

> Martin Amis, the British novelist and critic, said he was delighted by Naipaul's win.

"His level of perception is of the highest, and his prose has become the perfect instrument for realizing those perceptions on the page," Amis said, adding that Naipaul's travel writing "is perhaps the most important body of work of its kind in the second half of the century."

The academy cited Naipaul for "having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories."

exiled Chinese novelist and playwright Gao Xingjian, a French citizen. His award was denounced by the Chinese government as political. Italy's Dario

The 18 lifetime members of the academy make the selection in deep secrecy at one of their weekly Thursday meetings and nominees are not publicly revealed for 50 years.

Alfred Nobel, the Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite, offered only vague guidance about the prizes in his will, saying only the award should go to those who "shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind" and "who shall have produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction." The awards always are handed out on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

The Nobels started Monday with the Last year's winner was little-known naming of medicine prize winners, followed by the physics award on Tuesday and chemistry and economics on Wednesday.

The peace prize is to be announced

Dry dock will begin cautiously on Russian sub

INTERNATIONAL

MURMANSK, Russia (AP) Clamped beneath a giant barge, the gutted wreck of the Kursk nuclear submarine has pulled into the waters of a Russian shipyard, where the navy cautiously begins the weeklong process of putting it into dry dock.

The Kursk's two 190-megawatt nuclear reactors and an arsenal of powerful cruise missiles have been a concern since the vessel exploded and sank during naval exercises Aug. 12, 2000, killing 118 sailors aboard. In an unprecedented operation, the battered submarine was raised from the floor of the Barents Sea by a Dutch consortium on Monday.

The experts at Roslyakovo ship repair plant near Murmansk expected to spend Thursday attaching the first of two pontoons needed to hoist the barge with the submarine into dock. After the second pontoon is attached the next day, the Giant 4 barge with the Kursk

ap news capsules

clamped underneath will be slowly late Wednesday, and then an explosion. pushed into the dock — the largest the Navy has.

The pontoons will be filled with water and then drained, creating the lifting force to raise the barge and the submarine by about 26 feet for the docking, set for Saturday afternoon.

JERUSALEM (AP) — The dismembered body of a suspected Islamic militant was found Thursday in the West Bank, Palestinian security officials said.

The circumstances of Hani Rawajbeh's death were not immediately clear.

His body was found along a road that is often used by Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers. Residents of the nearby

Doctors said they could not determine whether Rawajbeh, 22, was killed in an explosion or by a missile. Hamas has carried out a series of bombings in Israel. Over the years, a number of Hamas activists have been killed by explosives that went off prematurely.

NATIONAL

NEW YORK (AP) — Democratic mayoral hopefuls Mark Green and Fernando Ferrer made last-minute appeals to voters as they headed into New York City's first mayoral runoff in 24 years, a race that took a drastic shift after the terrorist attacks.

Polls indicated a virtual dead heat between Green, the city's Public Advillage of Tel said they heard shooting vocate, and Ferrer, the Bronx Borough

President. The winner advances to the plunged into the tundra moments after tee planned to vote Thursday on a rouaire media magnate Michael the sole survivor critically injured. Bloomberg in the race to replace popular Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

The two-term Republican has been lauded for his leadership in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center. He flirted briefly with the idea of trying to challenge term-limit laws and remaining in office for a third term, but backed off and said he could stay on to help in the transition.

Many observers believe Ferrer has a slight advantage over Green because polls show his base of Latinos, blacks and members of the health and municipal labor unions are more loyal and better energized than Green supporters.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) -Federal investigators sent teams to the remote corner of southwestern Alaska to search for clues about how a Cessna

November election to take on billion- takeoff, leaving nine people dead and

Skies were clear and the wind was calm when the single-engine commuter plane operated by PenAir crashed Wednesday near Dillingham, about 330 miles southwest of Anchorage.

At least eight passengers were affiliated with the Bristol Bay Native Association, a nonprofit social services agency, said Terry Hoefferle, the association's chief operating officer. The plane was beginning a 75-mile trip to King Salmon when it took a nosedive.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House is expressing initial opposition to Senate legislation that would explicitly allow limited, federally financed stem cell research for the first time.

The Senate Appropriations Commit-

tine spending bill that includes the provision. A subcommittee of that panel approved the overall measure Wednesday.

The language, written by Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., would let President Bush follow through on his proposal to restrict the research to the 64 stem cell lines that he said already exist.

It also would permit him to go further, as long as the embryos used for the research otherwise would be destroyed and permission for their use had been granted by the people whose fertility treatments created them.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Bush would stand by his earlier decision on stem cell research policy. McClellan said the White House prefers a House version of the measure, which makes no change to current law.

The House plans to vote Thursday on its version of the spending bill.



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