

Physics Nobel for groundbreaking work on wonder material

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AP SHARING SMILES: Professor Andre Geim (left) and Professor Konstantin Novoselov, who have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics, seen outside Manchester University, England, on Monday.

A day after winning the Nobel Prize for Medicine, two scientists in Britain struck it “rich” again at Stockholm on Tuesday when Russian-born Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov of Manchester University were named joint winners of this year's Nobel Prize for Physics for their “groundbreaking” work on experiments with graphene, a new form of carbon with immense possibilities.

At 36, Professor Novoselov, a British-Russian citizen, has been the youngest physicist since 1973 to win a Nobel, a committee official said.

Professor Geim (51) is a Dutch citizen. Both started their careers in Russia.

Highlighting the significance of their work, the Prize committee said graphene could be put to a number of practical uses.

“Since it is practically transparent and a good conductor, graphene could be used for producing transparent touchscreens, light panels and maybe even solar cells,” it said.

No Change

Reacting to the news, an unemotional Professor Geim said he “slept well” and his plans for the day would not change.

“In my opinion, there are several categories of Nobel Prize winners. There are those who, after getting the Nobel Prize, stop doing anything for the rest of their lives, which is a big disservice to their community...There is another type of person who thinks that other people think they won the Nobel Prize by accident. So they start working even harder than before,” he said.

About his plans for the day, Professor Geim said: “My plan for today is to go to work and finish up a paper that I didn't finish this week. I just try to muddle on as before.”

Professor Martin Rees, President of Britain's Royal Society, said there could not be a better example of the value of enabling outstanding individuals to pursue “open-ended” research projects.

“The U.K. must sustain our science at a competitive level in a world where talent is mobile and other countries are advancing fast,” he said.

Professor Peter Main, Director of Education and Science at the Institute of Physics, said: “Following yesterday's [Monday's] win for Professor Robert Edwards [for medicine], there could be no clearer sign of just how much the U.K. punches above its international weight in a very competitive scientific world.”

AFP reports:

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences hailed graphene for its glittering potential in computers, home gadgets and transport.

This novel form of carbon comprises a single layer of atoms arranged in a honeycomb-shaped lattice. Just one atom thick, it is the world's thinnest and strongest nano-material, almost transparent and able to conduct electricity and heat.

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