

Health Matters

Subtle brain differences prominent in autistic men

British researchers have identified subtle differences in the brains of adult males with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The subtle brain differences were found in men who at a very young age had severe problems with communication and social interaction, the study showed. "The differences appear to remain even if they have somehow learned to cope with these difficulties in adult life," said Marco Catani from the King's College London. The study revealed that men with ASD had differences in brain connections in the frontal lobe — a part of the brain that is crucial for developing language and social interactive skills, the researchers said. Specifically, these men had altered development of white matter connections in the left side of the brain. White matter consists of large bundles of nerve cells that connect different regions of the brain and enable communication between them. The differences, which connects areas of the brain involved in understanding words and regions related to speech production, were particularly severe in those who had a significant history of 'delayed echolalia' — parrot-like repetition of words or sentences, the researchers explained. ASD was also associated with underdevelopment of white matter, which plays a significant



role in face recognition and emotional processing, the findings revealed. This also correlated with observations of inappropriate use of facial expressions in childhood. ASD affects around one in 100 people in Britain and involves a spectrum of conditions that manifest themselves differently in different people. People with ASD can have varying levels of impairment across three common areas, which might include: deficits in social interactions and reciprocal understanding, repetitive behaviour and narrow interests, and impairment in language and communication, the researchers said. The study, published in the journal Brain, used a novel brain imaging method to identify altered brain connections in people with ASD. The researchers used Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI), a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) technique, to compare networks of white matter in 61 adults with ASD and 61 controls. (Courtesy IANS)

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal supports demands of protesting MCD employees

PTI New Delhi, Jan. 31: Extending support to striking MCD workers demanding wages, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday hoped that "some solution" will emerge after the high court hears the matter next week. "I support demand of protesting MCD employees that they should get their full salaries. I hope some solution will emerge after Tu HC hearing," Kejriwal, currently in Bangalore for naturopathy treatment, said on Twitter. The chief minister also lauded personnel from the state's public works department (PWD) for working the "whole night" to clear garbage and urged AAP functionaries to help the department

men. "I am told PWD people and trucks worked whole nite to clean up garbage. I wd urge all AAP volunteers to help PWD," he said on the micro-blogging site, urging the PWD to "keep it up". The government had on Saturday deployed hundreds of PWD workers to lift garbage from across the city as nearly 60,000 civic sanitation workers continued their indefinite strike demanding payment of dues amid a blame game over the issue between AAP and BJP, which rules the three municipalities. The strike was launched by sanitation workers on January 27, demanding timely salaries and payment of arrears.

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National & International News

Why Arunachal Pradesh matters to India

ET Bureau, Jan. 31: On Monday the Supreme Court will hear the petition of the Congress party challenging the Centre's imposition of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the five Congress-ruled states in Northeast (NE) India that have been on the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) radar since the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Both the assembly and Lok Sabha elections were held simultaneously, although there was a lot of cross-voting.

Result: Voters gave a clear majority to the Congress in the assembly polls (42 out of 60 seats, which later increased to 47) but the BJP's vote share in the Lok Sabha segments was significantly higher at 47.8% against Congress' 43.7%. On the night of Republic Day, the state assembly was once again up for grabs courtesy of the President's approval of a Cabinet recommendation to impose Central rule in Arunachal and keep the legislative assembly in suspended animation. The Cabinet reckoned this had to be done because of a "constitutional breakdown" in the state, as reported by the state's governor Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa. For the Congress, the way ahead is simple: parade 31 MLAs as it claims it still has, provided of course the apex court offers it that option on Monday. That may not be easy, considering that 21 Congress MLAs have 'rebelled'; and five-time MLA Kalikho Pul, the leader of the pack, has a shot at becoming chief minister with the support of the 11 BJP MLAs. The stage may indeed be set for a repeat of 2003 when the BJP briefly ruled Arunachal Pradesh with the help of Congress defectors.

Strategic Importance Arunachal Pradesh may be located in India's easternmost part, too far flung from the nation's collective conscience to figure in drawing room conversations in Lutyens' Delhi or in the politically hyperactive cow belt of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. But as far as the BJP and Congress are concerned, aside from the four big states that go to polls in a couple of months (West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Kerala), Arunachal perhaps today is of the most strategic importance. For starters, as neighbouring Assam, the largest NE state in terms of population, is scheduled to go

for polls in April, the BJP's bid to net Arunachal is loaded with political implication. Though it will clearly be a backdoor entry, if BJP succeeds in conquering Itanagar, the message emanating from the Capital will be clearcut: that the saffron part has dislodged one "corrupt" government in the region, and Assam is next in line. "The governor (Rajkhowa) was appointed with the sole purpose of destabilising and dislodging my government. He converted Raj Bhawan into the state BJP's political headquarters," alleges Nabam Tuki, chief minister of Arunachal till President's rule was imposed. Commenting on the governor's report where it was alleged that a Mithun (a bovine) was slaughtered outside the Raj Bhawan to intimidate the governor, Tuki said: "Yes, there was Mithun slaughter, but it was done at the residence of an ex-BJP MLA. Lies were spread through social media. Also, where is the question of threatening the governor? No one can even throw a stone at the Raj Bhawan which is guarded by Central forces." Tuki adds, dismissing the law and order problems as cited in the governor's report. He also denies his linkage to underground Naga group, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K), as underlined in the governor's report, leaked to a section of the media though the apex court wanted the report in a sealed envelope.

BJP's national spokesman Sudhanshu Trivedi counters that Arunachal witnessed a constitutional breakdown, forcing the Centre to take the route of dislodging the government. The Congress did not have the numbers and that's why it could not convene the assembly session," he says. As many as 11 BJP MLAs and two independents lent support to the 21 rebel Congress MLAs, making it a total of 34 MLAs who opposed the Tuki government. Amid the political tug of war, rebellion and potential for horse-trading, New Delhi can't ignore one harsh reality: Arunachal Pradesh borders three of India's neighbours — Bhutan, China and Myanmar, stretching up to 1,630 km. And this NE state is more important than

many others because China has been persistently staking claim over its entire 83,743 sq km territory even after 53 years of India-China war when the Chinese soldiers briefly occupied parts of its land. Residents in Walong, located in extreme east of India, who brave soldiers of the Kumaon Battalion fought in 1962, can't erase the memories of that war. "The 1962 war still haunts us. But we are cent percent Indians and we don't want to be secondclass citizens of China," Chaitom, an elder in Mechong village of Changwinti circle said, when this correspondent visited the area in November 2014. Also, Arunachal is the only pre-Sikkim Northeast state that has not

witnessed home-grown insurgency (Sikkim was merged into India in 1975), although Naga underground outfits, particularly the NSCN-K have been active in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts, the area adjoining Nagaland. Most Arunachali youth were never attracted to insurgency despite the Northeast region being a hotbed of militancy. Thus, the risk of the youth of Arunachal, who are till date patriots to the core, going astray against a backdrop of political turbulence is a risk that can never be underplayed. And it's not rocket science to understand that China, which claims Arunachal as its own, will find opportunity in the insecurity.

Lanka to host Commonwealth regional human rights seminar tomorrow

ANI Colombo, Jan 31: The Parliament of Sri Lanka has decided to host a three day Commonwealth regional seminar from tomorrow to improve the abilities of parliamentarians to promote and protect human rights in Asia. The seminar reportedly will take place from February 1 to 3 in Colombo. Members of parliament, ministers, and human rights experts from Sri Lanka and other Commonwealth Asia countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Maldives will attend the seminar. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will deliver the keynote address during the opening of the seminar, reports the LankaPage. The Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association (CPA), in collaboration with the CPA Sri Lanka Branch, are jointly convening the seminar for Asia, India and South-East Asia Legislatures and will focus on 'strengthening the role of Parliamentarians in the promotion and protection of human rights'. The Parliamentarians in these three days will consider their relationship with the international human rights system including the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review mechanism. The Asia regional seminar in Sri Lanka will be the fourth in the series and seeks commitment to a practical set of actions as well as support for the establishment of a regional network of parliamentarians dedicated to implementing the declaration.

One killed, seven injured in shooting at Denver motorcycle show

ANI Washington D.C., Jan. 31: A person was killed and around seven were left injured after a shooting and a stabbing broke out at a motorcycle show in Denver. According to CNN, two rival motorcycle clubs were "possibly" involved in the violence at the Colorado Motorcycle Expo. A video taken after the shooting, showed police talking to groups

of men wearing jackets with motorcycle club patches. About 10,000 people were inside the National Western Complex hall when shots were fired. One person was fatally shot and three were wounded by gunfire, while one person was stabbed and three other people suffered injuries probably caused in a fight, but not by weapons. No arrests have been made but people are being questioned.

Contd. from previous issue

History of Manipur as reflected in the socio-cultural ties of hills & plain

Some aspects of homogeneity: In confirmation, their close affinity is still in manifestation in many aspects of the life-style of these people but for professing of Hinduism by the Meiteis which seemed to have pushed apart these homogeneous groups of Meiteis, Nagas and Kukis. Yet, it would be interesting if we can highlight some such life-cultures of affinity among them. (1) **Attention to genealogy:** McCulloch said, "I have before noticed the circumstance of the Koupooes believing themselves to be occupying the sites of villages which once belonged to the southern tribes, and as this belief tallies with the Khongjai idea... the latter had formerly occupied the position now occupied by the Koupooes (Kabuis)... They pay great attention to their genealogy, and profess to know the names of their Chiefs in succession from their leader out of the bowels of the earth..." Similarly, he said of the Meiteis that the attention of these tribes to their genealogy is curious, and the circumstance of "... the Munnipoes preserving in each family a "Mei-hou-rol" or

genealogical tree is a coincidence of custom worthy of notice". Such is an instance of cultural relationship of the people of Manipur without explanation in detail. (2) **Disposal of dead culture:** It needs hardly be overemphasized that when a person dies, the corpse is buried. This culture is prevalent till date since time immemorial without change despite the fact that the Nagas and the Kukis have embraced Christianity these days. This burial tradition among the Meiteis was prevalent till the time of Maharajah Garib Niwaz who ordered that the Meiteis should exhume the bodies of their ancestors which they used to bury formerly inside their compounds. It is well known that upto the advent of Hinduism, the dead were buried, and the chronicles mentioned that Khagamba Maharajah enacted a rule to the effect that the dead were to be buried outside the enclosures of the houses. This was altered during the reign of Garib Niwaz. It is said that he exhumed the bones of his ancestors and cremated them on the bank of Ningtli river. Since then, he ordered his subjects to burn their dead. This change took

place sometime in the year 1724, said Hudson. Regarding the death rites and rituals the Meiteis residing at places like Sekmai, Pheiyeng, Loitangkhunou, Khurkhul, Andro, Leimaram and Kwatha are more or less same as that of the Kukis. The Meiteis of Pheiyeng observed death rites even the same as are prevalent among the Thadou society. The female relatives of the deceased (Chanute) such as own daughters and granddaughters are obliged to kill at least a pig of five wais (one fist) to observe exclusively the family members of the deceased in token expression of sorrow and grief. It includes persons who took part in digging the grave at the burial ground and those who are near and dear ones. The eldest son, though not the heir also has to perform in like manner to pay respect to the departed soul. Offering cooked rice to deceased is also one of the features performed in token expression of sympathy. (4) **Mera Houchongba Festival:** Banned by Garib Niwaz on acceptance of Hinduism on ground of purity and impurity or touchable and untouchable between the hills and the plain, Mera Houchongba

Festival as a common culture among the people of the hills and the plain is one glaring evidence that had been in existence for centuries together before it was forced to abandon. On this occasion all the people from the valley and the hills brought together their offerings to the King all varieties of new arrivals of the year's crops and vegetables including paddy from their fields and made their festivities in the presence of the King and in praise of the Almighty for the abundance of blessings given to them and for a more rich harvests in the years to come. Unfortunately, with the embracing of Hinduism this was discontinued with a decree from the King. It was revived in recent years mainly with a view to bringing about a closer and better relationship and emotional integration among the people living in the hills and the valley. Yet, all the while, such a rich culture has been in vogue among the hill people which have now been officially declared as general holiday on the day of Kut for the Kukis and Luli-Ngai-Ni for the Nagas. (To be contd.....)