

FAQs

Article 244 (A) of the Constitution

Why is it in News?

A national party leader has promised to implement Article 244 (A) of the Constitution to safeguard the interests of the people in Assam's tribal-majority districts.

What is Article 244(A)?

- Article 244(A) allows for the creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam in certain tribal areas.
- Inserted into the Constitution in 1969 by the then government, it also has a provision for a Legislature and a Council of Ministers.

How is it different from the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution?

- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution — Articles 244(2) and 275(1) — is a special provision that allows for greater political autonomy and decentralized governance.
- It is applicable to certain tribal areas of the Northeast through autonomous councils that are administered by elected representatives.
- Article 244(A) accounts for more autonomous powers to tribal areas.
- In Autonomous Councils under the Sixth Schedule, they do not have jurisdiction of law and order.

How did the demand arise?

- In the 1950s, a demand for a separate hill state arose around certain sections of the tribal population of undivided Assam.
- In 1960, various political parties of the hill areas merged to form the All Party Hill Leaders Conference, demanding a separate state.
- After prolonged agitations, Meghalaya gained statehood in 1972.
- The leaders of the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills were also part of this movement. They were given the option to stay in Assam or join Meghalaya.
- They stayed back as the then government promised more powers, including Article 244 (A). Since then, there has been a demand for its implementation.
- In the 1980s, this demand took the form of a movement with a number of Karbi groups resorting to violence. It soon became an armed separatist insurgency demanding full statehood.