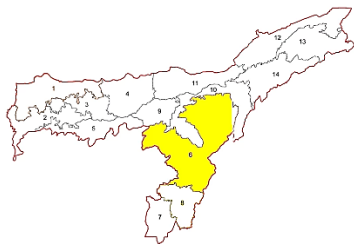


Polity & Constitution

Autonomy Issue in Assam: Article 244(A)

Context: In the tribal-majority Diphu Lok Sabha constituency of Assam, the upcoming elections on April 26, 2024, have ignited discussions around the implementation of Article 244(A) of the Indian Constitution.

- ❖ This constitutional provision holds significant promise for the region, offering the potential for the establishment of an autonomous state within Assam, with a focus on granting greater autonomy to tribal areas.



Diphu Constituency Profile

- ❖ Diphu, designated for Scheduled Tribes (STs), stands out as the most sparsely populated among Assam's 14 Lok Sabha seats, boasting a modest electorate of just 8.9 lakh voters.

- ❖ Governed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the region is under the jurisdiction of two autonomous councils – the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.
- ❖ This constituency serves as the residence for a diverse array of communities, encompassing Karbi, Dimasa, Hmar, Kuki, Rengma Naga, Zeme Naga, Bodo, Garo, Assamese, and Gorkha populations, among others.

Economy

Curbs on Kotak Bank by RBI

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed Kotak Mahindra Bank to halt the onboarding of new customers through online and mobile banking channels with immediate effect.

- ❖ This action is in accordance with Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, which grants the RBI the authority to issue directives to banks to safeguard the interests of depositors and the bank itself.



Impact on Customer Service

- ❖ The RBI's decision comes in response to persistent issues with Kotak Mahindra Bank's IT infrastructure and risk management framework.
- ❖ Over the past two years, the bank's Core Banking System (CBS) and online and digital banking channels have experienced frequent and significant outages, leading to substantial inconvenience for customers.

Report & Indices

Global Report on Food Crisis (GRFC): 2024

Context: The 2024 Global Report on Food Crisis (GRFC) unveils alarming statistics regarding acute hunger and malnutrition across the globe. With nearly 282 million individuals in 59 countries and territories experiencing high levels of acute hunger in 2023, the report underscores the urgent need for decisive action to address this crisis.

Key Findings

- ❖ **Magnitude of Acute Malnutrition:** The report highlights that 36 million children under 5 years of age are acutely malnourished across 32 countries, indicating a dire situation for the most vulnerable demographic.
- ❖ **Worsening Acute Malnutrition:** Acute malnutrition exacerbated in 2023, particularly among displaced populations, emphasizing the critical need for targeted interventions to alleviate suffering.
- ❖ **Consistent Trends:** Notably, 36 countries have consistently appeared in GRFC analyses since 2016, representing 80% of the world's most hunger-stricken regions, underscoring the persistent nature of this crisis.

About the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC)

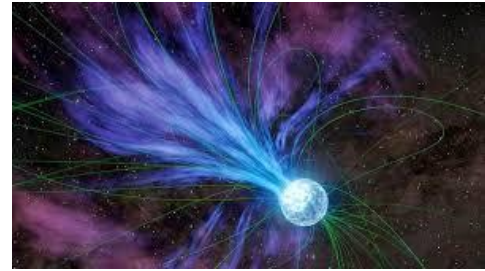
- ❖ The Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) is an annual publication produced by the Food Security Information Network and launched by the Global Network Against Food Crises.
- ❖ This comprehensive report highlights acute food insecurity and malnutrition on a global scale, identifying main drivers such as conflict, extreme weather events, and economic shocks.
- ❖ Moreover, it advocates for long-term investments aimed at transforming food systems to ensure sustainable solutions to the ongoing crisis.

Science & Technology

Astronomers Detect Rare Giant Flare from Magnetar

Context: Scientists have made a groundbreaking discovery, detecting an extraordinary event in the far reaches of the cosmos: a rare giant flare emitted by a magnetar.

- ❖ This celestial phenomenon, observed in the Messier 82 (M82) galaxy, commonly known as the “Cigar Galaxy,” marks the furthest-known instance of such an occurrence.



Understanding Magnetars and Giant Flares

- ❖ Magnetars, a distinct class of neutron stars, are characterized by their immensely potent magnetic fields, the most formidable ever recorded in the universe. Periodically, these enigmatic celestial bodies unleash colossal eruptions of gamma rays known as giant flares. These phenomena stand as the most potent non-destructive energy releases observed in the cosmos to date.
- ❖ The detection of this rare giant flare in the M82 galaxy adds to the limited catalog of confirmed occurrences. Prior to this discovery,

only two giant flares had been definitively observed in our own Milky Way galaxy, occurring in 2004 and 1998, respectively. Additionally, one such event was documented in the neighboring Large Magellanic Cloud back in 1979.

The Genesis of Magnetars

- ❖ Magnetars take shape through the cataclysmic aftermath of massive stars, typically those with a mass at least eight times greater than that of our Sun.
- ❖ As these colossal stars deplete their nuclear fuel and succumb to gravitational collapse, they unleash a supernova explosion. The remnants of this explosive demise coalesce into the compact form of a neutron star.
- ❖ Despite their diminutive size — with a diameter not exceeding 12 miles (20 km) — these neutron stars possess a mass equivalent to 1-2 solar masses.

International News

China's Space Endeavors: Shenzhou-18 Mission and Beyond

Context: China recently initiated the Shenzhou-18 spacecraft's journey, ferrying a three-person crew to its orbiting Tiangong space station.

- ❖ This mission marks a pivotal step in China's ambitious space program, geared towards achieving lunar exploration goals by 2030.



Building Their Space Station

- ❖ In response to exclusion from the International Space Station (ISS), largely due to U.S. concerns over military involvement, China forged ahead with its own space station initiative.
- ❖ The Tiangong space station is primed for two cargo spacecraft missions and two manned spaceflight missions in 2024.

Milestones in Chinese Space Exploration

China's space exploration narrative unfolds with its inaugural crewed space mission in 2003, making it the third nation, following the former Soviet Union and the U.S., to independently send an astronaut into space. Since then, China has celebrated remarkable achievements, including:

- ❖ *Successfully retrieving lunar surface samples after decades*
- ❖ *Successfully deploying a rover to the comparatively uncharted far side of the moon*



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