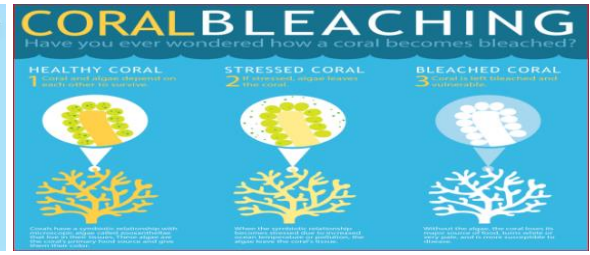


The Great Barrier Reef's Recovery

❖ Context

- The highest levels of coral cover, within the past 36 years, have been recorded in the northern and central parts of Australia's Great Barrier Reef (GBR).



❖ What are Coral Reefs?

- Corals are marine invertebrates or animals which do not possess a spine.
- They are the largest living structures on the planet.
- Each coral is called a polyp and thousands of such polyps live together to form a colony, which grow when polyps multiply to make copies of themselves.
- Corals share a symbiotic relationship with single-celled algae called zooxanthellae.
- The algae prepares food for corals through photosynthesis and also gives them their vibrant colouration.
- Corals are of two types - hard corals and soft corals.
- **Hard corals** extract calcium carbonate from seawater to build hard, white coral exoskeletons. Hard corals are in a way the engineers of reef ecosystems and measuring the extent of hard coral is a widely-accepted metric for measuring the condition of coral reefs.
- **Soft corals** attach themselves to such skeletons and older skeletons built by their ancestors. Soft corals also add their own skeletons to the hard structure over the years. These growing multiplying structures gradually form coral reefs.

❖ Great Barrier Reef

- Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest reef system stretching across 2,300 km and having nearly 3,000 individual reefs.

- It hosts 400 different types of coral, gives shelter to 1,500 species of fish and 4,000 types of mollusc.
- In Australia, the Barrier Reef, in pre-COVID times, generated \$4.6 billion annually through tourism and employed over 60,000 people including divers and guides.

❖ Coral Bleaching

- When exposed to conditions like heat stress, pollution, or high levels of ocean acidity, the zooxanthellae start producing reactive oxygen species not beneficial to the corals.
- So, the corals kick out the colour-giving algae from their polyps, exposing their pale white exoskeleton and leading to coral starvation as corals cannot produce their own food.
- Bleached corals can survive depending on the levels of bleaching and the recovery of sea temperatures to normal levels.
- Severe bleaching and prolonged stress in the external environment can lead to coral death.

❖ Significance

- Coral reefs support over **25% of marine biodiversity** even as they take up only 1% of the seafloor.
- The marine life supported by reefs further fuels global fishing industries.
- Coral reef systems generate \$2.7 trillion in annual economic value through goods & service trade & tourism.

Electricity Amendment Bill

❖ Context

- Power minister recently introduced The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in the Lok Sabha.



❖ Key Highlights

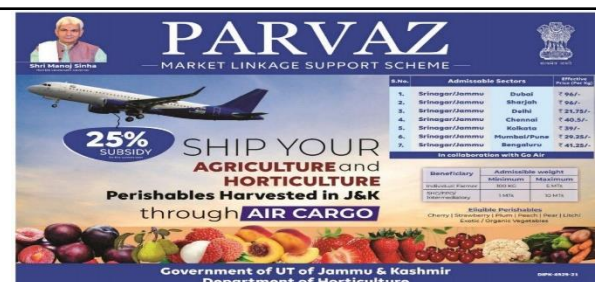
- The Bill is aimed at allowing the privatisation of electricity on the line of communication.
- The bill seeks to amend **section 42** of the Electricity Act to facilitate non-discriminatory open access to the distribution network of a distribution licensee.
- As a result, discoms will be able to use power distribution network of other licensees.
- The bill also provides for insertion of section **60A** aimed at enabling management of power purchase and cross-subsidy in case of multiple distribution licensees in the same area of supply.

- It also seeks to amend section 14 of the Act to facilitate usage of distribution networks by all licensees under provisions of non-discriminatory open access with the objective of :
 - enabling competition,
 - enhancing efficiency of distribution licensees for improving services
 - and ensuring sustainability of the power sector.
- If the bill is passed in both the houses, customers will have the option to choose electricity supplier just like one can choose for telephone, mobile and internet services.

PARVAZ Scheme

❖ Context

- The scheme was launched by the Government with an aim to create market linkage support for the shipment of Agriculture and Horticulture perishables being harvested in Jammu and Kashmir through Air Cargo.



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❖ Key Highlights

- The innovative Market Linkage scheme - PARVAZ possesses tremendous potential for uplifting the economic conditions of the farmers across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Under the scheme, **25 per cent** subsidy on freight charges is given for carrying perishable fruits harvested in Jammu and Kashmir for shipment through Air Cargo.
- The subsidy is provided to farmers through DBT mode.

- **Jammu & Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC)**, the implementing agency of the scheme.
- This scheme tends to benefit the farmers by doubling their income thereby ensuring their economic and social welfare,
- Through the scheme the farmers will get the price of their produce directly in their bank account with no intermediary in between.

Rising Extreme Weather Events

❖ Context

- India Meteorological Department Director General has said that climate change has hampered the ability of forecasting agencies to accurately predict severe events.



❖ Emerging Trends Due to Climate Change

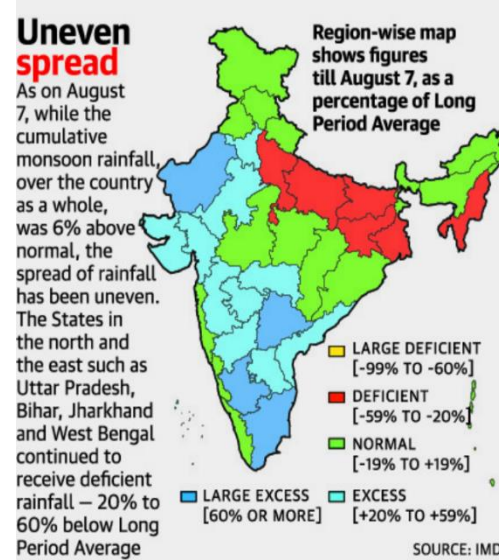
- Climate change has increased the **instability** in the atmosphere, leading to an increase in convective activity - thunderstorms, lightning and heavy rainfall.
- The severity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea is also increasing.
- Frequency of **mini-cloud bursts (five cm or more rainfall in an hour)** is increasing in the Himalayas.
- The number of heavy rainfall events had increased and that of light rainfall events had decreased.
- Large-scale variations are observed in case of monsoonal rainfall.
- Parts of north, east and northeast India show a decrease in rainfall, while some areas in the west, such as west Rajasthan, show an increase.

❖ Reason Behind Intense Rainfall

- Climate change has increased the **surface air temperature**, which in turn has increased the **evaporation rate**.
- Since warmer air holds more moisture, it leads to intense rainfall.

❖ Measures Planned to Improve Prediction

- The IMD is bolstering its observational network with the **augmentation of radars**, automatic weather stations and rain gauges and satellites to improve predictability.



- Radars are preferred because they have a higher resolution and can provide observations every 10 minutes.

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) also plans to upgrade its **high-performance computing system** - from a capacity of 10 petaflops currently to 30 petaflops in the next two years.

- **The lower the range of a weather model, the higher its resolution and the greater the precision.**
- At present, the IMD-MoES weather modelling system has a resolution of 12 kms. The target is to make it 6 kms.

Financial Stability Board

❖ Context

- The board recently said that it is working to ensure that crypto-assets are subject to robust regulation and supervision.



❖ About the Board

- It is an **international body** established after the G20 London summit in **April 2009** as a successor to the Financial Stability Forum (FSF). The board includes all G20 major economies, FSF members, and the European Commission.
- Hosted and funded by the **Bank for International Settlements**, the board is based in **Basel, Switzerland**.
- It is established as a **not-for-profit association** under Swiss law.
- It promotes international financial stability by coordinating national financial authorities and international standard-setting bodies.

❖ Structure

- It comprises the : **Plenary** as the sole decision-making body
 - **Steering Committee** to take forward operational work in between Plenary meetings
 - **Three Standing Committees**
- Its **decisions are not legally binding** on its members.

❖ India & FSB

- India is an active member having **three seats** in its Plenary represented by : (1) Secretary (Economic Affairs), (2) Deputy Governor (RBI), (3) Chairman (SEBI).
- The **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) secretariat** in the **Department of Economic Affairs** coordinates with various financial sector regulators and other relevant agencies to represent India's views with FSB.

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Heal in India Initiative

❖ Context

- The Prime Minister is likely to announce the initiative on August 15, 2022.

❖ Key Highlights

- The initiative aims to position India as a **global hub for medical and wellness tourism**.
- The **Health Ministry** is collaborating with Tourism, Ayush, Civil Aviation ministries, Ministry of External Affairs, hospitals & other stakeholders to build a roadmap to connect overseas patients with healthcare facilities in India.
- A nodal agency - **Medical Value Travel Council** - co-chaired by the health and tourism ministries has been formed to create an institutional framework for streamlined integration of all stakeholders.
- The government has identified **44 countries** from where a large number of people visit India for medical purposes. These are predominantly African, Latin American, SAARC and Gulf countries.
- The **10 identified airports** - Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam, Kochi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Guwahati - see higher footfalls of patients from these 44 countries.

- Interpreters and special desks at 10 airports, a multilingual portal and simplified visa norms are going to be the highlights of the initiative.
- The Health Ministry, in collaboration with the National Health Authority, has developed a **multi-lingual portal** which would be a one-stop shop for services provided by medical travel facilitators and hospitals.
- There will also be a mechanism to track patient journey by creating a **unique health ID under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission framework** and monitor service delivery in identified health facilities in India.
- Bangladesh, Iraq, Maldives, Afghanistan, Oman, Yemen, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria & Tanzania account for about 88% of the total international patients visiting India. **Bangladesh alone accounts for 54% of the total medical tourists. Medical treatment in India is 65 to 90% cheaper than in the USA.**

Economic Census

❖ Context

- The Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance remarked over the growing delay in releasing the findings of Economic Census (EC).



Economic Census	Year
First Economic Census	1977
Second Economic Census	1980
Third Economic Census	1990
Fourth Economic Census	1998
Fifth Economic Census	2005
Sixth Economic Census	2013
Seventh Economic Census	2019

❖ Key Highlights

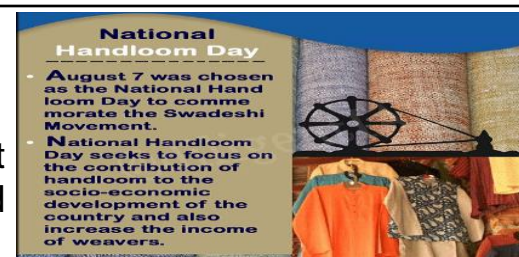
- The Seventh Economic Census being conducted by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** was launched in 2019.
- MoSPI has partnered with **CSC e-Governance Services India Limited**, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology as the implementing agency.
- It is a critical compendium of **formal and informal non-farm enterprises** operating across the country.
- It collects data from **household-based commercial establishments**.

- Information on the number of enterprises, number of persons engaged, ownership status, registration, annual turnover, branches, and sources of finance are collected.
- **Basic household details** are collected from households having no enterprise.
- Conducted every 5 years, District Collectors head the **District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC)**.
- The latest EC is expected to capture the changes in India's economic landscape since the implementation of policy shifts such as demonetisation, the Goods and Services Tax and paring of corporate taxes.

National Handloom Day

❖ Context

- Every year, August 7 is observed as the National Handloom Day in India to highlight the contribution of the handloom industry in the socio-economic development and create awareness about the sector.



❖ History

- The National Handloom Day is celebrated on August 7 as it was the same day the Swadeshi Movement was birthed.
- The government of India, on August 7, 2015, inaugurated and celebrated the **National Handloom Day for the 1st time in Chennai**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The handloom sector is one of the largest economic sectors in the country. The products manufactured by the weaving community of the sector are popular across the world.

- The National Handloom Day is celebrated across the country under the aegis of the **Ministry of Textiles**. Apart from being a significant employment source in rural areas, the handloom sector is also a key player in the field of **women empowerment** as roughly 70% of all weavers and allied workers are women. The Indian handloom sector exports its products to more than 20 countries across the globe, including the USA, the UK, Germany, France, & South Africa.

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News in Between the Lines

Gajapayana



❖ Context

- The stately march, Gajapayana, of the first batch of elephants began from **Nagahole Tiger Reserve** to **Mysuru** to participate in the Mysuru Dasara festival.

❖ About Mysore Dasara

- Mysuru Dasara is the **state festival of Karnataka**, commonly called 'Nadahabba'.
- The 10-day festival is celebrated during Navratri which reaches a grand finale on Vijayadashmi.
- Mysuru was once called 'Mahishur,' as it is believed to be the place where Goddess Chamundeshwari (a form of Durga) killed the buffalo-headed demon, Mahishasura.

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)



❖ Context

- India recently formally commenced cooperation with Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

❖ Key Highlights

- CMF is a **34-nation** grouping **naval partnership** to promote security, stability & prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters.



- Established in **2001**, headquartered in **Manama, Bahrain**, it is commanded by a **U.S. Navy Vice Admiral**.
- It upholds the **Rules-Based International Order (R BIO)** by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas.
- It comprises three task forces: CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism), CTF 151 (counter piracy) and CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation).

- Pakistan is a full member of CMF.
- At the India-U.S. 2+2 in April, 2022 India had announced that it would join the CMF as an **Associate Partner**.
- The Indian Navy has a Liaison Officer posted in the **U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in Bahrain** who will also function as the point person for cooperation with the CMF.
- Its members are not bound by either a political or military mandate.

India ki Udan Initiative



❖ Context

- Union Culture Ministry and Google launched 'India Ki Udaan' initiative, which will capture the milestones the country has achieved in its 75year journey since independence.

❖ Key Highlights

- The project which has been launched in collaboration with Search Giant Google, the initiative is aimed at celebrating India's achievements through an online repository of arts and cultural artifacts.
- The initiative is being organized as part of the Government's year-long 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- The online project which is hosted on Google's Arts and Culture Website, provides informative content on key events and iconic moments from last 75 years during which India has grown in status and stature across the globe.
- The central theme of the India Ki Udaan project is '**the unwavering and undying spirit of India over these past 75 years**'.

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