

**31– 03 – 2024**

- News: Great Barrier Reef (GBR)
- Recent aerial surveys conducted by Australian authorities confirm widespread coral bleaching across two-thirds of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR), signalling a dire threat exacerbated by climate change. Urgent action is needed to mitigate the impacts and protect this vital marine ecosystem.

## **Great Barrier Reef**

- Great Barrier Reef is **the world's most extensive and spectacular coral reef ecosystem composed of over 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands.**
- The reef is located in the **Coral Sea (North-East Coast), off the coast of Queensland, Australia.**
- It can be **seen from outer space and is the world's biggest single structure made by living organisms.**
- This reef structure is composed of and built by billions of tiny organisms, known as coral polyps.
- They are **made up of genetically identical organisms called polyps, which are tiny, soft-bodied organisms.** At their base is a hard, protective limestone skeleton called a calicle, which forms the structure of coral reefs.

- These polyps have microscopic algae called zooxanthellae living within their tissues. The corals and algae have a mutualistic (symbiotic) relationship.
- It was **selected as a World Heritage Site in 1981**.