

VAID'S  
**Estd :1988**

**Daily Current Affairs – 2020**

**(2<sup>nd</sup> Nov)**

**Resources: The Hindu / PIB**

**Topic: For Prelims and Mains**

### **The Future of Earth Report 2020 :**

Why in News?

Recently the South Asia Future Earth Regional Office, Divecha Centre for Climate Change, Indian Institute of Science released “The Future of Earth, 2020” report

**Aim:** The report was prepared with the **aim of reducing carbon footprint and halting global warming below 2 degree Celsius by 2050.**

#### **Key observations**

**The five global risks identified by the report are:**

- Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation

- Extreme weather events
- Major biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
- Food crises and
- Water crises

**The interrelation of risk factors:** It mentions that **extreme heat waves can accelerate global warming by releasing large amounts of stored carbon** from affected ecosystems, and at the same time **intensify water crises and/ or food scarcity**.

- **The loss of biodiversity:** **The loss of biodiversity** also weakens the capacity of natural and agricultural systems to cope with climate extremes, increasing vulnerability to food crises
- **Warmest years:** The report also states that during 2019, the concentration of **carbon dioxide** in the atmosphere reached more than 415 ppm, and the **five years from 2014 to 2018** were the warmest recorded over land and ocean since 1880.
- **Threatened species:** According to the report, humans have now “significantly altered” **75% of our planet’s land area**; about a quarter of species in assessed plant and animal groups are threatened, it mentions that in 2018, the world’s last male northern white rhino died in his Kenyan enclosure, while the Brazilian blue parrot, Spix’s Macaw, was declared extinct in the wild.
- **Food Production: Strains on food production** are expected to increase, as a result of various forces including climate change, biodiversity loss, and a global population on the rise

- **Digital Platforms/Social Media:** The flow of information in the world is changing, as today, around half of the planet's 7.6 billion people are online, deeply influenced by social media, search **engines and e-commerce algorithms**.
- These digital platforms tend to favor the spread of information designed to engage with emotion over reason, can cause the propagation of "**fake news**", and can lead to social harms like erosion of trust in vaccines

### **A brief note on South Asia Future Earth Regional Office**

- South Asia Regional Office of Future Earth is hosted by the Divecha Centre for Climate Change, **Bengaluru, India**.
- It seeks to promote sustainability and climate research and adapt and spread the vision of Future Earth in the region.
- Future Earth was officially announced in June 2012 at the UN Conference on **Sustainable Development (Rio+20)**, to be created as a global initiative to strengthen the interface between policy and science.
- Future Earth became fully operational with a permanent Secretariat at the end of 2015.
- A **South Asian Regional Office of Future Earth** was convened in Bangalore, south India, in July 2016.
- The new Regional Office for South Asia has a domain that spans over the countries of the **South Asian Association** for Regional Cooperation, **Myanmar and a few Indian Ocean island nations**.

## India's top trading Partner :

**Why in News ?** As per the data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the **USA remained India's top trading partner for the second consecutive fiscal year in 2019-20.**

- This indicates **increasing economic ties** between the two countries.

### Key Points

#### • **Trade with the USA:**

In 2019-20, the bilateral trade between the USA and India stood at USD 88.75 billion as against USD 87.96 billion in 2018-19.

The USA is one of the few countries with which **India has a trade surplus.**

- India's trade surplus with the USA increased to USD 17.42 billion in 2019-20 from USD 16.86 billion in 2018-19.
- In 2018-19, the **USA surpassed China** to become India's top trading partner.

#### **Trade with China:**

- The bilateral trade between India and China has **dipped** to USD 81.87 billion in 2019-20 from USD 87.08 billion in 2018-19.
- **Trade deficit** between the two neighbours has declined to USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 from USD 53.57 billion in the previous fiscal.
- **China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18.**
  - Before China, **the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** was the country's largest trading nation.
  - Further, India is considering certain steps like framing technical regulations and quality control orders for host of

items with a view to cut import dependence on China and boost domestic manufacturing.

Recently, **India banned 59 Chinese apps** and made **government approval mandatory for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from neighbouring countries.**

- The app ban decision came amid **tensions on the border.**

### Way Forward for the USA and India:

There is a huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries on account of **increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.**

- Because of the anti-China sentiment, several USA companies are exploring new suppliers in countries like India to cut dependence on **China** and if this happens, then it will greatly help India to **boost exports to the USA.**
- **Presence of Indian diaspora** in the USA is one of the main reasons for increasing bilateral trade. A **balanced trade** deal can further boost the economic ties.
- India and the USA are negotiating a limited trade pact with a view to iron out differences at trade front and boost commercial ties.
- However, India should be a bit cautious while negotiating the pact with the USA in areas such as **agriculture, dairy and issues related to intellectual property rights.**
- Recently, the USA administration has **extended the ban on immigrant and non-immigrant visas** till the end of

2020.

- **India's IT services exports to the USA**, which depends significantly on the **H-1B visa**, has been an **important** constituent element of **bilateral economic trade**.

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**Topic: For Prelims and Mains**

**SPICe+ :**

**Why in News?** Recently Ministry of Corporate Affairs deployed a new Web Form christened 'SPICe+', replacing the existing SPICe form.

- The SPICe stands as Simplified Proforma for Incorporating a Company Electronically.

### **About SPICe :**

It is an application form for incorporating/registering a company with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

- The initiative is a part of India's effort to improve the Ease of Doing Business (EODB).

SPICe+ would offer 10 services by **3 Central Govt Ministries & Departments.**

- **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**

- Ministry of Labour & Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance)

- One State Govt. (Maharashtra)

**Ten services are:**

- Name reservation, incorporation of a new company, applying for Director Identification Number (DIN) allotment, PAN, TAN, EPFO, ESIC, Profession Tax (Maharashtra), Opening a **Bank Account and GST Identification Number (GSTIN).**

- It would be applicable for all new company incorporations.

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**FACTS FOR PRELIMS**

**Barn Owls (Tyto alba):**

The barn owl is the most widespread **land bird species** in the world, occurring in every continent except Antarctica. They are one of the most widespread owls in the Indian Subcontinent.

- These owls are medium-sized with long legs and wings and have a relatively shorter tail when compared to other similar sized owls.

- Barn Owl exhibits dark eyes, and a distinct heart-shaped facial disc.
- This owl doesn't have the characteristic 'woo-woo-woo' hoot of owls and utters a screechy '**shreeeeeeeee**' to protect its territory.

**IUCN status- Least Concern.**

The Lakshadweep Administration had embarked on the 'Pilot project on **Biological Control of Rodents** (Rats) by Using Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) in **Kavaratti Island**'.

