# Prelim Bits 10-09-2019

## African Swine Fever (ASF)

- An **ASF** outbreak has been sweeping through swine populations in **China**, leading to massive mass cullings.
- This subsequently increased the price of the country's favourite protein.
- **ASF** is a highly contagious and fatal animal disease that infects domestic and wild pigs.
- It is a severe 'viral disease' of pigs that can spread very rapidly in pig herds.
- The disease occurs in many African countries, outbreaks have also occurred in Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia and China.
- **ASF** virus infects the herds in a number of ways,
    1. Often through the feeding of uncooked/undercooked contaminated food.
    2. Through the bites of soft-bodied ticks, lice and flies.
    3. Through inoculation with contaminated syringes and use of contaminated surgical equipment.
- The virus is then easily spread between pigs by,
    1. Direct contact with an infected animal,
    2. From its body fluids (nasal, oral, feces, blood) or
    3. Indirectly from contact with contaminated objects.
    4. Some species of 'ticks' (vector) can transmit the virus.
    5. Blood sucking flies or insects may possibly spread the virus between pigs.
- The fever has no cure, no approved vaccine, the only way to stop it spreading is by culling the animals.
    1. So over 5 million animals have been culled in China since August 2018.
    2. Philippines, world's $7^{th}$ largest pork importer and $10^{th}$ largest pork consumer culled more than 7,000 pigs.
- **ASF** is not a threat to human beings since it only spreads from animals to other animals.
- According to **FAO** of **UN, ASF** affected countries includes, China, Vietnam, Mongolia, Cambodia, North Korea, Laos, and Myanmar, The Philippines.
- It affected small farmers in China who do not have the resources to protect their pigs from the disease.

- China has over 2.6 crore pig farmers, half of its production of pork is undertaken by small-scale farmers.
- Pork is also a culturally significant meat for the Chinese people, symbolic of a family's well-being.

## Eradicating Malaria by 2050

- A report in 'The Lancet' concludes that it is possible to eradicate malaria as early as 2050 or within a generation.
- It requires the right strategies and sufficient funding.
- Since 2000, global malaria incidence and death rates declined by 36% and 60%, respectively.
- Today, more than half of the world's countries are malaria-free.
- However, Malaria cases are rising in 55 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
    1. Over 200 million cases of malaria reported each year, claiming nearly half a million lives.
    2. Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo accounts for 36 % of global cases.
- Analyses indicate that socioeconomic and environmental trends, together with improved coverage of malaria interventions, will helps to eradicate malaria as early as 2050.
- To achieve eradication by 2050, the report identifies 3 ways to accelerate the decline in malaria cases,
    1. The world must improve implementation of malaria control programnes.
    2. The world must develop and roll out innovative new tools to overcome the biological challenges to eradication.
    3. Malaria-endemic countries and donors must provide the financial investment needed.

## Project Bal Basera

- 'Bal Basera' or a 'Creche' has been inaugurated for the welfare of Children of Construction Workers deployed at AIIMS Rishikesh.
- Project is being executed by 'Central Public Works Department' (**CPWD**), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
- **CPWD** has signed an MoU with **CPWD OWA** (Officers' Wives Association), which shall run Bal Basera.
- The Creche shall accommodate about 35 Children.
- **CPWD OWA**, a socio cultural organization, is actively involved in the social welfare activities of weaker sections of society.

- It is providing monetary help to the families of CPWD employees in distress.
- It manages a large number of Bal Baseras and organizing health camps at construction sites, a day care centre.

## Central Public Works Department (CPWD)

- **CPWD** is a premier Central Government authority in charge of public sector works, came into existence in 1854.
- It fucctions under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It is the prime engineering department of Government of India
- Its specifications and manuals are followed by local public works departments and engineering wing of other departments.
- It deals with buildings, roads, bridges, complicated structures like stadiums, laboratories, bunkers, border fencing etc.
- It has now grown into a comprehensive construction management department.
- It provides services from project concept to completion and maintenance management.

## COP14 of UNCCD

- India takes over COP Presidency of **UNCCD** from China for next two years.
- Through hosting COP 14, India will highlight its leadership in navigating the land management agenda at global level.
- It will also provide a stage to mainstream sustainable land management in country's national development policies.
- The key outcomes of COP 14 will facilitate in delivering convergence and synergies among the existing programmes in the field of agriculture, forestry, land, water management and poverty alleviation.
- It will cater the need to achieve the SDGs and focused vision of of Doubling the Farmer's Income by 2022.
- The Conference is being attended by delegates from 197 parties comprising of,

    1. Scientists and representatives of national and local governments.
    2. Global business leaders, NGOs, gender-based organisations, youth groups, journalists, and faith and community groups.
    3. They will share their expertise and give an overview to achieve their goals at the Conference.

- The objective of the COP 14, accompanied with 'Committee on Science and Technology' (CST 14) and Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 18) is to,

1. Discuss on various issues of land such as sustainable land management, reversing land degradation, mitigating drought.
2. Addressing sand and dust storms, linkages with gender, tenure, etc. and
3. To guide the Convention as global and national circumstances needs change.

## United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

- **UNCCD** was adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and ratified by 196 countries & European Union.
- India ratified the UNCCD Convention on  December 1996.
- **UNCCD** called as “Mother convention” along with other 2 Conventions emerged at 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The other 2 are,
    1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) and
    2. Convention on Biological Diversity (**CBD**).
- It is committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.

**Source: PIB,  The  Indian Express**

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering