

**01 – 02 – 2022**

**News:** Second wave did not deter job formalisation

- Data from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) suggested that not only had formalisation of jobs continued through the second wave of the COVID19 pandemic, but the adverse impact on formalisation was also lower than in the first wave.

## **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is a government organization that manages provident fund and pension accounts of member employees and implements the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 which is applicable to whole of India.
- The Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 provides for the institution of provident funds for employees in factories and other establishments.
- It is administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India.
- It is one of the World's largest Social Security Organisations in terms of clientele and the volume of financial transactions undertaken.

**News:** Burkina Faso suspended from AU following coup

- The African Union recently suspended Burkina Faso a week after the volatile country suffered its latest coup, as envoys from West Africa and the UN headed for talks with the new junta.

## **African Union**

- African Union is the **political continental union consisting of 55 countries of Africa, except various territories of European possessions** located in Africa which **replaced Organisation of African Unity (OAU)**.
- AU was announced in the **Sirte Declaration** in Sirte, Libya on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1999.
- Founded in 26<sup>th</sup> May 2001 in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** & its secretariat is located there.
- Most important decisions are made by **Assembly of AU, a semi-annual meeting of Heads of State and Government of its members**.
- 12th Extra-Ordinary Summit of African Union saw **54/55 members (except Eritrea) signing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)**. AfCFTA seeks to create a single continental market for goods & services.
- It establishes the **largest free trade agreement since the creation of WTO**.

- Recently, India has extended \$15 million financial support to Niger as a support for organizing AU Summit.
- **Membership of Male has been suspended** following the military coup in the state.

## **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a **free trade area, outlined in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement among African Union nations.**
- AfCFTA is the **largest in the world in terms of participating countries** since the formation of the World Trade Organization.
- The agreement was brokered by the African Union (AU) and was signed on by 44 of its 55 member states in Kigali, Rwanda in 2018. To date, the **Agreement has been signed by 54 out of 55 member States.**
- **Accra, Ghana serves as the Secretariat** of AFCFTA.
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) **forecasts that the simplification of border controls and the reduction in duties to AfCFTA will boost intra-regional trade by 52 percent in five years.**

## News: World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day

- Neglected tropical disease day is observed every year on 30<sup>th</sup> January. It was declared in the 74<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (2021).

## **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)**

- Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a group of **infections that are most common among marginalised communities in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas**. They are caused by a variety of pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms.
- NTDs are especially **common in tropical areas** where people do not have access to clean water or safe ways to dispose of human waste.
- These diseases **generally receive less funding for research and treatment** than malaises like tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria.
- Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation, scabies, yaws, trachoma, Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease etc.
- They are **preventable and treatable**. However, these diseases - and their **intricate interrelationships with poverty and ecological systems** - continue to cause devastating health, social and economic consequences.
- There are **20 NTDs that impact over 1.7 billion people worldwide**.

- India carries the largest burden of **at least 11 of these diseases**, with parasitic illnesses like kala-azar and lymphatic filariasis affecting millions of people throughout the country – often the poorest and most vulnerable.

### **Indian Initiatives to Eliminate NTDs**

- The **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF)** was launched in 2018, as part of **intensifying efforts towards the elimination of NTDs**.
- A **World Health Organisation – supported regional alliance** established by the governments of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in 2005 to expedite early diagnosis and treatment of the most vulnerable populations and improve disease surveillance and control of sandfly populations (Kala-azar).
- India has already eliminated several other NTDs, including guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.

### **London Declaration on NTDs**

- London Declaration on NTDs **was adopted on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 to recognise the global burden of NTDs**.

- Officials from the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, representatives from leading global pharmaceutical companies as well as representatives of several national governments met at London's Royal College of physicians to pledge to end the diseases.