

World Leprosy Day, 2022

January 31, 2022

In news- World Leprosy Day (WLD) is **celebrated on the last Sunday of January**. In 2022, World Leprosy Day was celebrated on 30th January.

About World Leprosy Day-

- It seeks to celebrate people who have experienced leprosy, raise awareness of the disease, and call for an end to leprosy-related stigma and discrimination.
- **The day was first initiated in 1954 by French Philanthropist Raoul Follereau who made people know about this ancient disease.**
- This date was chosen by him as a **tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.**
- The **theme of World Leprosy Day 2022** is *'United for Dignity'*.
- The two main objectives of this day are treating people equally affected by leprosy and by educating people about the disease and the misconceptions related to it.

About leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease)-

- It is an infection **caused by slow-growing bacteria called Mycobacterium leprae, an acid-fast, rod-shaped bacillus.**
- It is an age-old disease, described in the literature of ancient civilizations.
- It can affect the nerves, skin, eyes, and lining of the nose (nasal mucosa).
- Symptoms include light-coloured or red skin patches with reduced sensation, numbness and weakness in hands and feet.
- With early diagnosis and 6-12 months of multi-drug therapy, the disease can be cured.

- Although leprosy was managed differently in the past, the first breakthrough occurred in the 1940s with the development of the medicine '**dapsone**'.

WHO strategy-Towards Zero Leprosy – Global Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) Strategy 2021–2030

Global targets for 2030 are:

- 120 countries with zero new autochthonous cases.
- 70% reduction in annual number of new cases detected.
- 90% reduction in rate per million population of new cases with grade-2 disability (G2D).
- 90% reduction in rate per million children of new child cases with leprosy.