



COBAS 6800 Testing Machine

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Why in News

The Union Health Minister inaugurated the first automated **coronavirus testing device named 'COBAS 6800'**.

This is the first such testing machine that has been procured by the Government for testing of Covid-19 cases and is installed at the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)**.

Key Points

- COBAS 6800 is a **fully automated**, high end machine for performing **Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) testing for Covid-19**.
- It will provide **quality, high-volume testing** as it can test around 1200 samples in 24 hours.
 - This will largely increase the testing capacity in the country.
- It is a sophisticated machine **enabled with robotics that minimizes the chance of contamination** as well as the risk of infection to the health care workers.
- The machine requires a minimum **Biosafety Level 2 (BSL2+)** containment level for testing, thus it was placed at the NCDC.
 - BSL2+ covers laboratories that work with agents associated with human diseases (i.e. pathogenic or infectious organisms) that pose a moderate health hazard.
- The device **can also detect other pathogens** like Viral Hepatitis B & C, **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)**, **Mycobacterium Tuberculosis**, Papilloma, Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, Chlamydia (a bacterial infection), Neisseria (bacteria) etc.

National Centre for Disease Control

- The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), formerly the **National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD)**, had its origin as the Central Malaria Bureau, established at Kasauli (Himachal Pradesh) in 1909.
- NICD was transformed into the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) with a larger mandate of controlling emerging and re-emerging diseases in **2009**.
- It functions as the **nodal agency** in the country for **disease surveillance, facilitating prevention and control of communicable diseases**.
- It is also a national level institute for **training specialized manpower** for public health, laboratory sciences and entomological services and is involved in various applied research activities.
- The Institute is under **administrative control of the Director General of Health Services**, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The Institute has its headquarters in **Delhi**.

Source: PIB