



I-Lab: Mobile Testing Facility

Why in News

Recently, the government has launched the **country's first mobile I-Lab (Infectious disease diagnostic Lab)** for **last mile Covid-19 testing access**.

- It has been created by a team from the **Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Limited (AMTZ)** under the **National Biopharma Mission**.

Key Points

- The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT - Ministry of Science & Technology)** under the **Covid-Command strategy** has supported building of mobile testing labs (I-Labs) through AMTZ.
- The Lab belongs to the **BioSafety Level (BSL-II)** category.
 - BSLs are ranked from **one to four** and are categorised on the basis of the organisms that the researchers are dealing with. The organisms include viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, etc.
 - BSL-I is considered to be the least hazardous, while BSL-IV poses the maximum safety risk. Each level builds on the previous category, adding more layers of constraints and barriers.
- It will be deployed in interior, inaccessible parts of the country and has the capability to perform **25 RT-PCR tests** a day, **300 ELISA tests** a day and additional **tests for TB, HIV** as per **CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme)** rates.
 - **RT-PCR and ELISA tests** have been approved by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** for Covid-19.
 - **CGHS** provides comprehensive medical care to central government employees and pensioners enrolled under the scheme. Rates of different procedures are decided under the Scheme.

Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Limited

- Incorporated in **2016**, it is Asia's first **medical equipment manufacturing ecosystem**, uniquely dedicated for Medtech and supported by various Ministries.
- It aims to put India on the global map of high-end medical equipment production and make healthcare products affordable and accessible not only in the country, but also the world at large.
- It also has set a target for reducing the cost of manufacturing up to 40% and also minimising the import dependency for the country, which is currently pegged at around 75%.
- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with the AMTZ has initiated the **DBT-AMTZ COMManD (Covid Medtech Manufacturing Development) Consortia** to address the shortage of critical healthcare technologies in India and move progressively towards a stage of self-sufficiency.

National Biopharma Mission

- The National Biopharma Mission (NBM) is an **industry-academia collaborative mission** for accelerating biopharmaceutical development in the country.

- It was **launched in 2017** at a total cost of Rs.1500 crore and is 50% co-funded by World Bank loan.
- It is being **implemented by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**.
 - BIRAC is a Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- Under this Mission, the Government has launched **Innovate in India (i3) programme** to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the biopharma sector.
- It has a focus on following **four verticals**:
 - **Development:** Development of product leads for Vaccines , **Biosimilars** and Medical Devices that are relevant to the public health need by focussing on managed partnerships.
 - **Upgrade:** Upgradation of shared infrastructure facilities and establishing them as centres of product discovery/discovery validations and manufacturing.
 - **Capacity Building:** Developing human capital by providing specific training.
 - **Industry-Academy Linkages:** Developing technology transfer offices to help enhance industry academia inter-linkages.

Source: PIB

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