

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Quality Assurance Scheme**

NABL launches Quality Assurance Scheme for Basic Composite Medical Laboratories.

Key features of the scheme:

- It is a voluntary scheme. The laboratories performing only basic routine tests like blood glucose, blood counts, rapid tests for common infections, liver & kidney function tests and routine tests of urine will be eligible to apply under this scheme.
- The scheme requires minimal documentation and a nominal fee has been prescribed for availing the scheme. Components of competence assessment have been added for assuring quality and validity of test results.
- Successful laboratories will be issued a certificate of compliance to QAS BC scheme by NABL and they will be allowed to use a distinct symbol on the test reports as a mark of endorsement to the basic standard for a defined time frame before which they will have to transition to full accreditation as per ISO 15189.
- Through this scheme, patients availing services of small labs in primary health centers, community health centers, doctor's clinic, standalone small labs, labs in small nursing homes will also have access to quality lab results.

Significance of the scheme: The scheme will help to bring quality at the grass root level of India's health system where laboratories follow the imperatives of quality in all their processes. This will inculcate the habit of quality and facilitate the laboratories to achieve benchmark accreditation of ISO 15189 over a period of time.

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL):

- NABL is a constituent board of Quality Council of India (QCI) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- NABL is Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signatory to International bodies like International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC) and Asia Pacific Accreditation Co-operation (APAC) for accreditation of Testing including Medical and Calibration laboratories.
- NABL is also having APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for Proficiency Testing Provider (PTP) & Reference Materials Producers (RMP). MRA are based on evaluation by peer Accreditation Bodies and facilitates acceptance of test/ calibration results between countries which MRA partners represent.

Web- Wonder Women Campaign

The Ministry of Women and Child Development hosted a felicitation event for Web Wonder Women.

About the Campaign:

- The Campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in association with the NGO Breakthrough and Twitter India.
- Through the campaign, the Ministry aims to recognize the fortitude of Indian women stalwarts from across the globe who have used the power of social media to run positive & niche campaigns to steer a change in society.
- The Campaign is aimed at encouraging, recognizing and acknowledging the efforts of these meritorious Women.

SwachhSurvekshan Awards 2019

- The SwachhSurvekshan awards 2019 were recently conferred by President Ram NathKovind. It covered all urban local bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world.

Performance of various countries:

- Indore was adjudged India's cleanest city for the third straight year. The second and third positions in the category were grabbed by Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh and Mysuru in Karnataka.
- Bhopal is country's Swachh capital.
- New Delhi Municipal Council area was given the 'Cleanest Small City' award.
- Uttarakhand's Gauchar was adjudged the 'Best Ganga Town'.
- The 'Cleanest Big City' award has been bagged by Ahmedabad, while Raipur is the 'Fastest Moving Big City'.
- Ujjain has been the adjudged the 'Cleanest Medium City' and Mathura-Vrindavan bagged the tag of the 'Fastest Moving Medium Cities'.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**International Criminal Court (ICC)**

Malaysia has ratified the Rome Statute making it the 124th State party to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

About ICC:

- The International Criminal Court (ICC), located in The Hague, is the court of last resort for prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- It is the first permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.
- Its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, entered into force on July 1, 2002.
- Funding: Although the Court's expenses are funded primarily by States Parties, it also receives voluntary contributions from governments, international organisations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

Composition and voting power:

- The Court's management oversight and legislative body, the Assembly of States Parties, consists of one representative from each state party.
- Each state party has one vote and "every effort" has to be made to reach decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions are made by vote. The Assembly is presided over by a president and two vice-presidents, who are elected by the members to three-year terms.

Jurisdiction:

- The ICC has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
- The ICC is intended to complement existing national judicial systems and it may therefore only exercise its jurisdiction when certain conditions are met, such as when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Councilor individual states refer situations to the Court.

Criticism:

- It does not have the capacity to arrest suspects and depends on member states for their cooperation.
- Critics of the Court argue that there are insufficient checks and balances on the authority of the ICC prosecutor and judges and insufficient protection against politicized prosecutions or other abuses.
- The ICC has been accused of bias and as being a tool of Western imperialism, only punishing leaders from small, weak states while ignoring crimes committed by richer and more powerful states.
- ICC cannot mount successful cases without state cooperation is problematic for several reasons. It means that the ICC acts inconsistently in its selection of cases, is prevented from taking on hard cases and loses legitimacy. It also gives the ICC less deterrent value, as potential perpetrators of war crimes know that they can avoid ICC judgment by taking over government and refusing to cooperate.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Hazardous Waste (Management&Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016**

In order to strengthen the implementation of environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in the country, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management &Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016.

The amendment has been done keeping into consideration the "Ease of Doing Business" and boosting "Make in India" initiative by simplifying the procedures under the Rules, while at the same time upholding the principles of sustainable development and ensuring minimal impact on the environment.

Some of the salient features of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management&Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019 are as follows:

- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
- Exporters of silk waste have now been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country, within a year of export, without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization also under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management &Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, provided that hazardous and other wastes generated by such industries are handed over to the authorized actual users, waste collectors or disposal facilities.

Background:

- In spite of having a significant plastic pollution load of its own, and a ban on plastic waste imports, imported PET bottles from abroad for processing SEZ.
- The influx of PET bottles was quadrupled from 2017 to 2018.
- Indian firms are importing plastic scrap from China, Italy, Japan and Malawi for recycling.
- India consumes about 13 million tonnes of plastic and recycles only about 4 million tonnes.

Hazardous waste:

- Hazardous waste is the waste that poses substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment.
- Rapidly growing industries in the country have contributed in the production of large part of hazardous waste material. The sources of hazardous waste are basically agricultural and agro industries, medical facilities, commercial centres, household and the informal sectors.
- Therefore, to reduce environmental hazardous proper attention is required during disposal of such waste, because it cannot be disposed of by common means like other by products of our daily lives.