

## India's first NABL accredited aquaculture pathology lab

04 June 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Rajiv Gandhi Center for Aquaculture, the research and development arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) established a state-of-the-art Central Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory in its headquarters at Sirkali, TamilNadu in September 2011. The laboratory has been serving the aquaculture industry of the country by providing timely and reliable diagnosis for various diseases encountered during the culture of finfish, shrimps and freshwater prawns.

The laboratory is equipped with all the latest diagnostic tools and has three component units for molecular pathology, histopathology and microbiology. The three together help in the diagnosis of various diseases encountered by the aquaculture industry. The molecular pathology laboratory has been routinely engaged in the screening or diagnosis of 16 Crustacean (shrimp or crab) pathogens including World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) listed pathogens besides the three from finfish.

In addition, the laboratory conducts periodical and need-based aquaculture disease surveillance in India for the benefit of the seafood export industry. All the known diseases affecting the shrimps, crabs or fish are diagnosed at this laboratory, which includes the recently emerged dreaded shrimp disease viz. Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) or Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (AHPND).

The laboratory has been successfully participating in proficiency testing conducted by the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, University of Arizona, USA (a OIE reference laboratory for crustacean diseases).