

CSIR and Tata MD partners to augment COVID-19 testing

New Delhi, June 17th (India Science Wire): The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and Tata Medical and Diagnostics Ltd (Tata MD), the new healthcare venture from the Tata Group have teamed up to boost the COVID-19 testing capacity across Tier-II and Tier-III towns as well as rural areas, across India. The two organisations are developing capacity to handle any future surge in the COVID-19 testing requirements.

The initiative will utilise CSIR's nationwide network of scientific labs, and help increase testing capacity in smaller locations in the country. The RT-PCR CRISPR test will be done using the Tata MD CHECK SARS-CoV-2 test kits that are powered by FELUDA technology from CSIR- Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB).

"Apart from vaccination, rapid testing and isolation of SARS-CoV-2 positive persons has emerged as the best strategy in combatting Covid-19. This initiative in partnership with Tata MD, to deploy the RT-PCR CRISPR test across multiple CSIR labs spread across the country is an important step. This will augment the national capacity to test for COVID and detect it locally", said Dr Shekhar C Mande, Director General, CSIR.

"By partnering with CSIR's network of labs and deploying fully equipped mobile laboratories, we are confident that we can quickly augment testing capacity using faster and scalable methods. This will significantly enhance the ability of state and district administrations to ensure wider availability and easier access to testing on an on-going basis," said Girish Krishnamurthy, CEO and MD of Tata Medical and Diagnostics.

Significantly, 13 CSIR labs have been engaged in carrying out RT-PCR testing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership is aimed at expanding the testing capacity further over the next few months by deploying the TATA-MD CHECK testing via the vast network of 37 CSIR labs spread across the country, from CSIR-IIIM in Jammu in north to CSIR-NIIST in Thiruvananthapuram in south and CSIR-CSMCRI, Bhavnagar in the west to CSIR-NEIST Jorhat in the North-East.

The first CSIR lab to go live with Tata MD is located at CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

"We are happy that CSIR-IIP is the first CSIR lab to launch this initiative and the current testing capacity will be 800 daily tests that can be scaled up using the Tata MD CHECK automation solution if demand rises significantly", said Dr Anjan Ray, Director, CSIR-IIP, Dehradun.

Tata MD's end-to-end paper strip based RT-PCR CRISPR (powered by CSIR-IGIB's FELUDA) is a simple test approved by ICMR that requires standard laboratory equipment like thermo cyclers. Another test called Tata MD automated testing solution can increase testing capacity by thousands with no cross-contamination. The solution can be deployed in an existing NABL II approved molecular laboratory as well as Tata MD mobile testing labs. Tata MD is also deploying a proprietary 3-room design mobile testing lab, built in partnership with Lowe's and United way and fabricated by ShanMukha MIT, can conduct end-to-end, on-site COVID-19 testing to increase the testing capacity.

Tata MD, the new wholly owned healthcare venture from the Tata Group, aims to provide leading-edge, patient-centric diagnostic solutions to make healthcare access more reliable for consumers..

Launched during the 2020 pandemic, Tata MD has developed and launched Tata MD CHECK, the world's first commercially available CRISPR Cas-9 based COVID-19 test, powered by FELUDA from CSIR-IGIB, a leading Indian biosciences research institute. (India Science Wire)

Keywords: Tata MD, Healthcare, Tata Group, Diagnostic solutions, CRISPR, Medical Devices, Connected Care Solutions, Pandemic, Tata MD CHECK, CRISPR Cas-9, COVID-19 test, FELUDA, CSIR-IGIB, CSIR



Testing capacity being augmented to detect future surge in cases with speed and agility



A view of testing facility being jointly developed by CSIR and Tata MD