

CSIR-IICT to develop indigenous RT-PCR kit for COVID-19 diagnosis

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New Delhi, May 03 (India Science Wire): The Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT) has taken up the challenge of making an affordable RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) kit indigenously. The Institute intends to use recombinant technology for the production of several enzymes used in the kit and optimize the reagent conditions to match the regulatory requirements. The partnering company Genomix Biotech will optimize the kit for COVID-19 diagnosis by adding the Taqman probes.



CSIR-IICT and Genomix Biotech plan to approach the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) or its recognized laboratory for validation before launching the product in a couple of weeks. The kits available in the market have serious limitations as most of them are currently imported. This collaboration will help produce quality RT-PCR kits that are affordable and will cater to the huge demand for the product in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the RT-PCR kit developed by CSIR-IICT can also be used in various other disease

diagnostics in humans, animals and plants. This technology is expected to bring down the overall cost of RT-PCR-based diagnosis in the country.

CSIR-IICT, based in Hyderabad, has also developed a convenient and cost-effective synthetic process for Favipiravir. As a collaborative effort with industry, the Institute had transferred the entire process and significant quantities of pharma-grade API of Favipiravir to Cipla. Cipla, a leading pharmaceutical company, will be conducting the investigations prior to launching of this drug against COVID-19 in India.

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