

## **Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute joins hands with Tata Sons to augment production of COVID-19 testing Kits**

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Trivandrum, an Institution of National Importance, Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, has entered into a partnership agreement with Tata Group for commercial production of COVID-19 testing kits. The kits will be based on RT-LAMP (Reverse Transcriptase Loop-Mediated Amplification) technology for COVID-19 detection, which can produce results in significantly less time, thereby increasing the throughput of labs in India. The tests are expected to get approval shortly, and production will commence soon after.

The RT-LAMP is a futuristic technology that can be adapted for a point-of-care setting. The 'Chitra Gene LAMP-N' test uses an isothermal setup to create copies of viral DNA for detection, which significantly reduces the complexity of the overall process compared to the prevalent Real-Time PCR technology. Additionally, the test also uses proprietary magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction, which gives a highly purified and concentrated level of RNA from the swab sample.

“The mass production of RT-Lamp- based COVID-19 testing kits with the active support of the Tata Group will be a significant milestone for the Institute. I would like to commend the efforts of the research & development team of the Institute and the Tata Group in building this partnership at this critical time to serve the needs of the nation,” said Dr. VK Saraswat, Member Niti Aayog and President, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology.

“Development of a novel, inexpensive, faster, a confirmatory test for the diagnosis of COVID-19 by Sree Chitra in record time is a compelling example of how a creative team of scientists, clinicians, and industry working together seamlessly can leverage knowledge and infrastructure to make relevant breakthroughs,” said Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, DST.

*For more details, please contact: Ms. Swapna Vamadevan, PRO, SCTIMST, Mob: 9656815943, Email: pro@sctimst.ac.in*