

Tata Sons partners with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute to augment production of COVID-19 testing Kits

Commercialisation of RT-LAMP technology for testing to enhance speed and throughput

Mumbai/Thiruvanthapuram, May 31, 2020: The Tata Group has entered into a partnership agreement with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Trivandrum, an Institution of National Importance, Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India 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.

Tata Sons tie-up with SCTIMST follows its partnership with CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology to produce CRISPR based COVID test kits. These two partnerships will significantly boost Tata Sons efforts to cater to the burgeoning demand for COVID testing across the country.

The RT-LAMP is a futuristic technology that can be adapted for 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 overall process compared to the prevalent Real Time PCR technology. Additionally, the test also uses proprietary magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction, which gives highly purified and concentrated level of RNA from the swab sample.

Commenting on the tie-up, **Mr. Banmali Agrawala, President - Infrastructure and Defence & Aerospace, Tata Sons said**, "The Tata Group is committed to play its part in fighting the global epidemic. Testing is a crucial part of this fight against CoVID-19 as early detection and treatment arrests the spread of the infection. With more and more tests being conducted, the demand for testing kits is growing. Our association with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute is significant step in our efforts to encourage indigenous production of second generation testing kits which enhances speed of testing and ease of handling."

"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. V K Saraswat, Member Niti Aayog and President, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology**.

“Development of a novel, inexpensive, faster, confirmatory test for the diagnosis of COVID-19 by Sree Chitra in a 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**.

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, is an Institute of National Importance, under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, and has a mission to become a global leader in Research and Development of affordable medical technologies and advanced super specialty medical services.

About the Tata Group

Founded by Jamsetji Tata in 1868, the Tata group is a global enterprise, headquartered in India, comprising 30 companies across 10 verticals. The group operates in more than 100 countries across six continents, with a mission 'To improve the quality of life of the communities we serve globally, through long-term stakeholder value creation based on Leadership with Trust'.

Tata Sons is the principal investment holding company and promoter of Tata companies. Sixty-six percent of the equity share capital of Tata Sons is held by philanthropic trusts, which support education, health, livelihood generation and art and culture. In 2017-18, the revenue of Tata companies, taken together, was \$110.7 billion. These companies collectively employ over 700,000 people. Each Tata company or enterprise operates independently under the guidance and supervision of its own board of directors. There are 28 publicly-listed Tata enterprises with a combined market capitalisation of about \$145.3 billion (as on March 31, 2018). Companies include Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Chemicals, Tata Consumer Products, Titan, Tata Capital, Tata Power, Tata Advanced Systems, Indian Hotels and Tata Communications.

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