

CSIR in Media



Only Covid-19 News Bulletin
16 to 31 March 2020



T-Hub, CCMB join hands to launch innovation challenge

CSIR -CCMB

31 March, 2020

Hyderabad: The state government-run T-Hub on Monday said it has joined hands with the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) as knowledge partner to launch a COVID-19 Innovation Challenge to empower students to conduct research to develop potential solutions to contain the spread of coronavirus. The Telangana ITE&C department's emerging technologies wing will help the T-Hub in curating problem statements for the challenge.

The programme is open to student innovators across colleges in Telangana. Students will be encouraged to develop a potential solution, idea or an application for reporting, curing or tracing the coronavirus pandemic or any other solution that can help curb the virus' spread and prevent future outbreaks.

The focus areas are easy detection of infected persons, solutions that are low cost and easy to implement, efficient tracking of infected persons and their contact with other persons as well as regular monitoring of the spread of the virus and predict outcomes.

As a part of the programme, the two most innovative projects and ideas will be shortlisted for advanced mentoring and support from all stakeholders to transform their ideas into a viable business proposition. Subject matter experts from CCMB, T-Hub, Q City and the emerging technologies wing will work with the students to help them transform their ideas into viable propositions.

The students shortlisted will be will get to be part of a curated mentorship programme by the T-Hub for student entrepreneurs and they will gain exposure to industrial experts from

Q City, Grace Cancer Foundation, CCMB and other corporate partners.

Commenting on the development, T-Hub CEO Ravi Narayan said the COVID-19 Innovation Challenge has been taken up to utilise existing resources and networks to explore possible solutions and innovations to tackle the current global crisis.

“Through this programme, we will encourage our student innovators, who are leveraging disruptive technologies, to find unique solutions to improve the management of the pandemic and contain further outbreaks. We hope that the new ideas that emerge will help us and our partners to step back and observe the changes and figure out ways of taking advantage of a horizon of innovative opportunities that are emerging,” Ravi Narayan said.

Published in:

[Times Of India](#)

CSIR-NCL to soon submit R&D of making raw material for drugs

CSIR -NCL

31 March, 2020

Pune: The CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory will help in making raw material (Key Starting Material) to make active pharmaceutical ingredients used to make many bulk drugs in the time of Covid-19.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry is the third-largest by volume, but is critically dependent on imports of raw material. The dependency, in some cases, extent to over 80%, particularly from China.

A senior researcher at National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) said, “If the lockdown continues for a longer duration, there may be a time in future when the pharmaceutical companies may face a shortage of raw material to make drugs. India has one of the largest number of Food and Drug Administration-approved manufacturing sites, outside the US. We supply the final drugs to a lot of countries, including China. But we need self-sufficiency. We at NCL will make the technology that helps create the Key Starting Material.”

CSIR-NCL director Ashwini Kumar Nangia said, “We are hopeful that the CSIR-NCL will be able to soon release the research and development (R&D) reports to the government and chemical and pharmaceutical industry bodies. Each laboratory-scale process will be ready in the next few weeks and months to be taken up for manufacturing by the Indian drug companies. The capability and infrastructure for further synthesis of the final active pharmaceutical ingredients from the intermediate Key Starting Material largely exist in the country.”

Another NCL researcher said, “Projects are already on for manufacturing 3-4 Key Starting

Material. For another 4-5 Key Starting Material, the process to manufacture it is already designed. This has been done keeping in mind the cost, safety and other parameters.”

Hyderabad-based CCMB starts coronavirus testing

CSIR –CCMB

30 March, 2020

Samples from suspected Covid-19 patients have been sent to CCMB for diagnosis and confirmation

The Empowered Committee for Covid-19 Response had allowed state-of-the-art laboratories of CSIR to start culture of the novel strain of coronavirus and serve as additional testing and validation sites for research

Hyderabad: The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) launched the novel coronavirus testing facilities from its laboratory on Monday. The samples that are being collected from suspected Covid-19 patients at Gandhi Hospital have been transported to CCMB for diagnosis and confirmation.

The CCMB laboratories have capacity to conduct clinical diagnostic tests of anywhere between 800 and 1000 samples at one go. Moreover, the trained genetic researchers at CCMB also have the ability to give the results of such large group of diagnostic tests within 7 to 8 hours.

“Yes, we have already started receiving samples from Gandhi Hospital. Our team of researchers and laboratory technicians are ready to start the tests. We should be able to start releasing the results at the earliest,” CCMB director Dr. RK Mishra said.

All tests are free

The entire process of conducting the coronavirus tests including the diagnostic kits are being offered free of cost by the top research institute. “There is no money involved because this is a Centre and State Government initiative. All the tests will be conducted free of cost,” Dr. RK

Mishra said.

Earlier, for quick and accurate diagnosis of Covid-19, the Empowered Committee for Covid-19 Response had allowed state-of-the-art laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to start culture of the novel strain of coronavirus and serve as additional testing and validation sites for research.

Following a request from Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, the researchers at CCMB had come forward to offer diagnostic facilities for coronavirus.

Two weeks crucial

The CCMB director made it clear that the next two weeks would be crucial for the country. “I urge people not to take the lockdown lightly. It has been ordered for a reason and it is everyone’s responsibility to follow social distancing. The next two weeks are crucial,” Dr. Mishra said.

No scientific basis

At the same time, Dr. Mishra said there was no scientific basis for claims that the Indian coronavirus was less virulent.

“Assertions that Indian strain of novel coronavirus is less virulent are scientifically not valid and such claims are more of individual’s imagination than anything else. There is no scientific basis for such claims. More data has to come in before comparing the strains of coronavirus,” he said.

Published in:

Telanganatoday

Indigenous tests kits likely to be available in 2 weeks: IGIB Director

CSIR-IGIB

30 March, 2020

Indigenous tests kits likely to be available in 2 weeks: IGIB Director

New Delhi, March 30 (IANS) The Director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Anurag Aggarwal, claimed on Monday that indigenous tests kits for diagnosis of COVID-19 are likely to be available in the next two weeks.

Speaking to IANS, Aggarwal said, "Indigenous technology has been approved and is very effective, comparable or better than the rest. The only problem is the supply chain, these are young companies which have to import some of the materials."

"There are some issues in imports, especially because the whole world is trying to make kits. But we expect that within next two weeks these companies promoted by CSIR and other departments will be able to push things into the market and make things available by the middle of April," he said.

When asked what would be the shortest goal in the fight against coronavirus, he said, "The shortest goal is to reduce transmission because cure of no virus is perfectly known. In fact, you can barely think of any viral infection of which has perfect cure, unlike bacterial infections. So reducing transmission is by far the most important goal."

The IGIB Director suggested that there is a three-step method to reduce transmission -- firstly, you do distancing; secondly, you find out people who have been affected fast so you can separate them effectively; thirdly, you find people who may have been exposed or have minor symptoms.

Earlier in the day, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan held a meeting with the scientists and officials of ICMR, CSIR other government department. These people are from the team which is assisting in combating COVID-19.

The objective of the meeting was to review the sampling and testing strategy of India in order to control the pandemic.

According to official data, there are 123 functional labs provided by ICMR and 7 are in the pipeline. The testing capacity is 13,000 per day.

प्रवासी श्रमिकों के लिए आई.एच.बी.टी. ने उपलब्ध करवाया रैडी टू ईट फूड

पालमपुर, 29 मार्च (भृगु): प्रवासी श्रमिकों के लिए हिमालय जैव संपदा प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान राहत लेकर आया है। पालमपुर उपमंडल में इन श्रमिकों को संस्थान द्वारा विकसित रैडी टू ईट भोजन उपलब्ध करवाया गया है।

भरमात पंचायत में ये प्रवासी श्रमिक लॉकडाउन तथा कर्फ्यू के कारण अटक गए हैं। जिस पर पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों द्वारा इसकी सूचना संस्थान को दी गई। ऐसे में संस्थान ने आगे आते हुए इन श्रमिकों को रैडी टू ईट भोजन उपलब्ध करवाने का कार्य किया। पैकड भोजन को पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों को सौंपा गया, ताकि इन श्रमिकों को उपलब्ध करवाया जा सके।



संस्थान के निदेशक डा. संजय कुमार ने बताया कि रैडी टू ईट फूड को भरमात पंचायत के उपप्रधान अजय कपूर, वार्ड सदस्य दवेन्द्र गुड्डू, हरमेश तथा पूनम बाली को सौंपा गया है। उन्होंने बताया कि संस्थान अपने सामाजिक दायित्वों की कड़ी में इस प्रकार के कार्य करने को कटिबद्ध है।

सैनिटाइजर राज्य और बाहरी विभिन्न एजेंसियों एवं अधिकारियों को वितरित किया

आई.एच.बी.टी. पालमपुर द्वारा विकसित हैंड सैनिटाइजर राज्य और बाहरी विभिन्न एजेंसियों एवं अधिकारियों को वितरित किया जा रहा है। कल सैनिटाइजर को डी.सी. राणा विशेष सचिव राजस्व व विनाशकारी प्रबंधन के माध्यम से मुख्यमंत्री को सौंपा गया। आई.एच.बी.टी. के निदेशक डा. संजय कुमार के अनुसार सैनिटाइजर सिविल अस्पताल पालमपुर को दिया गया है। इसे एस.डी.एम. और डी.एस.पी. पालमपुर के कार्यालयों तथा हि.प्र. विधानसभा के स्पीकर को भी दिया गया है।



CSIR-CCMB

29 March, 2020

CCMB have BSL3 facility to handle virus, trained 25 medical staff to handle infected material

Hyderabad, Mar 29 (UNI) The Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), which has "bio Safety Level three" to handle virus, can test hundreds of samples a day. CCMB Director Rakesh K Mishra while in an interview to electronic media here Sunday, said the CCMB trained 25 medical staff from hospitals on how to handle the infected material and state-run Gandhi hospital and other hospitals are only authorized to provide samples.

With regard to isolation of the Coronavirus, the CCMB Director said that the institution can isolate the RNA of the Corona virus (COVID-1) and tested at cellular level.

The laboratory has the safety mechanism to handle such virus, he said all the staff engaged in this.

The institute, which can test hundreds of samples a day, can also stretch till 1000 samples day, the Director said.

There is no scientific evidence that drugs used for other viruses or diseases can be used for this, he said that some are being recommended as these are desperate times and no guarantee that any of these are the cure.

We should not depend on drugs or vaccines as those will take time, the Director said and made it clear that the only way to restrict the spread of the virus is to stay isolated and to maintain social distancing.

In a separate interview, Padma Bhushan awardee and Chairman of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology, Dr Nageshwar Reddy suggesting to take vitamin C, D and zinc tablets which can help in preventing the virus infestation.

Keep an eye out on various symptoms of cold, along with short breathing or losing taste and smelling capabilities, he said for now, we are able to treat patients with various antibiotics under ICU's and ventilators.

There are tests being run in USA and China for an accurate vaccine and medicine, he said this will take at least 2 months for developing.

Italy has suffered the most as there was a mutation in the virus that reached. Italy and considering the age and there being so many smokers and diabetic patients the spread has gone out of control, Dr Nageshwar said.

However, the mutation in Indian virus has made it weak to attach to the cells of the body, he said there is research being conducted to prevent this connection between cells and virus in our labs.

Not so dangerous, we need to stay positive with the knowledge we have, he said. We will soon get medicines and vaccines and we will get over this soon enough, the famous gastroenterologist added.

Published in:
[Uniindia](http://uniindia.com)

CCMB capable of 1000 COVID-19 tests a day, says Director

CSIR–CCMB

28 March, 2020



CCMB Director Rakesh K Mishra says that the CCMB has completed the formality of conducting some preliminary tests for approval from ICMR

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) is ready to take up 1000 samples a day for diagnostic tests to confirm coronavirus, but it needs ICMR approved kits for taking up the tests, according to the CCMB director Rakesh K Mishra here on Saturday.

The CCMB was permitted by the Centre to conduct diagnostic tests of the samples sent by

Telangana government earlier following a suggestion made by Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The CCMB Director Rakesh K Mishra said that the CCMB has completed the formality of conducting some preliminary tests for approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). “But the main problem is shortage of the kits or reagents used in the tests. There are substitutes available but we need the ICMR approved kits to undertake tests,” he said.

He added that the Telangana government, which was instrumental in seeking the help of CCMB, is also pursuing the matter and trying its best to get the ICMR approved kits. He was confident that the kits might be available within a day or two.

Exuding confidence over the technical know how of the premier institute Rakesh Mishra said that the institution has multiple copies of

the equipment required for the tests and such experiments are conducted on day to day basis in the institution. He said that CCMB can join hands with other central institutions such as CDFD to increase the number of tests in the coming days.

CCMB can Isolate Coronavirus

With regard to isolation of the Coronavirus, the CCMB Director said that the institution can isolate the RNA of the Corona virus from the throat swabs and the laboratory has the safety mechanism to handle such as experiment. “We have now agreements with hospital like Osmania for samples. We have isolated the virus and preparing many other experiments,” he said. He said that the CCMB laboratory has “Bio Safety Level Three” certification and can handle the extraction process.

The CCMB director, however, made it clear that the only way to restrict the spread of the virus is to stay isolated and to maintain social distancing. “Many people who were infected might not show any symptoms but they can transmit the virus to the old and sick persons. Telangana government has done the best thing by announcing the lockdown even before the centre did,” he observed.

Mishra, who is also a member of the Telangana government’s Expert Committee on Covid 19, said that the committee that has been meeting regularly has urged the authorities to provide best protective gear for the paramedical staff and the doctors who are in direct touch with the patients. He said that the CCMB had so far trained 25 medical staff from five medical colleges in the state on the safe ways of handling the samples and on precautions in case of an accidental spill out.

Published in:

Telanganatoday

Trying Three Existing Drugs To Treat Coronavirus': IICT

CSIR-IICT

28 March, 2020



Scientists at Indian Institute of Chemical Technology are trying to re-purpose existing drugs for Covid-19

Scientists at Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad are fighting against time to develop a drug to treat Covid-19 even as the country stays under a lockdown till April 14.

IICT director **Dr Srivari Chandrasekhar** tells **M S Shanker** in an interview that all efforts are on to 're-purpose' existing drugs to find the right cocktail. Excerpts...

Is IICT ready with any molecule

formulations which can help cure the coronavirus infected patients?

There are no approved drugs for Covid-19 treatment and also no vaccine as of yet. Balaxovir was discovered for influenza and in re-purposing this has shown promise. Favipiravir was discovered for antiviral or RNA viruses. Remdesivir was developed by Gilead for Ebola. Now Remdesivir is re-purposed to do clinical trials for coronavirus and trials are currently going on.

We are working on three drugs based on clinical data available and under Cipla's initiative. This disease is rather new, only a few months old. So, the drug discovery was not done for this problem before. Any normal process of drug discovery takes 8-10 years. Hence, all efforts are on to try existing drugs (re-purposing) for this problem.

How quickly can the drugs be developed and made available in the market?

The drugs can be launched in India as soon as FDA approvals are given in the US as clinical trials are done there. If the Chinese agency approves, then India can take a decision on when to make it available.

Many scientists across the globe claim that the coronavirus can survive on some surfaces or in the air for several days...

Yes, the survival of the virus on various surfaces is being reported widely. It is always good to keep ourselves away from exposed surfaces.

What about the claims of alternative medical practitioners like homoeopathy and Ayurveda of having the capability to treat Covid-19?

I am not an expert on Ayurveda or homoeopathy.

CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology presents alcohol based sanitizer to Chief Minister

CSIR -IHBT

28 March, 2020

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur was presented an alcohol based formulation of hand sanitizer developed by CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (IHBT) Palampur by Special Secretary to Chief Minister, Revenue and Disaster Management Committee Duni Chand Rana here today on behalf of Director CSIR-IHBT Sanjay Kumar. The alcohol content in this hand sanitizer is as per World Health Organization guidelines. While appreciating the efforts of the Institute, Chief Minister said that the preparation would go a long way in facilitating the people to ensure adequate supply of sanitizers during the corona epidemic. He said that the formulation would also help the general public for personal sanitization in wake of COVID-19 outbreak. According to Director CSIR-IHBT Sanjay Kumar the results of formulation had showed more effective results in terms of sanitization as compared to several other brands. He said that the formulation has natural oils and tea constituents which offer sanitization in human friendly way. OSD to Chief Minister Mahender Dharmani and Principal Private Secretary to Chief Minister Vinay Singh were also present on the occasion.

Published in:

[5dariyanews](http://5dariyanews.com)

‘Share innovative ideas to develop novel solutions for Covid- 19 problems’

CSIR–NBRI,CDRI

27 March, 2020



March 26 to April 2.

“The students of AKTU are encouraged to share ‘Innovative Ideas’ to develop innovative solutions to the problems posed by covid-19 pandemic in order to join the hands of Government of India and state government of Uttar Pradesh to help the society in this unprecedented the situation,” said AKTU vice-chancellor, Vinay Kumar Pathak in a press the conference addressed via webcast.

“This would be a weekly challenge, whereby, the new set of challenges shall be posted every week. Three best ideas would be awarded and acknowledged,” he said.

As COVID-19 has now become a public health emergency, therefore, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow (AKTU) under the chairmanship of vice chancellor, Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak in collaboration with Prof SK Barik, director, NBRI and Prof Tapas Kundu, director, CDRI, Lucknow is organizing Online COVID-19 Challenge Ideathon.

The students of AKTU are encouraged to share ‘Innovative Ideas’ to develop innovative solutions to the problems posed by covid-19 pandemic in order to join the hands of Government of India and state government of Uttar Pradesh to help the society in this unprecedented the situation.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU), Lucknow in collaboration with National Botanical Gardens Research Institute (NBRI) and Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow is organizing ‘Online COVID-19 Challenge Ideathon’ from

The challenge is starting on March 26 and last date of the challenge is April 2, 2020, he said. The challenge is available at erp.aktu.ac.in

HIGHLIGHTS:

Ideas have been invited in these areas

For developing cheaper and effective new drugs and vaccines without any adverse side effects

For developing suitable technological interventions to discourage and mitigate false news as only accurate information can help to make informed decisions

For developing suitable solutions to discourage negative behaviour like hoarding and black marketing of essential items.

Developing suitable supply chain procedures to ensure smooth supply of essentials like food, medicine and utilities

Developing cheaper and effective diagnostic kits and mobile diagnostic kits

Supporting and protecting front-line healthcare staff and their families

Published in:

Hindustan Times

Coronavirus in Mumbai: CCMB may soon come up with diagnostic kits

CSIR –CCMB, IICT

26 March, 2020

Mumbai: The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) is working overtime on the development of cost-effective and accurate diagnostic kits for wide distribution.

This is in response to the WHO call wide scale “testing, testing, and testing” is the key as early diagnosis may help save lives from the pandemic.

“We are helping our incubating companies; they have come out with ideas and we are supporting them.

We are testing and validating the diagnostic kits proposed by them. We may come up with some good kits and it may take at least 2-3 weeks if everything goes well.

Quality and accuracy of the kits are the most important things. If the kits give 100 percent results, then only they will be approved,” said Dr R K Mishra, Director, CCMB.

The organisation is also keeping in mind the cost. “Our estimate is that the test should be less than Rs 1000. We are also thinking of kits which are as cheap as 400-500 rupees, but at present we cannot assure that, as it is a different route and all this needs more standardisation”, said Dr Mishra.

Further, CCMB is also planning to culture the covid-19 virus. Dr Mishra said that the institution has facilities for this, and they have got the approvals from the government too, they are yet to receive sample and kits to initiate the culture.

“In the meantime, our facilities are set, and we are actually training people who are going for

the testing in other recognised places in the city” he said.

There are 5 govt-designated testing centres in Telangana state. CCMB has trained 25 people so that they can go and do the testing in these centres.

Some labs where the virus testing will be done include Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) Hyderabad, Gandhi Hospital, Osmania General Hospital, Sir Ronald Ross Institute of Tropical and Communicable Diseases or Fever Hospital and Warangal Hospital.

The Centre for DNA Finger Printing and Diagnostics (CDFD) is also likely to be added to this group.

Vaccine and drug development are another aspect of fighting the virus. But as of now CCMB is neither working on the vaccine nor on the drug development. “We have no expertise for working on this.

However, when the virus is being cultured, we will try to set up a system as it can be used for screening” said Dr Mishra. He told that may be CCMB’s sister organisation Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) is working for repurposing of drugs as making a new drug is a long-term process

CSIR-IITR

26 March, 2020



आईआईटीआर के निदेशक ने मंडलायुक्त को सैनिटाइजर सौंपा।

आईआईटीआर ने 350 लीटर सैनिटाइजर बनाया

लखनऊ। आईआईटीआर ने कोरोना वायरस से जरूरी सेवाओं में लगे कर्मचारियों के बचाव के लिए बुधवार को 350 लीटर सैनिटाइजर का निर्माण करके मण्डलायुक्त मुकेश मेश्राम को सौंप दिया है। गुरुवार को 150 लीटर सैनिटाइजर और सौंप दिया जाएगा।

निदेशक प्रो. आलोक धवन ने बताया कि संस्थान के प्रधान वैज्ञानिक डॉ. आर. पार्थसारथी के नेतृत्व में रिसर्च स्कालर सुष्मिता तिवारी, अंशिका गुप्ता, मिताली सिन्हा, अभिषेक मिश्रा व अंकित कुमार ने दिनरात परिश्रम कर यह सैनिटाइजर बनाया है।

Published in:
Hindustan

COVID-19: Hyderabad's CCMB aims to make tests cost-effective

CSIR–CCMB, IMTECH, IIP, CDRI, IICB

25 March, 2020



Apart from CCMB, Hyderabad, Institute for Integrative Genome Biology (IIGB), Delhi and the Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH), Chandigarh have been permitted to conduct testing (**Reuters**)

India has so far tested over 23,000 samples and government continues to expand the network of government and private laboratories conducting the tests.

NEW DELHI: India's premier research organization Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) is preparing diagnostic kits to test COVID-19, which has

so far infected 562 people and claimed 11 lives across the country.

"We are providing support to our incubating companies and testing and validating the diagnostic kits proposed by them. We may come up with some good kits," said RK Mishra, director, CCMB, Hyderabad. He added that the process may take at least two weeks, since quality and accuracy would be a key concern.

India has so far tested over 23,000 samples and government continues to expand the network of government and private laboratories conducting the tests.

The testing is largely done using the RT-PCR probes for diagnosis of COVID-19 which were procured from US by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune and distributed across the country. To cater to the increasing demand, ICMR also opened its doors for validation of new testing kits which

have not been approved by US FDA or EUA-CE as yet.

“The kits are being evaluated for their performance and efficacy by ICMR and given a go ahead only when they give 100% results. These are then recommended to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) which take the final call,” said a senior official from ICMR.

Since, an RT-PCR test costs around ₹5,000, the government-run Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) laboratory is focusing on developing cost-effective and faster diagnostics which can address India’s increasing need for testing as infections rise.

“Our estimate is that the test should be less than ₹1,000. We are also thinking of kits which are as cheap as ₹400-500, but at present we cannot assure that, as it is a different route and all this needs more standardization,” said Dr Mishra.

CCMB also plans to culture SARS-CoV2, following approval from the Empowered Committee on COVID-19 Response, which allowed all national laboratories to do clinical testing of COVID-19 and share the results. This would help in screening of suspected patients.

“We are yet to receive sample and kits to initiate the culture. In the meantime, our facilities are set and we are actually training people who are going for the testing in other recognized places in the city” he said. So far, 25 people have been trained.

Apart from CCMB, Hyderabad, Institute for Integrative Genome Biology (IIGB), Delhi and the Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH), Chandigarh have been permitted to conduct testing.

The Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun, Indian Institute of Toxicology Research

Lucknow and Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), North East Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat, Assam and Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB), Kolkata have also requested similar testing facilities and are expected to come on board soon.

Published in:

[Livemint](#)

Covid-19 samples to be tested at AIIMS-Rishikesh, IIP-Dehradun

CSIR -IIP

25 March, 2020

DEHRADUN: The testing of Covid-19 samples will now also be done at AIIMS Rishikesh and Indian Institute of Petroleum Dehradun. Till now, the testing of the samples was being done only at Government Medical College Haldwani. The new testing facilities were announced by the state government after an approval by the Centre.

Meanwhile, the health department announced that reports of 22 suspected Covid-19 patients were received on Tuesday and all of them tested negative. Around 31 new samples were sent for Covid-19 test on March 24. So far, 237 samples have been sent for testing of which 180 samples were found negative while four have tested positive and results of the rest are awaited.

The department has further announced that maternity and women wing of Government Doon Medical College and Hospital (GDMCH) would be shifted to Gandhi Shatabdi Hospital.

The health department will also be identifying two hotels near GDMCH which would be used as rest houses by the doctors treating Covid-19 patients at the hospital.

Lucknow: NBRI's herbal sanitiser; IITR to hand over 10,000 units to administration

CSIR –NBRI,IITR

24 March, 2020



people. The other product is by the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR), which will distribute sanitisers manufactured by it among people in essential services. The institute will hand over 10,000 bottles of 50ml each to the district administration by the end of the week.

In clinical trials done on the pathogen *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, a dominant bacteria present on surfaces, NBRI scientists found their formula to be extremely effective.

The pathogen, they said, is very harmful to human skin.

Senior principal scientist at NBRI Sharad Srivastava also clarified that though the product has been developed in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak by NBRI under its CSR initiative, the institute does not claim that it is effective against coronavirus.

The sanitiser does have its advantages. The

LUCKNOW: Two Lucknow-based institutes under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research have begun manufacturing sanitisers for the public and for people working in essential services.

The National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) has made an alcohol-based, herbal hand sanitiser that has been clinically tested and found to be “highly effective” against surface microbes. Its impact lasts for about 25 minutes and it prevents the skin from dehydrating, scientists said. The product, to be available commercially, will be moderately

moisturising agent and essential oils it impact lasting and soothing to the skin.

NBRI had distributed samples of the product among people and received good response.

The technology has now been transferred to a Kanpur-based pharmaceutical firm. It is expected to hit the market within a week.

IITR, meanwhile, has prepared sanitisers at its centre for innovation and translational research as per WHO guidelines. The first batch will be ready by the weekend for distribution among workers in essential services and production will continue till required, said IITR director Alok Dhawan.

Two Delhi-based companies had provided the institute with support under corporate social responsibility.

“The hand-rub sanitisers have been prepared by a team headed by our scientist Parthasarathi Ramakrishnan,” said Dhawan.

The institute also plans to request the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to allow it to begin testing facilities for Covid-19.

IITR has written to the microbiology department of KGMU, also a nodal agency of ICMR, to train three scientists of the institute in the testing technique.

“After training, we will ask ICMR to recognise IITR as a testing centre and provide kits required for the purpose,” he added.

IITR has issued strict instructions to ensure safety at the institute. Hand sanitisers are kept

entry points of all departments and offices, entry of outsiders has been restricted, awareness posters and instructions have been displayed across the campus and research groups have been divided into batches to work in shifts.

Hope floats for COVID-19 patients

CSIR -CCMB

23 March, 2020

More testing to be taken up at five designated labs, says CCMB director

There is some hope on the horizon for COVID-19 patients. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is likely to allow hydroxychloroquine drug on high-risk patients for now following good results in United States.

“It is showing promising results and could be used for both treatment and prevention, but to begin with, the government may allow it for only treatment purposes,” said CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecule Biology (CCMB) director Rakesh Mishra on Monday.

Dr. Mishra, who has been supervising training programme for the scientific lab personnel to take up the proposed mass testing of those affected with coronavirus, took time off to explain that at least 25 of them will be ready for conducting the testing at the five designated labs in a couple of days. The batch of dozen candidates having undergone training at the facility here in Habsiguda have been sent to the respective test centres.

The labs where the COVID-19 testing will be done include NIMS, Gandhi Hospital, Osmania General Hospital, Sir Ronald Ross Institute of Tropical & Communicable Diseases or the Fever Hospital and the Warangal Hospital. The Centre for DNA Finger Printing and Diagnostics (CDFD) is also likely to be added to this group, he said.

“With this combined strength, we can test up to 1,500 samples a day and it has become necessary to check whether we have been able to control the pandemic in the past one week. The compulsory clampdown of the cities has become necessary, otherwise it would have been increasingly difficult to control the spread of the contagion. We will know in another week to

10 days if we have been really able to arrest the spread or if it has spread even further,” he added.

He pointed out that the ICMR has also revised the guidelines and directed the State governments to take up mass testing, including those not showing any symptoms of the virus but were known to have been in contact with the COVID-19 patients.

Mapping the spread

“We need to go for testing because we can then easily map in which way the virus has been spreading, where the infected people are and whether our efforts in the past few days have borne fruit or not. At the moment, we do not have any clue so far in these aspects. We will also know in the next few days if we have been quick enough with our preventive steps,” explained Dr. Mishra.

The CCMB director said a lot of scientific research activity is currently under way in both public and private sector with multiple institutions getting involved in “doing something effective before the virus spreads further”.

आईआईटीआर सैनिटाइजर देगा

लखनऊ। आवश्यक सेवाओं में जुटे नगर निगम और अन्य विभाग के कर्मचारियों को कोरोना वायरस के प्रकोप से बचाने के लिए भारतीय विष विज्ञान अनुसंधान संस्थान (आईआईटीआर) ने कमर कस ली है। वह महापौर संयुक्ता भाटिया को सेनेटाइजर की दस हजार बोतलें मुहैया कराएगा। साथ ही उन्हें रीफिल करने की सुविधा भी देगा। इस सप्ताह के अंत तक सेनेटाइजर उपलब्ध करा दिया जाएगा।

मौजूदा समय में सेनेटाइजर की बढ़ी मांग के कारण बाजार में कमी हो गई है। जबकि जरूरी सेवाएं मुहैया कराने में जुटे कर्मचारियों के पास बार-बार हाथ धुलने का वक्त नहीं है। आईआईटीआर के निदेशक प्रो. आलोक धवन ने कहा कि विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन की गाइड लाइन के तहत सेनेटाइजर बनाया है।

Pune coronavirus updates: IISER, NCL step in, make their own sanitisers for in-house staff

CSIR -NCL

22 March, 2020



Both the institutes have been using self-made sanitisers in, as per standard norms prescribed by World Health Organization (WHO).

The expertise of these two research institutions could come in handy at this crucial time, when medical stores in the city are fast running out of hand sanitisers. Besides, those available are being sold at exorbitant rates, ranging from Rs 250 to Rs 450 for different brands and capacities.

“In this hour of need, we could put together required ingredients and have produced about 25 liters of hand sanitiser, so far. They have been bottled and kept at the institute’s wellness center. This center has distributed the bottles within the campus,” H N Gopi, head, department of chemistry at IISER, Pune, told The Indian Express. This is the first time that IISER has mass-produced hand sanitisers.

The expertise of these two research institutions could come in handy at this crucial time, when medical stores in the city are fast running out of hand sanitisers (Representational)

EVER SINCE the coronavirus outbreak, hand sanitisers have been flying off the shelves. Rising to the occasion with their expertise, chemists at Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Pune, and CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) have produced sanitisers at their own laboratories and have been using them for in-house purposes.

The institute has also expressed its willingness

to provide hand sanitisers to all those in need, given that personal hygiene is paramount in guarding against the spread of coronavirus.

“If anybody requires sanitisers, the institute is willing to provide them free of cost,” added Gopi. Neighbouring NCL too has produced their own sanitisers and recently gave them away to its own staff. All those who require to continue with their work have been provided with them, officials said.

“Our staff requested sanitisers, so we distributed bottles to 70 to 80 of them till last week,” said an NCL official. While the process of producing hand sanitiser is not new, having the right ingredients and expertise are key in producing those which kill germs right away.

“It takes about an hour to prepare the sanitiser mixture, but it needs to be kept aside for at least 24 hours before it is actually utilised,” Gopi said.

Asked if NCL could help if needed, he said, “It will be definitely considered by senior NCL authorities, if such a request is made.”

NEIST formula to produce hand sanitiser : Lack of material impedes production

CSIR -NEIST

22 March, 2020

Principal Scientist cum Principal of CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (NEIST), Huidrom Birkumar Singh has conveyed that even though CSIR has the ability and the know-how to produce herbal hand sanitizers, lack of raw ingredients has posed a great challenge.

Speaking to media persons at CSIR-NEIST complex at Lamphelpat today, Birkumar explained that the hand sanitizers made by the institute contains ethyl alcohol, aloe vera, turmeric, hydrosol and citronella essential oil.

Alcohol is the main ingredient in producing hand sanitizers but currently, CSIR-NEIST Lamphelpat does not have ample stock of the required alcohol to produce the liquid.

The institute is also facing shortage of aloe vera, he added.

He continued that most of the hand sanitizers sold in the market are chemical based and such liquids often result in dry hands after use.

On the other hand, the hand sanitizers produced by CSIR-NEIST Lamphelpat contains citronella essential oil which has antimicrobial properties.

The other ingredient, turmeric, is also used as an antiseptic.

Birkumar then said that of all the ingredients, the one with the most germicidal properties is alcohol.

However, alcohol cannot be used alone on the skin as it can lead to skin burn which is why aloe vera is added to soothe the skin, he explained.

CSIR-NEIST Lamphelpat is producing 50 ml bottles of the hand sanitizer and some bottles will be taken by MP Dr RK Ranjan to Delhi during his trip tomorrow so also introduce it to others.

Many Government Departments have ordered around 50-100 bottles of the hand sanitizer.

Even NABARD and IMC staff are asking for the liquid.

The demand is huge but the stock is limited as only around 150 more bottles of the hand sanitizers can be produced.

He clarified that many interested parties have approached the institution for the formula behind the hand sanitizers but the institution has declined such offers as it wants to discuss the issue with the head quarters and produce the liquid as a form of social service.

Huidrom Birkumar conveyed that CSIR-NEIST Lamphelpat is producing its hand sanitizers mainly for those working in the medical sector and those who are at high risks.

However, if adequate stock of the much needed ingredients is available, then the institute will be able to mass produce the formula, he concluded.

Published in:

[E-pao](#)

Telangana govt forms committee to study measures to control coronavirus

CSIR –CCMB,IICT

21 March, 2020

Hyderabad: The State government has constituted a five-member expert committee to study the measures needed to control incidences of Covid-19. The committee members include Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Director Rakesh K Mishra, Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) Vice-Chancellor B Karunakar Reddy, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) Director S. Chandrasekhar, Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) professor T Gangadhar and Health Management and Research Institute (HMRI) former founder, Balaji Utla.

The committee would study measures taken by various countries in the world to combat the virus and also study the impact of control measures. The committee will suggest the measures to the State government to based on successful models from across the world.

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[Telanganatoday](http://www.telanganatoday.com)

CCMB permitted to test samples

CSIR -CCMB

21 March, 2020

PM issued orders, says CM

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday issued orders permitting the use of facility at Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology here to test samples of infection by coronavirus.

He said the State government will make use of the facility, which has a capacity to test 1,000 samples a day. The permission to access CCMB equipment was raised by Mr. Rao at Friday's video conference of Mr. Modi with chief ministers of various States.

Published in:

[The Hindu](#)

CCMB to start diagnostic tests for Covid-19

CSIR –CCMB,IICT

21 March, 2020

Hyderabad: The high-end genetic laboratories at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) are all set to start diagnostic tests for the novel strain of coronavirus, following the green signal to carry out such clinical testing from the Empowered Committee for Covid-19 Response set up by the Centre.

The CCMB laboratories have a capacity to conduct clinical diagnostic tests of anywhere between 700 and 800 samples (scalable up to 1,000 if the need arose) at one go. Moreover, the highly trained genetic researchers at CCMB also have the ability to give the results of such a large group of diagnostic tests within 7 to 8 hours.

“We are all set to contribute from our side to fight against the coronavirus in India. The CCMB is one of the foremost genetic research institutions in the country and our researchers are capable of conducting the tests quickly and very precisely. We are ready to go and start the diagnostic checks as soon we start receiving the samples,” Director, CCMB, Dr RK Mishra told *Telangana Today*.

Hyderabad-based CCMB is known for its high-quality basic research and training in modern biology and also for promoting the concept of having centralised facilities for new and modern techniques in the areas of biology. Initially, it started as a semi-autonomous centre in 1977 with the Biochemistry Division of the then Regional Research Laboratory (at present, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology [IICT]) forming its nucleus and Dr P M Bhargava heading the new centre. By 1982, the CCMB received the status of a full-fledged national laboratory.

The CCMB is involved in work related to a number of incurable genetic disorders through

molecular diagnosis, carrier detection, genetic counselling, pre-pregnancy monitoring, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and prenatal diagnosis for these disorders. It is also known for popularising DNA Fingerprinting and setting up of Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostic, which was spearheaded by past CCMB Director Dr Lalji Singh

Labs to culture the virus

The Empowered Committee for Covid-19 Response has allowed state-of-the-art laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to start culture of the novel strain of coronavirus and serve as additional testing and validation sites for research, based on self-assessment of their laboratory facilities. State health officials will now coordinate with the national laboratories like CCMB for clinical samples collections.

Earlier, on Friday in a video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao requested that the CCMB be allowed to take up coronavirus diagnostic tests.

On Saturday, DG, (CSIR), Dr Shekhar C Mande tweeted that 'In addition to helping Telangana in testing, CCMB will also train technicians to scale-up and develop faster Covid-19 tests. CCMB's real expertise is in deeper scientific questions on Covid-19, which is already on'.

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CSIR-NBRI

21 March, 2020

'क्लीन हैंड जेल' नाम से आया सैनिटाईज़र

- कीटाणुओं को मारने में सक्षम है ये प्राकृतिक रोगाणुरोधी
- सीएसआईआर-एनबीआरआई ने बनाया हैंड सैनिटाईज़र

लखनऊ। सीएसआईआर-एनबीआरआई लखनऊ ने विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन के दिशा-निर्देशों के अनुरूप सीएसआईआर एरोमा मिशन के तहत कोरोना वायरस के प्रसार की रोकथाम के लिए अल्कोहल आधारित हैंड सैनिटाईज़र बनाया है। इस हर्बल हैंड सैनिटाईज़र में हर्बल घटक के रूपमें तुलसी का तेल, जोकि कीटाणुओं को मारने में सक्षम एक प्राकृतिक रोगाणुरोधी है, और 60 प्रतिशत आइसोप्रोपिल अल्कोहल का प्रयोग किया गया है। इस उत्पाद को इसकी रोगाणुरोधी गतिविधि के लिए वैज्ञानिक रूपसे परीक्षित किया गया है।

सीएसआईआर-एनबीआरआई के निदेशक प्रोफेसर एसके बारिक ने बताया कि हर्बल हैंड सैनिटाईज़र की तकनीकी को मैसर्स सद्गुरु बायोलॉजिकल प्राइवेट लिमिटेड लखनऊ को हस्तांतरित किया गया है। वैज्ञानिक डॉ बीएन सिंह और उनकी टीम ने बताया कि कोरोना वायरस को फैलने से रोकने के लिए हैंड सैनिटाईज़र की बढ़ी हुई मांग को देखते हुए यह हैंड सैनिटाईज़र अगले सप्ताह तक बाज़ार में उपलब्ध हो जाएगा। हैंड सैनिटाईज़र बाज़ार में 'क्लीन हैंड जेल' के ब्रांड नाम से उपलब्ध होगा।



Published in:

Swatantraawaz

Utilise CCMB labs for COVID-19 testing: KCR to PM

CSIR -CCMB

20 March, 2020

Bringing the existence of CCMB laboratories to the notice of the PM, KCR said the facility can be utilised to conduct tests on blood samples of a large number of patients and from any place in the country

Hyderabad: Chief Minister K Chandrashekhhar Rao on Friday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to utilise the laboratory facilities at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad for coronavirus tests.

Bringing the existence of CCMB laboratories to the notice of the Prime Minister, Chandrashekhhar Rao said the facility can be utilised to conduct tests on blood samples of a large number of patients and from any place in the country.

He pointed out that CCMB, which was under the Union government's control, was into life sciences research. If CCMB is given the opportunity to conduct tests for Coronavirus, a thousand samples can be tested at one go at the Institute, he said.

Chandrashekhhar Rao, participating in the video-conference of all Chief Minister with the Prime Minister, explained to the latter about the measures taken by the State government to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. He also offered some suggestions to Modi on the measures that need to be taken, and it was in this context that he spoke about the CCMB labs.

The Chief Minister said that in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, where passenger traffic from foreign countries was high, there was a need to check them thoroughly. He wanted more focus on these cities and called for appropriate measures to be taken in this regard. Since the chances of the virus spreading are more

with the entry of passengers from abroad, international flights should be cancelled for some time in the country, the Chief Minister suggested.

Since a large number of people in the country travel by trains, tests should be conducted at railway stations too, Chandrashekhar Rao told the Prime Minister, and suggested high levels of sanitation in railway coaches and at railway stations.

The Chief Minister said all measures have been taken in Telangana State to prevent people from gathering in large numbers. Festivals like Sri Ram Navami, Jagne Ki Raat and celebrations connected with them have been cancelled, he said, and assured the Prime Minister that the State government will work with the Centre to stop spread of coronavirus in the country.

Private labs to begin COVID-19 testing next week; Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw panel to work on modalities

CSIR -CCMB

20 March, 2020



able to start testing from next week.

Currently, the kits used by the ICMR labs cost the government around Rs 5,000 per test, which is being absorbed by the government, and are offered free of charge to the patients. How this will be done in the private setting, is still not clear

To begin with the testing is expected to be based on the well-established USFDA (US Food and Drug Administration) approved kits, which those in the private laboratory circles, read as kits made by companies like Roche Diagnostics and Thermo Fisher. However, it is likely that the list could perhaps be extended later to include other kit makers, including some domestic kit manufacturers.

Only NABL-accredited private laboratories in the country will be allowed to undertake COVID-19 tests. NABL is quickspeak for National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories. Once identified, the private labs will wait for directions on the kits

Test kits used by ICMR labs cost the government around Rs 5,000 per unit and are offered free of charge; it's still not clear how this will work in the private setting

Government of India has constituted a committee headed by Biocon Chairperson and Managing Director Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw to work out the modalities for private sector diagnostic labs to be involved in creating nationwide capacity for testing COVID-19. Business Today has learned that the process has gained momentum and there is a good chance that the private labs will be

to be used. Most of these labs are already equipped with the first part of the test, which is RNA and genetic material extraction, and will need to go ahead on the kits/reagents to be used in the next stage to identify coronavirus.

Who can make the kit: Several companies have jumped into the fray and want to make the kits. Some have even been approaching entities like the CCMB for getting their kits evaluated. However, at the moment, Business Today learns, the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), the parent organisation of CCMB, is apparently, in talks with ICMR for getting CCMB to conduct testing and training for coronavirus detection. But as things stand, none of the kits can be used in the country until these are clinically validated by any of the ICMR labs and approved by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

Which kits can be used and what is the process: Any kit to test for coronavirus has to be clinically validated by an ICMR laboratory or National Institute of Virology, Pune. After that, the DCGI will need to approve it for use and supply in the market. Right now, an official from the DCGI says, seven kits have been sent to NIV Pune for clinical validation. These include kits by companies like Roche Diagnostics, Thermo Fisher, and a few others.

What is stopping the government from roping in the CSIR laboratories from conducting the tests: An ICMR official says 49 CSIR labs have been identified and if there is a need, they will be put into action.

Cipla to manufacture anti-viral drugs eyeing Covid containment

CSIR -IICT

19 March, 2020



“Scientists throughout the world are working towards developing new drugs for containment of Covid-19. The research on anti-viral drugs has been going throughout the world since long. Many companies have developed molecules having anti-viral properties. But due to lack of demand, these molecules were not widely marketed,” Dr SChandrasekhar, director, CSIR-IICT, told FE.

CSIR-IICT has decided to work on three promising compounds namely Remdesivir, Favipiravir and Baloxavir.

In a voluntary initiative, pharma major Cipla has come forward to manufacture anti-viral drugs, which could be effective for Covid-19, through a partnership with CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT). CSIR-IICT has decided to work on three promising compounds namely Remdesivir, Favipiravir and Baloxavir. It would take about six to 10 weeks to make two of the compounds of 100 gms each at the lab scale.

“IICT has taken up the task to develop active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) for the drug. When they are developed, it would be handed over to Cipla, which would then manufacture the drugs based on the knowhow given by IICT. Dr YK Hamied, chairman, Cipla, has requested to start work on these molecules on an immediate basis,” he said.

It is learnt that Cipla will follow it up with bioequivalence tests on dogs and human trials before approaching the regulatory authority for manufacturing the drug which is claimed to cure coronavirus. However, Cipla did not

respond to queries on the investment details or the timing to market the drug. Earlier, Cipla and IICT had joined hands to make drugs for AIDS, cancer, etc.

According to Chandrasekhar and principal scientist Prathama S Manikar, Cipla chairman has requested them to manufacture three compounds — Favipiravir, Remdesivir and Bolaxivir — and Cipla would look after formulation and bio equivalence studies and mass production of the drugs.

“Anti-viral drugs may work. The need of the hour is that there has to be an API stock to make the drug. While CSIR-IICT will synthesise in lab scale of 100 gms, Cipla will upscale and manufacture the drug,” he said. “Clinical trials have been either done or under progress on Favipiravir and Remdesivir. It would take around 4-6 months to make them, but we will also start making Bolaxavir now,” Chandrasekhar said. Besides, IICT is ready to supply Reverse Transcriptase, an enzyme used for Covid 19 testing kits with 40,000 units. This could help ease managing the shortage of kits once primer is procured by diagnostic labs.

Published in:

[Financialexpress](https://www.financialexpress.com/)

CM to request for access to CCMB to screen patients

CSIR-CCMB

19 March, 2020

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has said that he will request Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the video conference with the chief ministers on Friday, to ban all international flights immediately.

Addressing a media conference, Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao said so far 1,165 people were quarantined in Hyderabad and those who requested to be sent home too would be under government's medical supervision. Initially, those who came from seven countries and later 11 countries were quarantined but now the virus had spread to 161 countries. Thus, every one coming from overseas would be quarantined, he said.

He said there were six screening centres in the State and they would also request the Prime Minister to let the State use the facility at the CCMB.

Ruling out that the State was not imposing prohibitory orders under Section 144 to prevent gathering of people, he said he expected people to voluntarily refrain from gathering in groups and adhere to safety and preventive measures and cooperate with the government to keep the State safe from onslaught of COVID -19.

The government was not in favour of shut down and bring the State to a standstill. They would let various sectors function but emphasis would be on measures to be taken by people to check spread of virus.

Even Muslim religious elders who met him on Thursday said they would shut down Shadikhanas and limit gatherings, he said.

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Thehindu

Cipla, CSIR-IICT join hands for COVID-19 drugs

CSIR -IICT

18 March, 2020

‘It could take about six to 10 weeks to make two of the three chemical compounds’

Indian Pharmaceutical giant Cipla has voluntarily come forward to immediately manufacture three promising chemical compounds with anti-viral properties to treat COVID-19 and has sought the help of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) to make the Active Pharma Ingredients (APIs) for the same

IICT director S. Chandrasekhar and principal scientist Prathama S. Mainkar on Tuesday told presspersons that Cipla chairman Y.K Hamied has requested them to start preparing the chemical compounds — Favipiravir, Remidesivir and Bolaxavir — so that his pharma-biotech firm can start the next phase of trials, regulatory authority approvals and subsequent mass production of the anti-viral drugs “at any cost”.

Dr. Chandrasekhar and Dr. Mainkar said several anti-viral drugs were discovered in the past few years but were halted after clinical trails due to



lack of demand. IICT scientists had narrowed down to about 15 such compounds which had passed toxicology reports and the above three are in that category.

“Favipiravir and Remidesivir have already undergone clinical trials and hence, we will not require much time to make them as the raw materials

are readily available. It could take about six to 10 weeks to make them. We had proactively started making the molecules in our modern Kilo lab with scientists working in two shifts. Process to start Bolaxavir molecule will begin now,” they said.

The director explained that due to artificial intelligence, deep data mining and advanced computational and mathematical models, it is not that difficult to narrow down to the chemical compounds required. “We will be making about 100gm each to begin. Cipla will follow it up with bio-equivalence tests, on dogs and human trials before approaching the regulatory authority to manufacture the drug to cure coronavirus,” he said.

“Cipla will be investing substantial resources into the making of the drug which should be in the market in the next six months. We will get royalty and this is not the first time we are collaborating with the pharma giant as we had helped them make drugs for AIDS, cancer and others,” said Dr. Chandrasekhar.

The institute is ready to supply Reverse Transcriptase PCR or RT-PCR enzyme used for COVID-19 testing kits with 40,000 units ready and the process is on to make more of them on demand.

IHBT scientists develop new hand-sanitizer

CSIR -IHBT

17 March, 2020



The demand for products such as sanitizer is increasing amidst reports of preventive measures against coronavirus and many counterfeit materials being sold in the market. In view of this, a new hand-sanitizer has been developed by the scientists of CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) based in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Director of IHBT stated that “The natural flavours, active tea constituents and alcohol content in this hand-sanitizer have been used as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization

(WHO). One of the special things is that chemicals like parabens, triclosan, synthetic fragrance and phthalates have not been used in this product.”

The technology has been transferred to Palampur based company M/s A.B. Scientific Solutions for the commercial production of this newly developed hand-sanitizer. An agreement has been signed between CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) and the company.

The company, which has a strong nationwide marketing network of its own, will be establishing a facility in Palampur for the commercial production of hand-sanitizer. The company will also market these hand-sanitizers and other disinfectants in all major cities across the country.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar says that due to the sudden increase in demand for sanitizer in the market, its arbitrary prices are being charged. In the

view of current increase in demand for the right product, this hand sanitizer has been developed at an appropriate time.

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Next two weeks critical for India'

CSIR -CCMB

16 March, 2020

Vaccine for coronavirus may take at least a year: CCMB chief

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19, having originated from China, is very different from what is prevalent in Europe, West Asia or United States of America. "There is nothing to indicate it is a less virulent strain, looking at the pattern. Hence, it becomes all the more crucial to control spread of the virus in the community in the next couple of weeks, before it affects large sections of population," said Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) Director Rakesh Mishra on Monday.

There is no scientific basis to claim that the coronavirus will vanish once summer sets in and a vaccine is a long way off. "Summer will bring in more heat and dryness to that extent the cough droplets may evaporate but the virus can spread indoors — inside cinemas, malls — and wherever there is dampness. There is a good chance it could help but we should not depend on weather alone," he explained.

Isolation necessary

Therefore, rather than expect some quick remedies, the populace should brace for two weeks of isolating themselves from community gatherings, avoiding travel and practising personal hygiene like washing hands often. "Virus is not the issue as most will recover. We need to break the fast spread to thousands of people and though they too will recover, it will be difficult for the system to tackle large numbers," said Dr. Mishra

“Central government and scientific heads have decided the next fortnight is going to be crucial in halting the spread of the contagion because even if a virus it is not fatal but a sudden rise in the number of sick people could put the entire healthcare machinery under strain,” he said, in an exclusive interaction.

Top scientists from various research institutes have been interacting with principal scientific adviser K. Vijayaraghavan through video-conferencing in the past few days to deliberate on the steps to be taken to tackle the crisis and on pushing forward the research and development processes with the help of the private sector, he stated.

“A combination of drugs can be tried to tackle any virus, but it comes with the risk of toxicity and uncertainty of benefits. However, a vaccine for coronavirus is many months away and could take at least a year,” said the director.

The CCMB has not banned any visitors as such to its facility but has halted international travel of scientists and non-essential travel. Large gatherings are a no-no and staff have been sensitised about the precautions.

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