

# CFTRI lab to handle bulk of RT-PCR tests

## MMCRI lab goes for facelift

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With the COVID-19 testing target in Mysuru increased from 3,000 to 5,000 a day amid Omicron scare, the bulk of RT-PCR tests are now being handled by the lab at the CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) with the Microbiology Department's Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) facility on the premises of K.R. Hospital shut for restoration.

The VRDL facility, which has been in the forefront of COVID-19 testing since April 2020, is not in operation since the last few days over a short-circuit incident and the structure housing the lab requires

immediate repairs due to leakage from the roof.

Now that the scare of a new variant has triggered an alert and the government has asked the districts to ramp up testing to deal with any rise in COVID-19 numbers, the Mysore Medical College and Research Institute (MMCRI) has resolved to shift some of the staff from VRDL and the RT-PCR testing equipment to the CFTRI lab for the time being for handling the testing load until the VRDL gets ready for resuming tests.

The MMCRI Testing Centre (Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory) and the CSIR-CFTRI Testing Centre are the two public institutions that have been providing services to the public free of cost since the outbreak.

The CSIR-CFTRI came

forward to support the district administration in the fight against the pandemic by setting up the testing centre and carrying out RT-PCR tests since testing was key for containing the spread of the disease.

VRDL is a part of a network of labs established across the country by the Department of Health Research, Government of India. The rise in the number of viral outbreaks and the resultant mortality from them had been cited as key reasons for the launch of a network of such hi-tech labs. The National Institute of Virology, Pune and the National Centre for Disease Control, Delhi will be the top laboratories for the network while the National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai will be supervising the data generated by the network of labs.