

## **Indian companies ready to export coronavirus test kits, target Latin America, Eastern Europe markets**

Indian manufacturers of the RT-PCR kits used for Covid-19 diagnosis are set to export their products to markets such as Latin America, East Asia and Eastern Europe, after the Indian government allowed restricted shipment of these kits earlier this week. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has fixed export quotas for viral transport media kits (VTM kits) and RT-PCR kits including swabs.

India has a manufacturing capacity of 1 billion RT-PCR kits. The country on an average is doing daily testing of 600,000 samples. The decision of allowing limited exports of these kits was taken after diagnostic companies complained that their stocks were unpicked by state governments, leaving them with surplus inventory.

The directorate has fixed the export quota of VTM kits at 23.8 million and PCR kits of 10 million for August.

“There is still a huge global shortage of these kits. We will be applying for an export quota as we have got orders from the United Nations to test their peacekeeping forces,” said Sriram Natarajan, the chief executive of Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics. The company said it was also in the process of applying for emergency authorisation approval from the US Food and Drug Administration to launch its TrueNat test devices in that market.

Companies such as Mylab and Huwel Lifesciences are also expected to apply for export licences.

As countries expand their testing capacity for Covid-19, they are also finding themselves woefully short of test kits. Countries in Latin America and some parts of Africa and Eastern Europe are looking to procure these kits, companies said. Huwel Lifesciences director Shesheer Kumar told ET that his company got an order for around 2 million kits from Nigeria.