

## Indian researchers to work for COVID-19 vaccine

By Jyoti Singh

New Delhi, April 14 (India Science Wire): The swell of novel coronavirus appears not abating. In just a few months from the outbreak, it has reached around 210 countries, took lives of more than one lakh people. The numbers are climbing. In an effort to place a hurdle before the runaway train, scientists across the globe are racing to develop a drug that can cure or a vaccine that stop its spread. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a call to all the scientific community from India to work together and come up with some solution for this problem. Answering to this call Dr Shekhar C Mande, Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has said that the CSIR labs would be engaged to discover a potent vaccine for novel coronavirus. "We have decided to commence our research and development for developing a vaccine from today" said Dr Mande. Further he said confidently that "CSIR would try hard to start the clinical trials for the vaccine in the coming weeks". He made this announcement during an interview given to a national news channel.

CSIR would collaborate with two industries. There is one vaccine named mycobacterium-w that is still is being used against leprosy. CSIR is seeing a potential in that old-time tested vaccine. "We consider this vaccine as BCG's (Bacille Calmette-Guérin) cousin this can be used against corona" he said. The second approach would try to inactivate the corona virus particle. CSIR is partnering with another industry for this R&D.

He also said that in these trying times to have an effective and timely response, it includes digital and molecular surveillance; rapid and economical diagnostics; new drugs or repurposing of drugs and associated production processes; hospital assistive devices and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and, supply chain and logistics support systems.

The CSIR would be joining hands with academia and industry in this effort right from the beginning. Dr Mande said "All sectors have come on the same platform to work together. Industries, scientists, scientific institutions and private sector agencies have come forward and we are working hand in hand for this."

Institute of Genomic and Integrated Biology (IGIB) while working on the rapid and economical diagnostics vertical has prepared paper-strip test for corona which will be low cost and affordable in Indian conditions. As a part of digital and molecular surveillance vertical Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and IGIB, two institutes of eminence under the CSIR network have commenced genome sequencing of the novel corona virus from Indian patients. The sequencing and analysis of the way the genome is evolving will help the researchers to understand the behaviour, virulence and spread of the virus. (India Science Wire)

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