

## India International Science Festival 2020 kicks off on December 22

New Delhi, October 20 (New Delhi): Launched in 2015, India International Science Festival (IISF) is a celebration to promote science and technology and demonstrate how science could lead India towards a developed nation within a short period. It is an annual festival to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.

Defying all speculations caused by the ongoing pandemic situation, The Union Minister for Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan announced the sixth edition of IISF (2020), today, while launching a website dedicated to provide updates on CSIR ushered repurposed drugs/vaccines and their current stage of trials.

IISF 2020 will be held from December 22 to December 25 through virtual medium. "Despite COVID-19 we have decided to do it on a bigger scale. It will be operated from Delhi. All the laboratories, institutions, scientists from across the globe, students, teachers and innovators will participate" said the Minister.

The launched online portal "CuReD: CSIR Ushered Repurposed Drugs" is meant to provide information on CSIR ushered repurposed drugs and their current stage of trials. The website also serves as a repository of information about the numerous clinical trials of diagnostics and devices that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is engaged with, in a partnership with Industry, other government departments and ministries. The website provides information on partnering institutions and their role in the trials and other important details.

CSIR is exploring multiple combination clinical trials of antivirals with host-directed therapies for the potential treatment of COVID-19. CSIR is also working with the Ministry of AYUSH for clinical trials of AYUSH drugs and has undertaken safety and efficacy trials of AYUSH prophylactics and therapeutics based on individual plant-based compounds and in combination. Five clinical trials involving *Withania somnifera*, *Tinospora cordifolia* + *Piper longum* (in combination), *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Tinospora cordifolia* & *Adhatoda vasica* (individually and in combination) and AYUSH-64 formulation are currently underway for safety and efficacy checks.

A key clinical trial of CSIR is the Sepsivac (Mw) against COVID -19 in partnership with Cadila. The phase 2 clinical trial has been completed successfully on critically ill COVID-19 patients, and more extensive Phase 3 trial is on the anvil. Further, the Phase 2 trial of phytopharmaceutical AQCH on COVID-19 patients with Sun Pharma and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is underway. Dr. Harsh Vardhan also acknowledged the efforts of the CSIR for being at the forefront of the ongoing fight against the COVID-19. (India Science Wire)

Keywords: IISF 2020, virtual, CuRED, website, repurposed drug, CSIR, Dr Harsh Vardhan