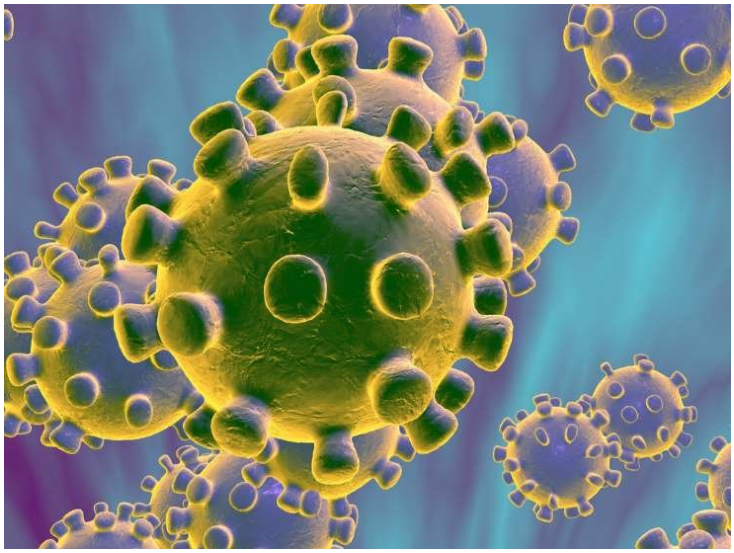
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# ICMR isolates COVID-19 virus strain

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**India is the 5th country globally to isolate the COVID-19 virus strain**



Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex health research body of India has successfully isolated the COVID-19 virus strain.

The isolation is the first step towards expediting the development of drugs, vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits in the country.

The other countries that have isolated the virus are Japan, Thailand, United States of America and China. ICMR has been closely working with the Ministry of Health, and other departments to coordinate the effort to tackle COVID-19.

ICMR, which is also the testing agency for the virus, has expanded its network of labs equipped to test COVID-19 from 51 to 65. The secondary test for reconfirmation of the virus which was earlier conducted only in National Institute of Virology have also been expanded to 31 labs. These steps will enable India to expedite detection of the virus and will help in effective management.

Till date ICMR has tested more than 6500 samples of 5900 individuals, out of which 78 cases have been tested positive for the virus. ICMR is equipped to handle more volumes of samples if the need arises.