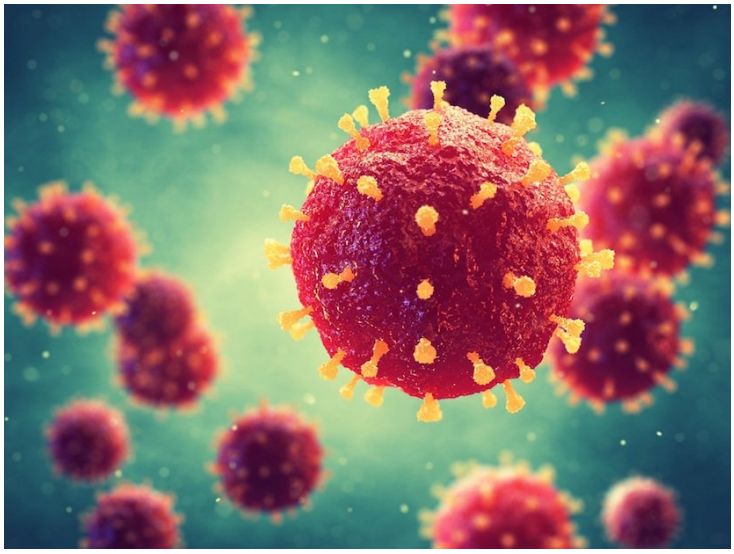
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# Six UK returnees test positive for new UK variant of SARS- CoV-2

29 December 2020 | News

**All these persons have been kept in single room isolation in designated Health Care facilities by respective State Governments. Their close contacts have also been put under quarantine. Comprehensive contact tracing has been initiated for co-travellers, family contacts and others. Genome sequencing on other specimens is going on**



Government of India took cognizance of the reports of mutant variant of SARS- CoV-2 virus reported from the UK and put in place a pro-active and preventive strategy to detect and contain the mutant variant.

The entire issue was examined at length by NTF on December 26, 2020 and the NTF concluded that there is no need to change either the existing National Treatment Protocol or existing Testing Protocols in view of the mutant variant. NTF also recommended to conduct enhanced genomic surveillance.

From November 25 to December 23, 2020 midnight, about 33,000 passengers disembarked at various Indian airports from the UK. All these passengers are being tracked and subjected by States/UTs to RT-PCR tests. So far only 114 have been found positive. These positive samples have been sent to 10 INSACOG labs (NIBMG Kolkata, ILS Bhubaneswar, NIV Pune, CCS Pune, CCMB Hyderabad, CDFD Hyderabad, InSTEM Bengaluru, NIMHANS Bengaluru, IGIB Delhi, NCDC Delhi) for genome sequencing.

A total of 6 samples of 6 UK returnee persons have been found to be positive with the new UK variant genome. 3 in NIMHANS, Bengaluru, 2 in CCMB, Hyderabad and 1 in NIV, Pune.

All these persons have been kept in single room isolation in designated Health Care facilities by respective State Governments. Their close contacts have also been put under quarantine. Comprehensive contact tracing has been initiated for co-travellers, family contacts and others. Genome sequencing on other specimens is going on.

It is important to note that the presence of the new UK Variant has already been reported by Denmark, Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Sweden, France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Japan, Lebanon and Singapore, so far.