

## Commencement of Testing for COVID-19 at Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar

Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar, with its proven expertise in infectious disease biology research has resolved to augment the testing for COVID -19 in Odisha. With due approval of DBT and ICMR, it commenced its testing with effect from 14 April 2020, in its newly commissioned BSL 3 facility. After initial training, standardization of protocols, DBT-ILS on **21<sup>st</sup> April completed successful testing of 1000 samples**, provided by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha. These samples were collected from 9 districts of Odisha (Puri, Jagatsighpur, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Kadhmal, Koraput, Bolangir, Malkangiri and Sonpur). Nine senior faculties of ILS, led by Dr. Ajay Parida, Director are supervising this challenging task with support from as many as 21 Ph.D. students and 4 Technical staff. It now aims to scale up the testing facility to achieve a target of analyzing 500 samples per day. In addition to contributing to screening efforts, DBT-ILS aims to initiate research activities for diagnostics, identifying drug targets and genomics and immunobiology studies related to COVID-19.

