



Tea, Immunity & Coronavirus

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Why in News

During a webinar organised on the occasion of **International Tea Day**, the Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Himachal Pradesh has claimed that **tea chemicals can boost immunity and block coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs**.

IHBT, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh is a constituent of **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

Key Points

- There was a **special focus on polyphenols** (bioactive chemicals) **that could bind to a specific viral protein** more efficiently than commercially available anti-HIV drugs approved for treating Covid-19 patients.
These chemicals can **further block the activity of the viral protein that helps the virus to thrive inside human cells**.
- A combination of anti-HIV drugs **Lopinavir and Ritonavir** is being used in many countries to treat Covid-19.
- The findings on Kangra tea comes days after an earlier research study where Indian and Japanese scientists **claimed that Ashwagandha - a popular herb in Ayurveda - may hold an efficient anti-Covid-19 drug**.

Polyphenols

- Polyphenols are a category of compounds naturally found in plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, tea, dark chocolate, and wine.
- They have **antioxidant properties** that can protect against various diseases. They can be subdivided into **flavonoids, phenolic acid, polyphenolic amides, and other polyphenols**.

- Polyphenols may help prevent blood clots, reduce blood sugar levels, and lower heart disease risk. They may also promote brain function, improve digestion, and offer some protection against cancer.

Kangra Tea

- **Kangra tea** is grown in the **Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh**.
- It is well known for its **unique colour and flavour**.
- Kangra tea has got the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- It is loaded with **antioxidants** like **catechins and polyphenols**, and said to offer these health benefits: promotes weight loss, builds immunity, improves oral health and mental alertness, etc.
- It is also **used in making sentizers, soap, vinegar, wine** etc.

Source: PIB