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The Wuhan Institute of Virology's vital role in fighting COVID-19

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BEIJING, May 18, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Since the outbreak of COVID-19, researchers at the **Wuhan Institute of Virology** (WIV) of the **Chinese Academy of Science** (CAS) have been working on the frontline, undertaking a range of R&D tasks to prevent and control the pandemic. Still, rumors swirling around the internet have spread around the world claiming that the novel coronavirus was synthesized and that the pandemic was caused by a leak from the lab.

In order to present a comprehensive overview of the work into pandemic prevention and control being done by researchers at the WIV, and to share their frontline experiences with the world, Science and Technology Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Yuan Zhiming, president of the CAS Wuhan Branch and director of Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory, and Guan Wuxiang, deputy director general of the WIV.

Working all out since Dec. 30, 2019

Science and Technology Daily: When did the WIV begin its research and development work into COVID-19? What was the first task you received?

Guan Wuxiang: The WIV's efforts in this regard began on Dec. 30, 2019. Upon receiving samples of an "unknown pneumonia" from Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, we organized our top experts in the field to conduct pathogen detection and identification overnight, and promptly reported their findings to the relevant authorities.

Science and Technology Daily: What R&D tasks have the WIV undertaken concerning the prevention and control of the pandemic since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak? How have these tasks progressed?

Guan Wuxiang: Since the outbreak began, the WIV has carried out various R&D works in an orderly manner. These include isolating and identifying the virus, detecting pathogens, developing antiviral drugs and vaccines, evaluating the titer levels of neutralizing antibodies in recovering patients' plasma, establishing animal-based models, and researching pathogenic mechanisms. The progress made in these areas has provided scientific and technological support