

Move to protect agro products from patenting abroad

The government Thursday decided to protect Indian agro products from foreign patenting through an amendment in the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act (APEDA).

The amendment, approved during a meeting of the central cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, will enable the agency to register products like basmati rice for protection against foreign patenting using the mechanism of Geographical Indications (GIs).

'APEDA will get power to register products under GI and protect their Intellectual Property Rights,' Finance Minister P. Chidambaram told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

Currently, basmati rice has been listed as special product for protection against intellectual property rights, but more items can be added to the list, Chidambaram said.

After the amendment is passed by parliament, APEDA would be able to fight cases abroad whenever any violation takes place. 'Products registered by India under GI cannot be grown in other parts of the world,' a trade expert said.

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