



Pricing of Bt seeds: HC reserves order

BENGALURU: The vacation bench of the High Court on Wednesday reserved its order on the interlocutory application filed by the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises and Namdhari Seeds Pvt Ltd, which had sought a stay on a central government notification.

The Centre, in December 2015, approved the quality of Bt Cotton seeds (BG-II variety) stating that the seeds can be sold at Rs 800 for 450 grams. It put the seed value at Rs 751 and trait value including taxes at Rs 49.

The Union issued a notification directing the seed manufacturers and traders to sell the seeds at the stipulated price.

The Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises and Namdhari Seeds Pvt Ltd challenged the notification before a single judge, who granted a stay on March 21, 2016. But the stay was vacated on May 3. The petitioners had filed an appeal before a division bench seeking a stay on the notification.

Senior Congress leader and Supreme Court senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for the appellants, submitted that Centre had no authority to decide the prices of the seeds.

He contended that the decision to fix Rs 49 as the trait value for the Bt cotton seeds was unscientific as private companies had developed the seeds after taking up a research.

The counsel representing South-Indian Co-ordination Committee of Farmers Movements contended that appellant companies were not manufacturing BT cotton seeds, hence they do not have the merit to question the price decided by the government. A division bench comprising Justice S Abdul Nazeer and Justice B Veerappa reserved its order.

DH News Service

