

Home » Politics

Last Modified: Mon, Sep 19 2016. 12 07 PM IST

## Regulator for GM organisms to induct more experts for faster approvals

Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee bids to undertake wider consultation to avoid controversy and smoothen the clearance process

31

Go

[Subscribe to our newsletter.](#)

Mayank Aggarwal



Photo: Ramesh Pathania/Mint

**New Delhi:** With increasing number of applications being received seeking clearances for veterinary vaccines, food, feed and processed foods, India's regulator for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has now decided to expand its pool of experts to smoothen the process.

The issue was discussed in a meeting of the regulator, Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), whose minutes were reviewed by *Mint*.

"The committee deliberated and discussed regarding the increasing number of applications being received by the GEAC requesting for various types of approvals like veterinary vaccines, food/feed and processed foods etc ... it was recommended that a panel of experts to be constituted and whenever required, those experts to be consulted for review of applications," said the minutes of the meeting.

As per the minutes, in the August meeting of the GEAC itself, at least eight such proposals were placed before the committee seeking approval for vaccines.

For instance, Serum institute of India Pvt Ltd (SIPL) sought clearance for phase III clinical trial application of a vaccine for tuberculosis while Ceva India Pvt Ltd sought permission for import of a poultry vaccine from the US and marketing in India.

Of the eight applications, seven were approved by the GEAC.

The panel, however, advised all seven applicants whose applications were cleared to approach the ministry of agriculture for further approvals.

### **Also Read: [Politics around GM mustard issue heats up](#)**

"The applicant should also approach the department of animal husbandry dairy and fisheries, ministry of agriculture and Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for seeking further approvals as per prevailing Indian laws," the minutes said.

A senior official of the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC), who did not wish to be identified, said, "The GEAC's effort is to undertake wider consultation from all experts to avoid controversy of any kind and smoothen the clearance process."

"The pool of experts drawn from all fields will be very helpful in the clearance process and would add value to work of existing experts in the GEAC," the MoEFCC official added.

The issue of GM crops has been a contentious issue in India. It flared up a few years ago during the tenure of Jairam Ramesh as the environment minister, when he had to put a moratorium on commercialization of Bt brinjal, under pressure from non-governmental organizations and activists.

At present, the controversy is revolving around application for allowing commercialization of GM mustard which has been developed by Delhi University's Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants. If GM mustard gets the green light from the GEAC, it will become the first transgenic food crop to be commercially cultivated in India.

Presently, only GM cotton is cultivated in the country.

The GEAC on 5 September made public a safety assessment report prepared by one of its sub-committees which stated that GM mustard technology has been found to be "safe for food/feed and environment".

The panel has invited comments till 5 October and will take a final decision on allowing commercialization after it receives comments from the general public and other stakeholders on the safety assessment report.

But since then the politics around the issue has heated up.

Activists are also alleging that the data released in the report is incomplete and difficult to access, and that the one-month review period is too short.

**Mayank Aggarwal**

TOPICS: **GM CROPS** **GM ORGANISMS** **JAIRAM RAMESH** **BT BRINJAL** **GMOS**

First Published: Mon, Sep 19 2016. 11 31 AM IST

## **READ MORE FROM LIVEMINT**

**Pay bills online or at a kiosk?**

**Are retail investors direct plan-ready?**

**REITs: Real estate investment trusts**

## **EDITOR'S PICKS**



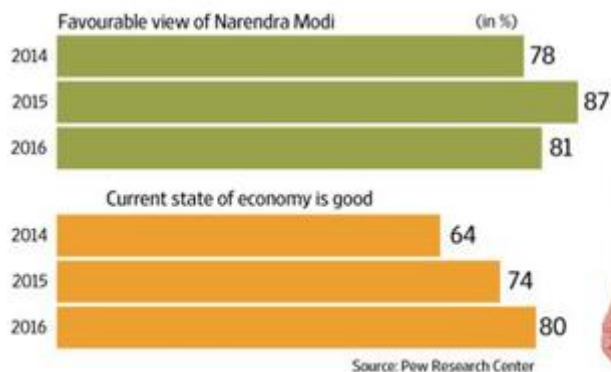
NSE IPO values it at Rs45,000 crore



Why did Bengaluru burn?

## MODI'S HONEYMOON WITH INDIA CONTINUES

A new survey conducted by the Pew Research Center finds that two years into Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure, his popularity is unblemished. Eighty-one per cent of respondents view Modi favourably, while eight out of 10 are satisfied with the state of the economy.



Narendra Modi's honeymoon with India continues uninterrupted

### FROM THE WEB

---

[HOME](#) | [COMPANIES](#) | [OPINION](#) | [INDUSTRY](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [CONSUMER](#) | [LOUNGE](#) |

[MULTIMEDIA](#) | [MONEY](#) | [SITEMAP](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Mint Code](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Mint Apps](#) | [About Us](#) |

[Syndication](#) | [Mint on Sunday](#) | [RSS](#) | [Hindustan Times](#) | [Desimartini](#)

Copyright © 2016 HT Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved