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GM crop trials: Govt will 'tread cautiously'

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NEW DELHI: Environment minister Prakash Javadekar on Tuesday said that the government would "tread cautiously" on allowing field trials of genetically modified crops after the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) issued a statement quoting the minister saying that the trials have been put on hold.

"We would consider all aspects before taking a decision on whether the field trials of GM crops should be allowed or not," the minister told HT.

The government's biotech regulator, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), had recommended to the minister that trials for 15 varieties of GM crops should be allowed.

This was the first recommendation on allowing trials GM crops after the National Democratic Alliance government took over.

Representatives of SJM and the Bhartiya Kissan Sangh had met the minister on Tuesday and their statement said, "The minister assured the members of SJM and BKS that the decision about field trials of GM crops has been



Prakash Javadekar

put on hold."

The minister was quick to rebut the claim saying that no final decision has been taken.

The two organizations had said that a parliamentary standing committee on agriculture had recommended the stopping of all field trials. They also quoted the recommendation of the Supreme Court appointed technical expert committee to impose a moratorium on field trials for 10 years till bio-safety protocol was formulated and tested.

Interestingly, the stand taken by two RSS affiliated organisation was similar to anti-GM crop campaigners, which the recent Intelligence Bureau report had accused of being anti-national.

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