

## Bt brinjal could enter India from Bangladesh illegally despite moratorium

Despite India's moratorium on the release of genetically-modified (GM) Bt brinjal, there is a possibility of gene contamination of Indian brinjals from Bangladesh due to illegal entry of Bt brinjal seeds through the porous border between the two countries.

Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company (Mahyco), which developed the Bt brinjal technology, has transferred it to the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI). Mahyco, whose 26 per cent stake is owned by US life sciences company Monsanto, is hoping that the new Union government will expedite the release of Bt brinjal in India.

CD Mayee, former co-chairman of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee, said: "In the absence of a permission to use them in India, there is a threat of illegal entry of Bt brinjal seeds into India via Bengal, Orissa and Bihar." Eggplant is a popular vegetable in West Bengal, which has banned field trials of genetically modified crops.

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