

Diverging paths of developing giants: GM seed approvals surge in China while Indian innovation blocked by biotech barriers

China's moves since October 2023 to approve several genetically modified (GM) strains of maize and soybean have shined a spotlight on India's own GM journey and how lengthy legal tangles and government moratoriums have condemned Indian agriculture to low yields and output levels.

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The Chinese media has reported that its government, in October 2023, approved 37 GM maize varieties and 14 GM soybean varieties. More recently, in March 2024, it approved a second batch of 27 additional maize and three soybean varieties.

China's moves come when India continues to ban the use of most high-yield GM varieties of crops. The only genetically modified crop India has so far allowed is Bt cotton.

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According to veteran agricultural economist Ashok Gulati, India should take inspiration from the success of Bt cotton, which was approved by the Vajpayee government in 2002, and has since seen a huge increase in crop yields.

According to Deepak Pental, a distinguished genetic scientist who developed India's first variety of GM seeds in the form of Bt mustard, another way India is losing out is that the bulk of the scientific community has stopped working in the field of genetic engineering of seeds due to there not being any progress in the area for decades.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)