

# Old knowledge to get India money

**DRUG DEAL** Signs pact that will curb bio-piracy

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**NEW DELHI:** India will be able to claim compensation for use of country's traditional knowledge to derive medicines by the developed world as per the new agreement approved by negotiators of over 190 countries in Japan on Friday night.

The approval, to set up an International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources, came on the last day of the convention on bio-diversity meet in Nagoya, Japan, result of over 20 years of negotiations and debate.

The treaty, a protocol to the main convention, lays down basic ground rules on how nations cooperate in obtaining genetic resources from animals to plants and fungi, said a state-

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JAIRAM RAMESH  
Environment minister

ment issued by United Nations Environment Programme.

Environment minister Jairam Ramesh described the deal as a major achievement in the country's efforts to curb bio-piracy. India was first to announce that it will have green accounting system — to measure worth of India's forests and bio-diversity — in place by 2011.

India has already established Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), where over 2,000 sources

have been digitised to check patent of this knowledge in the western world. India has already thwarted moves to patent derivatives of tulsi (basil) and haldi (turmeric) in US and Europe.

Though TKDL only allows India to challenge patents, the new agreement will help in seeking compensation through a new global protocol. It will also promote research between rich and poor nations in use of plants and pathogens for development of medicine. "Indians will get money if its pathogens are used to derive medicines like the ones done for Avian flu," Ramesh said.

The deal outlines how the benefits, arising for example when a plant's genetics are turned into a commercial product such as a pharmaceutical, are shared with the countries who have conserved that resource often for millennia.

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