

IAF urges Govt to collaborate with SAARC nations & China to fight against THMPD

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The International Ayurveda Foundation (IAF) has urged the Indian government to collaborate with SAARC nations and China to fight against the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD) of the European Union (EU) under which every herbal medicine that is sold over the counter will need to have either a Traditional Herbal Registration or a marketing authorisation.

IAF's suggestion in this regard comes in the wake of the THMPD directives that came into force from May 1 this year.

IAF general secretary Praful Patel said that the ban on traditional medicines is not an issue faced by India alone, as other SAARC countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal etc also have a huge market in European countries. "If we all protest and voice our stand together against this ban on traditional medicines in the EU it will have a greater impact on the message we want to send across the EU."

He added that like India even Chinese traditional industry is facing the brunt of the ban. "It is high time to act, I am surprised the Indian government is not doing its best to protect the industries interest," he said.

The IAF had suggested to the government on the formation of a coalition with other THMP exporters, such as China, South Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, etc almost three years back which fell on deaf years.

Patel warned that even though the THMPD is implemented in the EU, the European law enforcing agencies have not actually started policing it thoroughly but let a month go by they would soon be closing on the traditional dispensaries, hospitals and shops claiming it illegal, displacing and rendering hundreds of trained and qualified doctors and pharmacists jobless.

Patel informed that he is surprised by the government's lack of concern over the loss of business from the EU. He said, "Now THMPD has started to act as a precedent for other countries as well. Recently the US had intercepted a consignment of Indian traditional medicines and stopped it from entering the US market. If this goes on then our traditional medicines market will soon be confined only within India."

"We hope that the government will take the initiative at least now. The government needs to conduct an in-depth study of all international issues pertaining to traditional medicines with other countries who are being affected by this ban and suggest a line of action together," he suggested.

Protesting the ban of all ayurvedic products in the European Union through the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD), IAF is soon planning to initiate legal proceedings under Article 234 EC in the Courts of the United Kingdom challenging the legality of the THMPD.