

India foils Chinese bid to patent 'pudina'

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: India has foiled a major Chinese bio-piracy bid to patent the use of medicinal plants 'pudina' (mint) and 'kalamegha' (andrographis) for the treatment of H5N1

and epidemic fevers.

After receiving exhaustive evidence from **CSIR** that confirmed India's stand, the European Patent Office (EPO) on June 10 cancelled the decision to grant patent to Livzon, a major Chinese pharmaceutical

AYURVEDA WARS

► 'Pudina' and 'kalamegha' have been widely used in India since ages for flu & epidemic fevers

► Chinese firm Livzon filed a patent application in 2007 claiming their usefulness in the treatment of bird flu

► Impressed with the data, European Patent Office decided to grant patent to Livzon on February 25, 2010

► **CSIR** and India's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library presented proof that the medicines had been widely used in India



company, on the medicinal properties of 'pudina' and 'kalamegha' for treating bird flu.

It all began when Livzon, on January 19, 2007, filed a patent application at EPO claiming usefulness of 'pudina' and 'kalamegha' for the treatment of bird flu to be novel. Impressed with the data, EPO decided to grant patent to Livzon on February 25,

avian influenza or bird flu.

The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, with the help of India's **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, dug out formulations from ancient Ayurveda and Unani texts, like 'Cakradattah', 'Bhaisajya ratnavali', 'Kitaab-al-Haawi-fil-Tibb' and 'Qaraabaadeen Azam wa Akmal', dating back to the 9th century, to show that both 'pudina' and 'kalamegha' have been widely used in India since ages for influenza

2010. However, on April 27, **TKDL director Dr VK Gupta** shot off a letter to EPO informing the examiners that the medicinal properties had been long known in the Indian systems of traditional medicine.

Following the letter, the EPO set up a three-member panel to study the evidence. On June 10, the panel decided to cancel the Chinese patent claim. **TKDL** is a collaborative project between **CSIR** and **Union health ministry's department of Ayush**.