

Stop GM mustard trials: Farmers to PM

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A day before the Supreme Court hearing on GM mustard, a group of scientists and activists alleged the government had given “untrue” and “incorrect” information in its affidavit filed recently.

Also, some anti-GM farmers’ associations wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop all approvals and trials of GM mustard. “It is with alarming alacrity that the government of India has violated its own undertaking given to the SC in hearings related to this matter and also acted in contempt of the court’s orders when it got the GM mustard planted in six locations around November 1, 2022,” said Kapil Shah of the Alliance for

Sustainable Agriculture.

The Centre, in an affidavit, said opposition to GM crops was based on “unfounded” fears as India was importing and consuming edible oils made from GM seeds. It said 50-60 per cent of the edible oil consumed in India is imported and hence the use of new genetic technology was pertinent in reducing dependence on import.

Kavitha Kuruganti of the Coalition of GM-Free India said all these were incorrect and there were at least five areas in which the government gave wrong information to the country’s highest court.

The first of these is the claim that the government is

implementing what the court-appointed panel had said and the panel itself was divided in its recommendations, she said.

She said the Centre’s claim that GM was not a herbicide-tolerant crop was “outrageously irresponsible” and unscientific. The applicant did not apply for the HT commercial trait. Bar genes being enhanced manifold in its expression is a dead giveaway that GM mustard is nothing but an HT crop, she said.

The claim about GM mustard leading to substantial savings on foreign exchange by lowering imports does not have evidence to support it, she added.

