

Govt officials decline to meet USITC members

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TOUGHENING its stand against the US, Indian government has decided not to meet the officials of the USITC, a federal American agency which has initiated a probe against domestic trade and investment policies.

"USITC officials are coming to India and they have sought meetings with officials of different ministries, including commerce and industry, finance and external affairs. But India has decided not to entertain them," said an official.

USITC has alleged that India's trade and investments

rules, particularly intellectual property laws, discriminate against US companies. Last week, it conducted a hearing in connection with its investigation, "Trade, Investment, and Industrial Policies in India: Effects on the US Economy".

"The country's IPR laws are fully compliant with international laws including WTO. If they have any issues with our laws, they can raise that in the WTO and at that forum we can have consultations with them," the official said.

The Obama administration had been strongly criticising India's investment climate and IPR laws, specially in the pharma and the solar sectors.

OFFICIALS from the American agency are visiting India and have sought meetings with different ministries

The USITC has raised the matter of rejection of patent to Bristol-Myers Squibb's Sprycel and Novartis' Glivec. It has stated that Indian IPR laws are not Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights compliant under the WTO.

Swiss pharma major Novartis had lost a legal battle for getting its blood cancer drug

Glivec patented in India and to restrain Indian companies from manufacturing generic drugs. The Supreme Court had rejected the multinational company's plea last year.

India already figures on the US Government's Special 301 Priority Watch List and there is also a proposal to include India in the list of America's Priority Foreign Country.

Under the US Trade Act, a Priority Foreign Country is the worst classification given to foreign countries that deny adequate and effective protection of IPR or fair and equitable market access to US persons relying upon IPR protection.

Govt.