

Bose sues Beats over headphone patents

SAN FRANCISCO, US: Audio technology veteran Bose Corporation on Friday sued Beats Electronics over patented technology for cancelling noise in earphones.

The suit filed in federal court in the US state of Delaware pits the 50-year-old firm against an Internet Age youngster being bought by Apple in a deal valued at \$3bn.



"Bose brings this action against Beats to protect its valuable patented technology for noise-cancelling headphones," lawyers for the company said in a copy of the suit obtained by AFP.

Attorneys said they had also filed a complaint with the US International Trade Commission, which has the power to block imports of headsets found to infringe on patented technology.

Bose accused Beats of infringing on five of its patents for cutting out unwanted noise in headphones, particularly by cancelling it out with other sound waves.

The technology is referred to as active noise reduction.

"Beats has designed the infringing noise cancelling functionality to be used automatically when a user is listening to music, and Beats instructs users on how to implement noise cancelling functionality when a user only desires noise reduction," the lawsuit maintained.

Bose called on the court to order Beats to stop using the patented technology and to pay unspecified damages.

The suit comes at a time when Beats is being bought by a technology titan well experienced in patent litigation.

Apple has been waging battles in courts around the world with Samsung over patented technology in iPhones and iPads.

Apple in May said it is buying Beats Music and Beats Electronics in a much-hyped deal worth \$3bn. The acquisition has yet to close.

Buying Beats was expected to help Cupertino, California-based Apple, a pioneer in digital music with its wildly popular iTunes platform, ramp up its efforts to counter successful models of streaming services like Pandora, Spotify and others.

The deal for the maker of high-end audio equipment and operator of a subscription streaming music service is Apple's largest acquisition ever.

It calls for Beats co-founders Dr. Dre, a Grammy-winning hip-hop pioneer, and Jimmy Iovine, a veteran music executive, to join the California company.



Since launching five years ago, Beats has become a popular brand for audio equipment and has attracted the likes of Lady Gaga, Lil Wayne and Nicki Minaj, who have designed their own customised Beats headphones and speakers.

Fashion designers and street artists such as Alexander Wang, Futura and Snarkitecture have collaborated on some products.

The deal, which has been rumored for weeks, is subject to regulatory approvals and is expected to be completed later this year.

Beats was reported to have claimed 60% of the billion dollars spent on top-end earphones in the US last year.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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