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Diluted patent laws will spike drug price: experts

- Special Correspondent

Drug prices in India are likely to escalate if the government dilutes patent laws under pressure from monopoly companies in the West, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) experts participating in a meeting here have warned.

Principal Secretary, Industries and former Controller General of Patents, Government of India P.H. Kurian said trade negotiators from India faced immense pressure from lobbies representing the pharmaceutical and publishing companies in the US and other Western countries for a more liberalised IPR regime that would enable them to reap vast profits from the booming market in India. "They often insist on amendments to our IPR laws as a pre-condition to invest and do business in India," he said in his presidential address at a two-day discussion on the National IPR policy organised by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) and the Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council here on Thursday.

IPR literacy

Mr. Kurian said any attempt to suppress the compulsory licensing system or amend section 3 (D) of the Indian Patent Act would lead to a spurt in the price of drugs, affecting a large section of the Indian population and impacting on the public health system. Inaugurating the meet, Chief Secretary S.M. Vijayanand called for a broadbased IPR literacy campaign in Kerala. Legal educator N.R. Madhava Menon called for policy initiatives to address commercialisation, the weakest link in the IPR chain. Many patented inventions that failed to generate interest in India are known to have become commercially successful in countries with a better IPR ecosystem, he said.

Former Director, CSIR-NIIST, A.D. Damodaran highlighted the need to promote in-house research by Indian industries.

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