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PCB buckles, lowers fee for pharma & chemical units
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HYDERABAD: Succumbing to the pressure from bulk drug manufacturers, chemical companies and other industries, the Pollution Control Board (PCB) sent fresh proposals to the Telangana government calling for decreasing of the hike in the fee regarding the consent for operation (CFO) and consent for establishment (CFE).

The fee had recently been increased five-fold and the companies had been asked to pay five-year fee in one go to avoid renewal every year. PCB member-secretary P Satyanarayan Reddy told TOI that a new proposal has now been sent to the government to lower the fee amount, and said, "We are expecting a GO later this week or next week."

He explained that the consent fee was last hiked 20 years ago. "The decision to hike the fee by five times is now being withdrawn," he said.

Reddy said the fresh proposal to the government talks about increase of fee by only three times. "Regarding the five-year payment, we amended it so that industries can pay annually though the renewal which is for five years. For companies that have already paid as per the new structure (of the five-fold hiked fee), the excess fee will be adjusted to future payments made by them," he added.

Meanwhile, Bulk Drug Manufacturers' Association executive director P Eshwar Reddy told TOI that the increase in fee was turning out to be a huge burden for them all. PCB collects the fee for establishment and operation consent under the Air and Water Pollution Prevention Acts.

"When compared to Andhra Pradesh and other states, Telangana has increased the fee by five times. This has become a huge burden to the industries," Reddy pointed out.

For instance, an industry which pays ₹50,000 per annum towards the fee will have to cough up ₹25 lakh. "We represented the matter to both PCB and government and demanded that the fee be reduced," Eshwar Reddy added. But the PCB official said when compared to West Bengal and Tamilnadu, Telangana's fee structure is reasonable by comparison.