

Y.K. HAMIED CHAIRMAN, CIPLA

For someone who calls himself a man of science, Yusuf K. Hamied has a patent dislike for intellectual property rights. He's been lobbying for India and other like minded countries to walk out of the WTO and form the TWTO (Third World Trade Organisation).

For long, Hamied has almost single-handedly fought the Big Pharma of the Western world. He accused them of holding 3 billion people in the Third World to ransom by using their monopoly status to charge higher prices. About a decade ago, Cipla shot into the limelight, when Hamied offered AIDS drugs to African countries at \$350 for a year of treatment, compared to \$10,000-15,000 that Western multinationals charged. He followed it up by supplying a drug that stops AIDS transmission from mother to child free of cost to African countries. In India, however, authorities declined his free offer.

Hamied believes that Indian patients could get a raw deal in the next few years. Since 1972, the national rules allowed Indian companies to fire \ make copies of patented drugs and sell them cheaply in India. The Indian government, under the WTO guidelines, changed this rule. Now no local firm will be allowed to copy a drug patented after January

I, 2005. Since it usually takes seven to 10 years for drugs to hit the market after patents have been filed, Hamied says that Indian patients will be forced to buy expensive, patented medicines starting 2013. He's egging on the Indian government, under TRIPs, to allow automatic licensing to copy drugs in case of emergencies. If he has his way, Indian patients could get life-saving drugs at 30-80 percent lower prices. It may even encourage developing countries to follow suit.

January 8, 2010 FORBES INDIA