

r>**Title:** Need to make available cheap drugs for treatment of AIDS – Laid.

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SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT) : In spite of tall promises of succour to HIV Positive persons in India, ninety per cent of them have no access to medication. Drugs which can prolong life span and improve the quality of their lives are still beyond their reach. Due to strict patent restrictions even those Indian companies which have the technical capacity to manufacture these drugs cannot do so. If they could, the drugs would have cost a fraction of the current price. Even if these drugs are imported at zero duty, a HIV positive person would need medication amounting to Rs.7-8 lakhs a year for life and even then it is not a cure! It is for the Government to explore ways to get around strict patent restrictions demanding relaxation of WTO provisions like compulsory licensing of our country on public health emergency. The situation is grim as it is calculated on an average, some 3,500 Indians are contracting HIV every day. A World Bank Report warns that without prevention efforts 3.5 crore Indian adults – five per cent of adults could be infected by 2005 outstripping the entire continent of Africa.