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Title: Need for speedy passage of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill.

SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA (KENDRAPARA): I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the need for speedy passage of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill.

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and its rules in their present form restricts the availability of essential narcotic drugs like morphine, administered to patients in severe pain. The licensing regime in place makes it very time consuming and to avoid legal hassles, hospitals are weary of stocking such medicines.

In most States barring some like Odisha and Maharashtra, hospitals have to obtain licences from different departments like Excise, Drugs Control, Health etc. These licences are for a very short period and by the time they are able to procure the medicines, the permit period is almost on the verge of lapse. Therefore, they buy very small quantities as a result of which deserving patients are deprived of the highly effective pain relief medications.

The proposed amendment bill aims at creating uniform regulations for all States and Union Territories and creating a single level clearance for procurement of narcotic drugs, subsequently improving the availability of pain medications across the country. For the lakhs of patients suffering from diseases such as cancer and AIDS, the speedy passage of this bill will ensure that some measure of relief is provided to them.

Therefore, I would request the government to support this cause and ensure that it is passed in this session.