

market linkage to our farmers. Otherwise, lowering the targets of foodgrain procurement by the Government will only increase the hardship of our farmers. Thank you.

**Need to create a special AIDS Control Agency in the North East Region of the country**

SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI (Gujarat): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, recently, the Public Accounts Committee while reviewing the National AIDS Control Programme recommended the setting up of a separate special agency other than the National AIDS Control Organisation, exclusively for the North Eastern States to oversee and supervise the implementation and monitoring of the special HIV programme there. They observed that the problem of AIDS was fast assuming epidemic proportions in the North-East and was qualitatively different from other States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, where it is highly prevalent. Hence, it is felt that there is need to have a separate dispensation to control and combat HIV/AIDS in the North Eastern States.

It is said that the spread of HIV in this particular region is largely because of the intravenous drug use where over 30 per cent of the youth population is HIV positive.

There is an international dimension to the AIDS problem in the North Eastern Region due to the illicit trans border drug trafficking. It is shocking to note that the National AIDS Committee which is supposed to provide an overall policy decision, has not met even once since 2001. The NAC should meet once every six months to review the overall implementation of the programme.

There is an urgent need to develop an alternative drug to ARTUs which will be cost effective and it should be 'made through the Indian System of Medicines like Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha. The Minister of Health and Family Welfare is, therefore, requested to sponsor a special R&D project to develop an indigenous drug. The Government should also enhance suitable incentives for Indian companies to undertake research in developing AIDS vaccine. Thank you.

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with this issue.