NEWS

Rs 11,000 cr for third phase of AIDS plan

Four times more funds compared to phase II

Anuradha Mascarenhas

Pune, January 22: AS efforts are on to halt and reverse the AIDS epidemic in India over the next five years, hopes are now pinned on the third phase of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP-III) that will officially be launched on April 1 this year. K Sujatha Rao, Director General, National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), when contacted, told Pune Newsline that a whopping Rs 11,000 crore will be spent on the programme.

During the NACP-II, the government had allocated a budgetary amount of Rs 2,065 crore.

The amount has quadrupled during the NACP-III, points Suresh Kumar, Director, Finance, NACO.

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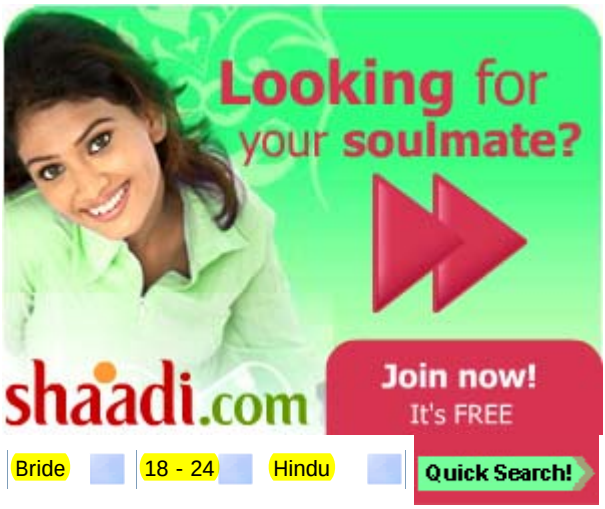

While agencies like WB, DFID, USAID, UNDP and Global Fund have promised Rs 23 crore, a major chunk of the said amount — an approximate Rs 3,000 crore — comes from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and ILO. The GOI will provide one-third of the amount to the tune of Rs 8000 crore.

The first phase of NACP-I began in 1992 followed by NACP-II in 1999. While the third phase was scheduled to be launched in April last year, a delay due to internal matters will now see it open on April 1, says Kumar.

The preparation for the programme which promises to be more research driven and include more of prevention activities, went through a rigorous amount of

planning, say experts at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) who were among the key groups for the programme.

Experts point out that the NACP-III intends to provide a range of preventive services, including behaviour change communication, treatment of STI's, Integrated Counselling and Testing, Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission and supply of safe blood and infection control.

Key areas of the programme also include more people on ART including children and strengthening the infrastructure and human resources in prevention and treatment programmes at the district and village levels.

The preparation of NACP III has involved all development partners including the private sector, academic and research institutions, civil society and People Living with HIV/AIDS networks.