

Italy to help India fight AIDS, drug menace

Italy will provide financial assistance to fight HIV/AIDS and drug addiction in Tripura, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, an Italian official said here Friday.

'The Italian government has decided to provide Rs.30 million through the Red Cross societies of India and Italy to deal with AIDS, drug addiction, tuberculosis, malaria, water borne disease, various public health problems and disaster management,' said Antonio Armellini, Italian ambassador to India.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Red Cross Societies of India and Italy to implement this one year long project, beginning next month.

'Drug abuse has become a major challenge in Southeast Asia and it does not recognize borders,' Armellini told journalists.

'Students, professionals, vehicle workers, and army and para-military troopers are the target group of this project,' said Matteo Ciarli, country coordinator of the Italian Red Cross.

Armellini said: 'India and Italy have done business worth \$6.5 billion during last year and the former is in the advantageous side in doing the business.'

'Both the countries are doing business in automobiles, fertilizers, leather, chemicals, information technology and food processing sectors,' he said.

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