

2.1 mn may be hit as India faces shortage of HIV drugs

New Delhi: Many of the 2.1 million HIV-affected patients in India could be in for difficulties with the government facing shortage of a critical medicine which is distributed free. Tenofovir/lamivudine tablets may run out of stock, said sources in the National Aids Control Organisation (Naco), which is the nodal government agency for distribution of the medicine.

An overwhelming majority of the country's 2.1 million HIV-affected depend on the free supply of antiretroviral drugs from the government as they are expensive in open market and beyond the reach of most patients.

The Naco sources, at the same



Majority of the HIV-hit depend on the free supply of drugs

time, said all efforts are being made to address the situation through timely replenishment.

When contacted, health minister Harsh Vardhan said the stocks will be replenished very soon. "There is one drug. We will get adequate supply in some

time," he said.

Government procures these drugs from manufacturing firms through tendering process and it is the delay caused in floating of tender that has caused the delay.

Activists have been complaining of drug shortage, saying patients were not being adequate supply of medicines because of their depleting numbers.

India has the third-highest number of people living with HIV in the world with 2.1 million Indians accounting for about four out of 10 people infected with the deadly virus in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a UN report. — PTI

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