

PM asks industry to help curb AIDS

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Vajpayee on Friday urged industry to forge an alliance with the government for controlling the spread of HIV in the country.

At a special meeting with captains of industry on World AIDS Day, the PM said the battle against HIV has to be fought on four fronts: Maximising public knowledge as there is no cure for AIDS, activating institutional and administrative measures, care and support for people who are afflicted, and support of the business houses for research on prevention and cure. Vajpayee urged the business community to take the message of prevention to this unorganised sector.

The government-industry partnership, he said, should focus on:

- Networking among government agencies, businesses, voluntary organisations and social institutions for advocacy and partnerships.

NR's AIDS helpline

NEW DELHI: To spread awareness about HIV and AIDS, the Northern Railway is planning to start a helpline on its telephone network. The service is expected to be functional "shortly".

The helpline will offer responses to standard queries such as information on the disease, how it is transmitted, symptoms and preventive measures. (TOINS)

- Funding comprehensive health services for employees and their families.

- Ensuring easy access to condoms to employees and local community.

- Making use of every method and outlet of business advertising to create awareness.

- Eliminating HIV screening as part of pre-employment physical examination.

- Ensuring non-discrimination in work places and introducing effective workplace intervention.

- Joining the national campaign against drug abuse.

- Starting activities for income generation for families of employees who are affected by AIDS.

Naidu wants national policy on sex workers

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NEW DELHI: Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu, during a video conference among the chief ministers of AP, Karnataka and Maharashtra — states with a high prevalence of HIV — on Friday, has called for a nationwide debate for evolving a policy on commercial sex trade for realistically coping with it. These people have been identified as a high-risk group for HIV

infection. In fact, most of the earlier interventions on AIDS targeted this group only.

Naidu said one of the most urgent tasks is to "break the silence" surrounding the infection, remove the stigma and talk about sex issues for encouraging safer practices. Union health minister C P Thakur said the government is making all efforts to meet the needs of different groups, to initiate dialogue.