

# Govt to ensure cheaper drugs for AIDS

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government is looking into ways to ensure that the hardcore poor who are infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS will have access to medicines, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said the Government was negotiating with pharmaceutical companies

to reduce prices and invoking its rights to compulsory licensing and parallel importing.

"Some people may not like us doing this, saying that we are not respecting intellectual property rights but surely our people's lives are more important than huge profits for already rich companies," he said during the Red Ribbon Gala 2002 organised by Malaysian AIDS Foundation

yesterday.

The fund raising event is the first in a yearlong series of events to commemorate the Malaysian AIDS Council's one decade of existence.

During the event, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali presented the Dr Siti Hasmah Award 2002 to Michael Chow Shuh Yun for his outstanding contribution to HIV/AIDS work in the country.