

Trial via video conferencing turns into a reality

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In a revolutionary step towards the administration of justice, trials via video conferencing have finally become a reality in Goa, with the North and South Goa district and Sessions courts linked to the jails and judicial lock-ups through electronic media communication and trial facility.

In fact, trials through video conferencing, wherein undertrials housed in jails are examined and cross-examined on camera, has already started on a trial basis, and the facility will now become a routine affair with its formal commissioning at the hands of Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Swatanter Kumar in the presence of Chief Minister, Digambar Kamat, Justices Nelson A Britto, P B Mazumdar and C L Pangarkar and other dignitaries on Thursday.

Under this system, undertrials need not be brought to the courts for examination, saving valuable time and manpower required to escort the accused to the trial courts.

The facility has been networked by the National Informatics Centre at a cost of Rs 23 lakh. The Aguada



Chief Minister Digambar Kamat speaking to a convict at sub jail in Sada, Mormugao from the District & Sessions Court, Margao via video conferencing on Thursday.

central jail will be linked to the facility during phase II.

Soon after the commissioning, Chief Justice Swatanter and Chief Minister Digambar Kamat communicated to a convict housed at the Sada sub jail and jail superintendent, Levinson Martins. The convict was asked by Kamat on the jail environment, whether the undertrials get adequate food et al.

The convict answered in the positive.

In his address, Chief Justice Swatanter congratulated the district Judiciary and the State Government for the path-breaking facility, which will provide a new dimension to the dispensation of justice. "This system is aimed at facilitating quicker, speedier and cost effective trials through video conferencing.

The system will minimise the movement of the under trials and save cost on the deployment of the police force for escort duties", he said, adding that threats to key witnesses will be reduced by this facility.

In his address, Chief Minister, Digambar Kamat said the system will ensure that the accused is produced before the court digitally,

adding that this is one step by the Government to ensure speedy dispensation of justice.

Saying that the advantages of trials through video conferencing are manifold, Kamat said the facility would do away with the requirement producing undertrials in the court and minimise manpower for escort duties and reduce chances of escapes during transit.

He offered his Government's unstinted support to the Chief Justice of the Bombay High court to make Goa a model State.

In her welcome address, District and Sessions Judge, Nutan Sardesai said "with the inauguration of the facility, we make a beginning to get across people at far off distances with the use of the technology in a positive way for better connectivity with minimum expenses, time and risk."

She said the facility will go a long way in the speedy administration of justice and thanked Chief Justice Swatanter for his vision to make Goa a model state vis-à-vis administration of justice, aimed at reducing the backlog of cases and ameliorating the anxiety of the litigants at large.