

e-boost to prison visits in Dhanbad

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Dhanbad, Aug. 16: Relatives and friends of undertrials and prisoners lodged in Dhanbad Jail will no longer have to wait for hours in long queues to meet them as all the eight block headquarters of Dhanbad district have now been e-connected to the prison to facilitate video conferencing.



(An inmate talks to a family member through video conferencing after the facility was inaugurated in Dhanbad jail on Monday. Picture by Gautam Dey)

Inaugurating the prison e-interview service, Dhanbad deputy commissioner Sunil Kumar Burnwal — he was earlier state IG (prisons) — said the move would greatly reduce stress among prisoners regarding the well-being of their family members as most often they do not get an opportunity to interact with them due to rush at the jail gate during meeting hours.

“Women find it most difficult to meet their relatives in jail due to social compulsions,” said the DC, adding the new facility will address all their concerns.

The e-connecting efforts would be co-ordinated by block pragya kendras, a key element in the Centre’s national e-governance plan under which unemployed youth are used to man service centres equipped with computers.

The kendras in eight block headquarters of Dhanbad district have been e-connected with the jail by Jharnet, the state arm for implementing the e-governance project.

According to district officials, a family member of a jail inmate would have to contact the nearest pragya kendra to be allotted a time slot. The kendra will fix a time in consultation with the jail authorities.

Under normal circumstances, time allotted to a family would be 15 minutes for a nominal charge of Rs 10.

Jail superintendent Hamid Akhtar said the facility would be available from 8 am to 1 pm throughout the week except Sundays. “Two studios have been created in the jail premises,” he said, adding that the hardware and software required to start the facility were already in place.