

'Can court sessions be live-streamed?'

The Supreme Court on Friday asked for the assistance of the Attorney-General on a plea to live-stream proceedings of the Constitution Bench in nationally important cases, such as those on Aadhaar and decriminalisation of gay sex, in the Supreme Court.

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra decided to seek K.K. Venugopal's opinion on a petition filed by senior advocate Indira Jaising in her personal capacity.

Ms. Jaising said courts around the world allowed their proceedings to be recorded, though they differed in their ways.

She said some judges in the constitutional court in India had historically been reluctant about the idea of recording court proceedings because it would "capture every sentence" in the banter between judges and lawyers which were merely a way to elicit responses and not a sign of how the judge would finally decide the case.

Different methods

Ms. Jaising, however, said there were different methods to resolve such reluctance and listed the means adopted by courts globally.

"Some courts allow publication after a gap of 30 minutes, some ban recording of proceedings only in trial courts as that would compromise witnesses, some give edited versions of the proceedings, some record the proceedings but do not air it in public, some give out transcripts of proceedings," Ms. Jaising said.

She said such apprehensions should not create a roadblock in the public's right to information.

The Supreme Court, in a bid to usher in transparency, had earlier allowed the installation of CCTV video recording with audio in trial courts and tribunals.

Citizen's right to know

Ms. Jaising said citizens have the right to information and matters of constitutional and national importance can be live-streamed.

If live streaming of top court's proceedings is not possible, then alternately the video recording should be allowed the senior lawyer had argued.

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