

AIR Panaji starts digitizing its archives

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Panaji: Have you ever nostalgically wished you could go for a play or for a mando festival from back in the days? All may not be totally lost as All India Radio, Panaji, has begun the process to digitize and upload its archives of magnetic tapes which include talk shows, interviews, dramas, a radio play and even live music that was recorded. All India Radio's chief executive officer Jawhar Sircar is keen to digitize and preserve the recordings and furthermore to allow all radio stations to access the rich content through a central server.

"Every day in our programme meetings we collectively decide which tape - whether Konkani, English, Marathi, whichever tapes came our way- should be declared for digitization. Having done that, the scene shifts to the digitization hub," AIR's FM channel head Savio Noronha said.

The need to digitize the magnetic tapes is an urgent one since the tapes are already being affected by fungus, dust, heat and age which can cause the magnetic tapes to wrinkle, said Noronha, who is coordinating the digitization process.

In order to digitize the 10,000 spools of magnetic tapes, AIR had to repair the old equipment and coax the engineers. The equipment in this case is the Meltron tape recorder and player. "Sometimes to digitize a half an hour tape takes one hour or even 2 hours because the Meltrons overheat," Noronha said.

Under the supervision of the head of AIR office C S Besekar and additional director general M S Thomas, the digitization process is being facilitated by a team of volunteers and former AIR employees like former station head of Ahmedabad and

director Athos Fernandes, RJ Bambino Dias, ex-radio announcer Pratima Kamat, Zulema Pereira, Priyanka Holi, Amey Joshi, Ruth Costa, RG Gawade, engineers Rajendra Naik, Suhas Chari and Pramod Kumar.

Along with the records, the team has also digitized the tape cue sheets, including details like date of recording, event, singer or performers of the play for future reference.