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Latin America's first same-sex marriage

BUENOS AIRES: Two Argentine men wed in Latin America's first same-sex marriage on Monday, helped by a provincial governor who ignored a court ruling that blocked their marriage plans earlier this month.

Alex Freyre, 39, and Jose Maria Di Bello, 41, were married in the southern Argentine city of Ushuaia in a ceremony with a small group of onlookers and friends.

"We're extremely excited and happy about what this means for all gays and lesbians in Argentina," DiBello said.

The two men, who are HIV-positive, were granted a marriage licence by a municipal judge here last month that allowed the couple to wed despite a national policy of defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

They planned to marry on Dec 1 for World AIDS Day

but a federal judge overturned the wedding decision and ordered it suspended.

The couple then travelled to Ushuaia in the province of Tierra del Fuego, where they were given residency by the governor, who upheld the initial ruling allowing them to marry, said Claudio Morgado, president of the Argentine gay rights group National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism.

"The first same-sex marriage in Latin America and the Caribbean finally took place," said Morgado, a witness to the wedding.

Argentina became the first Latin American country to allow civil unions by same-sex couples in 2002.

Civil unions here and other Argentine cities grant same-sex couples some legal marital rights, but not others, such as the right to adopt. — Reuters