

The following steps have been taken by the Government for modernization and strengthening of forensic capabilities in the country which would inter-alia help in reducing the extent of time taken for completion of forensic investigations:

(i) Modernization of Central Forensic Sciences Laboratories at Bhopal, Guwahati, Pune and Kolkata.

(ii) Upgrading of machinery & equipment in the Central Forensic Sciences Laboratories, including in the new disciplines of Forensics in Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances, Digital Forensics, DNA Forensic analysis, Forensic Psychology.

(iii) Setting-up a State-of-the-art DNA Analysis and Research & Development facility at the Central Forensic Sciences Laboratory at Chandigarh. The new facility has commenced operations since December 2019.

(iv) Setting-up a National Cyber Forensic Science Laboratory at the Central Forensic Sciences Laboratory, Hyderabad to investigate important cases of digital fraud / cyber forensics. The laboratory has started functioning.

(v) Operationalizing an e-Forensics IT platform, which connects 117 forensic science laboratories (Central and State) in the country.

(vi) The National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) has been set up under the Act of the Parliament in the year 2020 for providing quality and trained forensic manpower across all parts of the country. The headquarter of the NFSU is located in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Apart from this, campuses of the NFSU are situated at Delhi, Goa, Agartala (Tripura), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Dharwad (Karnataka), and Guwahati (Assam). The NFSU has also started training academies in Imphal (Manipur) and Pune (Maharashtra).

(vii) Assistance to States/ Union Territories for strengthening the DNA analysis, Cyber-forensics and related facilities in their forensic laboratories under Nirbhaya Fund Scheme. Projects have been approved for 30 States/ Union Territories at a total cost of Rs.250.5954 Crore.

(viii) A Scheme for Modernization of Forensic Capacities with a total financial outlay of Rs. 2080.5 Crore has been approved. This will provide assistance to States/ Union Territories to develop high quality forensic science facilities for modernization of machinery and equipment, and facilitating availability of trained manpower in these laboratories through expansion of educational facilities for forensic science in the country. So

far, funds to the tune of about Rs. 155 Crore have been approved for 13 States / Union Territories for the component of “Modernization / Upgradation of Forensic Science Laboratories in States / Union Territories” and Rs. 69.5 Crore have been approved for 10 States / Union Territories for the component of “Mobile Forensic Vans for all districts and State FSLs in the country” under the Scheme. Apart from this, funds to the tune of Rs. 300 Crore have been released under the Scheme for the component of establishment of off-campus and Centres of Excellence of the National Forensic Sciences University.

(ix) To ensure quality and standardization in forensic examination, the Directorate of Forensic Science Services, MHA, has issued the following guidelines:

- Quality Manuals for accreditation of laboratories as per NABL standards (ISO 17025) and Working Procedure Manuals in nine disciplines of Forensic Sciences.
- Quality Manuals and Working Procedure Manuals for Biology and DNA Division.
- Guidelines for collection, preservation & transportation of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases for Investigation Officers and medical Officers.
- Standard list of Equipment for establishing/upgrading of Forensic Sciences Laboratories.

This was stated by the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Ajay Kumar Mishra in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.