

## Maneka Gandhi lays foundation for India's First Advanced Forensic Lab in Chandigarh

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**Five more labs in next three months will be set up in order to address the gap in Forensic DNA analysis of pending sexual assault cases, said Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi.**



Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi laid foundation of Sakhi Suraksha Advanced DNA Forensic Laboratory in the campus of Central Forensic Science Lab, Chandigarh today. Speaking at the event, the Minister said that forensic analysis plays critical role in criminal investigation and the Advanced Lab will contribute to address the gap in forensic DNA analysis of pending sexual assault cases in the country. The Minister added that the lab is being set up as a model forensic lab and would be replicated in other parts of the country.

The Minister mentioned that the current capacity of CFSL, Chandigarh is less than 160 cases per year and the Sakhi

Suraksha Advanced DNA Forensic Laboratory is estimated to increase the capacity to 2000 cases per year. The Minister further said that 5 more advanced forensic labs would come up in Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Pune and Bhopal in the next 3 months bringing the total minimum annual capacity of the labs to 50000 cases. The Labs in Chennai and Mumbai would be set up with WCD funds while remaining 3 labs would be set up with funds by Home Ministry. To meet international standards and deliver timely justice to women, advanced forensic DNA laboratories with latest high throughput DNA technology, are required, she added.

Special forensic kits for rape cases: Underscoring the importance of the forensics in nabbing the culprits in sexual assault cases, the Minister said that special forensic kits for rape would be distributed to all the police stations and hospitals by the month of July. The Minister said that forensic rape kits are currently with CFSL Chandigarh for validation. These inviolable kits will be used for providing uncontaminated evidence. These kits would contain a complete list of evidence/samples to be collected along with the equipment required to collect the evidence. The kits would be locked and sealed before being sent to forensic labs. The details of name of the person, date and time of sealing the kit would be recorded in the kit.

Secretary WCD Sh. Rakesh Srivastava said that this project is a joint effort of Ministry of Home Affairs and WCD Ministry and it will play a vital role in justice delivery system.

In sexual assault cases, the ideal time frame to complete the examination and submission of report is 90 days. Furthermore, it is important that the biological crime exhibit is stored and preserved in scientific manner so as to make any examination/reporting meaningful. However, presently such a storage/preservation capacity is around 200 cases in CFSL, Chandigarh.

At present there are 6 Central Forensic Science Labs (CFSLs) in Chandigarh, Guwahati, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune and Bhopal and one State Forensic Science Lab in each State/UT. These labs are responsible for conducting forensic analysis of all cases in the country including sexual assault, criminal paternity and homicide.