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PC launches Truth Labs in city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: More than two crore cases are pending in courts across the country. Over 56 lakh new cases are registered by the police every year. Upward of six lakh cases require the services of a forensic lab to build evidence. However, just 25 state-run labs and four central labs exist all over the country. The result: A mere 1.4% of those arrested are convicted due to lack of scientific evidence.

The above facts were revealed by central information commissioner and former special director of CBI, M L Sharma, as Union home minister P Chidambaram launched the first private Truth Labs in the city on Wednesday.

Describing the private sector initiative as a milestone as forensics so far has been the

monopoly of the government, the home minister said till now the services had only been available to the prosecution and not to the defence. He admitted that there was a gap between need and availability of lab services.

"There is definitely a need for forensic services for all, particularly in civil cases. However, for a private lab to make a mark, the effort has to be towards confidence building. There is no scope for any faux pas," the home minister added.

Stating that the government would work towards reinforcing forensic science lab infrastructure, the home minister said scientific evidence was not the only route to justice. He labelled it a critical component of the entire legal process.

"The legal justice system is a very tardy one. In the



Home minister Chidambaram

process, a lot of evidence is lost and justice becomes a casualty," Chidambaram said. Citing the Shopian case, the minister said this was a case which showed what a lab could do. There was miscarriage of justice in that case, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, former Chief Justice of India M N Venkatachalaiah said about 20 million criminal cases were pending trial in subordinate courts. There are about eight lakh criminal cas-

es in the High Court.

Pointing out the neglect in the field of forensic sciences, the former chief justice revealed that while he was the NHRC chairperson, an expert committee to revisit forensic science labs across the country was set up. "That was an useful exercise. But that report meandered through the bureaucratic corridors and is now lost in the mists of time," he said.

"After Hyderabad, Truth Labs has forayed into Delhi in a bid to create an alternate route to justice for many of those who do not wish to go to the police and the court," Dr Gandhi P C Kaza, the founder-chairman of Truth Labs said. The Truth Labs experts will work on fingerprints, polygraph, documentation, voice and image and DNA profiling.

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