

Scene of crime officers

July 16, 2021

In news

In a first in the country, the Karnataka State Police will introduce 'scene of crime officers' to gather crucial and minute evidence from crime scenes.

About scene of crime officers(SoC officers)

- The SoC officers will specialise in forensic science as well in identification, collection and preservation of evidence at the scene of the crime.
- This is the first time in the country that dedicated officials will be deployed for evidence collection, a system that exists in advanced countries.
- **In 1961 in London, the first crime scene officer post was created.**
- Before this, in 2015, the Karnataka police had planned to create a crime scene management section in the state with 33 district scientific aid units (DSAUs) and some selected police personnel were to be trained in evidence collection, but the plan did not materialise.

What is the current status?

- At present, it is only in sensational cases that forensic experts from the FSL visit the scene of crime and guide investigating officers.
- In most cases, the crime scene management is done by the police personnel.
- In India, crime scene management has been a neglected area of crime investigation. There is no dedicated manpower with grounding in forensic science.

Role & Functions of SoC officers

- They will have a rank equivalent to police sub-inspector and will be part of the Directorate of Forensic Science Laboratories.
- They have to identify, record and collect evidence at the crime scene.
- They will assist investigation officers by providing crucial evidence material.
- SoC officials will provide the police force with more trained forensic experts for investigations.
- SoC officers will be trained investigators, who will **undergo training at National Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat**, and Central Forensic Science Laboratory in Hyderabad.
- Initially, SoC officers will be assigned for cases of serious nature. Gradually, more officers will be recruited.
- Apart from this, they will also be engaged in other police duties, including maintaining law and order.
- Once operational with 206 'scene of crime' officers deployed across 33 DSAUs, they **will be deployed in cases involving crime against women and children, crimes against weaker sections, and those that merit punishment of more than seven years.**

Karnataka's all districts to have one SoC unit

According to the initial plans by the police department, all districts will have one SoC unit with four to five SoC officials.

Forensic mobile lab

The police department is also planning to deploy a dedicated 'Forensic mobile lab' for SoC officers, so they can arrive at the crime scene as soon as possible with all the equipment needed.

The officers will be provided PPE kits so that the evidence can be safely transported to FSL for further investigation.