DNA draft bill 2017

What is the issue?

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The DNA draft Bill which seeks to streamline genetic profiling activities, has potential once approved.

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What is DNA draft bill?

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- The Law Commission of India submitted a draft of the DNA Based Technology (Use and Regulation) Bill, 2017 to the government in July.
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- The DNA Bill seeks to regulate human DNA profiling and establish standard procedures for DNA testing.
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- The draft Bill has substantially modified the earlier Bill and suggested various measures to fortify the use of uncontaminated DNA samples for investigation purposes and for identifying missing persons.
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- Given that there are no appropriate legal mechanisms with regard to identifying missing persons, victims of disasters, etc.
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- It proposed a Plan for Constituting a statutory body called the DNA profiling board and a DNA data bank.
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What is DNA profiling board?

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- The profiling board will undertake functions such as laying down procedures and standards to establish DNA laboratories and granting accreditation to such laboratories.

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- It will advise the concerned Ministries/ departments of the Central and State governments on issues relating to DNA laboratories.
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- It will also be responsible for supervising, monitoring, inspecting and assessing the laboratories.
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- The Board will frame guidelines for training the police and other investigating agencies dealing with DNA-related matters.
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- Its functions also include giving advice on all ethical and human rights issues relating to DNA testing in consonance with international guidelines.
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- It will recommend research and development activities in DNA testing and related issues.
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- DNA profiling will be undertaken exclusively to identify a person and will not be used to extract any other information.
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What are the features of DNA data bank?

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- DNA data banks both nationally and on a regional basis in the States will be setup.
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- The data bank will primarily store DNA profiles received from the accredited laboratories and maintain certain indices for various categories of data such as
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1. Crime scene index.
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2. Suspect’s index.
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3. Offender’s index.
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4. Missing persons’ index
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5. Unknown deceased persons index - with a view to assisting families of missing persons on the basis of their bodily samples and substances.
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- Strict confidentiality will be maintained with regard to keeping records of DNA profiles and their use.
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- The DNA profiles shall be shared with and by foreign governments or government organisations or agencies only for the purposes enumerated in the Act.
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- Violators of the provisions will be liable for punishment of imprisonment which may extend up to three years and also a fine which may extend up to Rs. 2 lakh.
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Source: The Hindu

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