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At the Parliament Street police station in New Delhi. (File photo)

To avoid any diminution in the legal value of FIRs, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has directed Chief Secretaries and DGPs of Union Territories to ensure that 'zero FIRs' recorded in local languages carry a translated copy if forwarded to states where different languages are used. Complying, the UTs have started sending out the original zero FIRs along with their English translation, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

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A 'zero FIR' is an FIR that can be registered at any police station irrespective of jurisdiction or the area where the crime was committed, in case of cognisable offences. It is then sent to the police station concerned, which could even be in another state, for re-registration as a regular FIR.

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Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which replaced the CrPC,

police are now bound to register a 'zero FIR'.

The BNSS and the other two new laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (which replaced the IPC) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (for Evidence Act) — were rolled out on July 1. Later, in the same month, then Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla chaired a meeting with Chief Secretaries and DGPs of all UTs to review the implementation process.

At the meeting, the Chief Secretaries and the DGPs highlighted the teething issues they faced in implementing the new laws. Sources said one senior officer from the intelligence agencies told the meeting that FIRs were often recorded in local languages and there was a strong possibility of this hampering their accuracy for use in probes. The officer then suggested the FIRs be translated before being sent to other states.

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The Lakshadweep administration also informed that they had written to the governments of [Karnataka](#), Kerala and [Goa](#) for notifying the utilisation of their forensic facilities under Section 176 (3) of BNSS.

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Under Section 176 (3) of BNSS, collection of forensic evidence and video-recording of the crime scene in case of offences punishable with seven years or more is mandatory. If the forensic facility is not available in a state, it can notify the utilisation of such facility of any other state.

The administration department of [Chandigarh](#) informed the meeting that the courts dealing with the old and the new laws have been segregated for better efficiency.

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“Two courts have been designated to specifically deal with cases under the new laws... They (Chandigarh administration) also requested to provide a testing and staging environment for the case information system (CIS)... They also requested the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) to provide draft notification so that the Chandigarh administration could adopt, under BNSS Sections of 64, 173, 193 and 497,” an officer said.

For Delhi, it was informed that the Delhi Police were making efforts to align the Witness Protection Scheme and the Directorate of Prosecution with the new criminal laws.



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The officials from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands informed that they were taking steps to augment its forensic resources. “Boats have been customised as forensic boats to reach remote locations,” the officer said.

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