



I-Familia: Global Database to Identify Missing Persons

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Why in News

Recently, the **Interpol** has launched a **new global database named “I-Familia” to identify missing persons through family DNA** and help the police solve cold cases in member countries.

Key Points

- **About I-Familia:**
 - The **first of its kind**, I-Familia is a **global database for identifying missing persons based on international DNA** (deoxyribonucleic acid) **kinship matching**.
 - The database **seeks to identify missing persons or unidentified human remains when direct comparison is not possible**, by using **DNA samples from family members** instead.
 - **Family members must give their consent** for their data to be used for international searching.
 - It **builds on Interpol's long-standing success in direct DNA matching**.
- **Working:**
 - I-Familia has **three components**:
 - A **dedicated global database to host the DNA profiles provided by relatives**, held separately from any criminal data.
 - **DNA matching software** called Bonaparte.
 - **Interpretation guidelines**, produced by Interpol, to efficiently identify and report potential matches.
 - In the event of a match, **notifications are sent to the countries that supplied the DNA profile from the unidentified body and from the family** respectively.

- **Significance:**
 - There is **growing international concern about the number of missing persons and unidentified victims** around the world **due to increased international travel**, the prevalence of **organized crime and human trafficking**, the rise in **global migration, conflicts and natural disasters**.
 - All countries have unsolved missing persons investigations as well as human remains that **cannot be identified using their national systems alone**.
- **Direct DNA Matching vs Kinship DNA Matching:**
 - **A direct DNA sample** from the missing person, for example a prior medical sample or a personal item such as a toothbrush, can be compared to the DNA from an unidentified body or human remains to see if a match can be found. **This type of identification** has been carried out via the Interpol **DNA Database since 2004**.
 - **Biological relatives share a percentage of their DNA**, depending on their relationship. In the event that a DNA sample from the missing person cannot be obtained for direct matching, **DNA from close family members (parents, children, siblings) can also be compared**. This is where **I-Familia** is set to make a difference.

Interpol

- The **International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)** is an **intergovernmental organization** that helps **coordinate the police force of 194 member countries**.
- Each of the member countries hosts an **Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB)**. This connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat.
 - The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** is designated as the **National Central Bureau of India**.
- It is **headquartered in Lyon, France**.
- **Interpol Notices** are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.



Source: TH