

Nation needs DNA banks, says lead CSI

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SHAH ALAM: Malaysia needs to build DNA banks or repositories to assist in solving crimes and prosecuting cases, according to a senior forensic police officer.

Head of the Police Forensic Lab's Crime Scene Unit (CSU) Supt Amidon Anan said the ability to collect DNA at crime scenes often proved futile as the forensic lab had only a limited bank of samples.

"Having the DNA is useful if we have suspects we can match the samples against. But we are unable to use the samples to help us find potential perpetrators as we don't have DNA banks like what you see on the television series CSI," said Amidon.

He was speaking to students from UiTM's Faculty of Communication and Media Studies on the topic, 'Crime as the elective subject' at the campus here on Oct 5.

The need to create and develop DNA banks was critical, said Amidon, given the high public expectations on the police to safeguard society and reduce crime.

He said: "DNA banks can help the CSU in many pending cases, such as Nurin Jazlin. It was sad that while we were able to collect a DNA sample from the body of the child, we had little means or resources to match it with the likely murderer," he said.

Nurin Jazlin was a high-profile case of a missing child whose body was subsequently dumped in a gym bag in Petaling Jaya more than three years ago.

Amidon expressed his frustration that the CSU's repeated requests for the establishment of DNA banks seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

While the cost of implementing such a project would be substantial, he said it would only escalate over time and "if not now, then when?"

"It is not about being a hero in solving these cases. It is about finding justice for the victim's family."

"Having this ability to solve and prosecute cases would significantly reduce the ability of criminals to get away with their crimes," added Amidon.

(Ed: This article first appeared in Varsity Voice, a monthly publication jointly produced by the New Straits Times and Universiti Teknoogi MARA (UiTM) under the newspaper's Journalism on Campus project.)

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