

# NATGRID

[UPSC Notes]

## What is NATGRID?

NATGRID or National Intelligence Grid aims to prevent terrorist attacks with real-time data and access to classified information such as banking, air & train travels, immigration, and individual taxpayers.

In 2020, NATGRID and NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) signed an MoU that would give access to FIRs and reports on stolen vehicles to National Intelligence Grid.

This would make NATGRID the centralized data access solution for intelligence and security agencies.

## Origin of NATGRID

The 26/11 Mumbai attack was one of the most brutal terrorist attacks in India which shook off the entire country.

- The 26/11 attack exposed the weaknesses in the defense system of India's intelligence which had no mechanism to look for crucial information in real-time.
- NATGRID project started so that these types of attacks can be prevented in the future.
- The budget was 2,800 crores, and. It was expected that the NATGRID will provide cutting-edge technology that would enhance India's ability to fight terrorist attacks.
- NATGRID is conceptualized as a secure and seamless database for information on economic crimes, terrorists, and similar incidents that would give an advantage to India to stay ahead.

## Features of NATGRID

The NATGRID is the integrated intelligence grid that connects the most powerful security agencies in India. The job of NATGRID is to collect

comprehensive patterns of intelligence that would be accessed by the intelligence agencies.

- NATGRID project was initiated in 2009 with a huge budget of INR 2800 crore, and the office is attached to the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- NATGRID is basically an online database that collects the scattered pieces of information and then puts them together on one platform.
- It connects the dots of intelligence and investigation agencies and it is exempted from the Right to Information Act, 2005 under sub-section (2) of Section 24.
- It functions with the help of technologies like Big Data and data analytics that analyze and study huge amounts of data from various intelligence and enforcement agencies. It helps to track suspects if required.
- It is a counter-terrorism measure that is involved in collected a host of information from government data based including tax details, visas, immigration records, bank account details, and credit card transactions,
- The data will be accessed by the central agencies namely the Central Board of Excise and Customs, Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence, Central Bureau of Investigation, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Intelligence Bureau, and the Research, Financial intelligence unit, and Analysis Wing.
- NATGRID also helps out the Intelligence Bureau and Police to keep an eye on persons with suspicious backgrounds,
- Unlike the central organizations like NIA and NCTC, NATGRID is a tool that enables security agencies to collect and detect relevant information on terror suspects from the database collected from different services and organizations in the country.

## NATGRID Concerns

The criticisms related to NATGRID are as follows.

- NATGRID facing changes of a possible violation of leakage of personal information and privacy issues,
- As per some experts, NATGRID can be misused,
- NATGRID's effectiveness is questioned as no state agency or police force has access to NATGRID's databases which would reduce the chances of immediate action.
- It is also feared that the data can be leaked on leads.
- A huge amount of funds would be needed for the software solution of NATGRID and for building infrastructural works of Data Centre, offices, etc.

## Significance of NATGRID

Without a sophisticated tool like NATGRID, police would rely on harsh means to extract information in a degrading fashion.

- NATGRID will act as a link between the investigation and intelligence agencies.
- Solutions provided by NATGRID are technology-intensive.
- The police would have access to all the data and movement of a suspicious person, and he/she will be tracked easily with this database.

