

NATGRID: Critical Analysis
(13 September, 2021)

What is NATGRID?

- **NATGRID** is an ambitious **counter terrorism programme**.
- It will **utilise technologies like Big Data and analytics** to study and analyse the huge amounts of data from various intelligence and enforcement agencies to help track suspected terrorists and prevent terrorist attacks.



- It will connect, in different phases, data providing organisations and **users** besides developing a legal structure through which information can be accessed by the law enforcement agencies.
- NATGRID is a post Mumbai 26/11 attack measure.

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JUST A CLICK OF THE MOUSE AWAY ALL YOUR DATA

₹1,200 crore

Is what the project will cost in its first two phases

2018

when NATGRID will be fully functional in all four phases

Some of the 21 citizen databases which NATGRID will link...

1 UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (UID)



2 VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS DRIVING LICENCE DATA



3 MOBILE CALL DETAILS & PHONE CONNECTIONS



4 BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS CREDIT CARD USAGE INSURANCE POLICIES



5 STOCK EXCHANGE INVESTMENT DETAILS



6 TRAIN RESERVATIONS



8 INCOME TAX RETURNS



7 PASSPORT DATA AIR RESERVATIONS IMMIGRATION DATA



ACCESSIBLE TO 11 AGENCIES

- National Investigation Agency
- Intelligence Bureau
- Research and Analysis Wing
- Defence Intelligence Agency
- Military Intelligence
- Directorate of Air Intelligence
- Directorate of Naval Intelligence
- Directorate of Revenue Intelligence
- Enforcement Directorate
- National Security Council
- Central Bureau of Investigation

NATGRID
A 'TOOL' TO LOCATE
DATA IN REAL-TIME

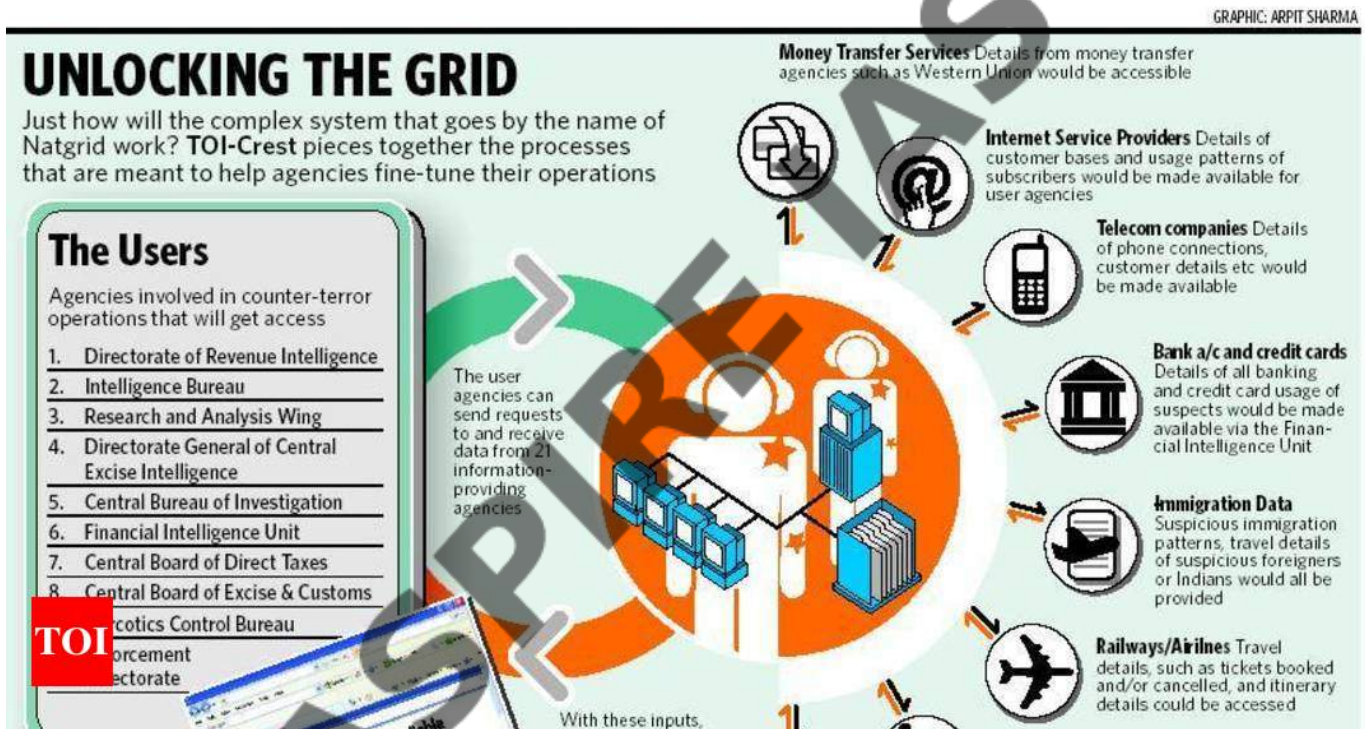
HOW IT WILL WORK

- ▶ NATGRID will link 21 citizen databases so that each intelligence agency can access all data at one go when required
- ▶ It is said the system will not store any data — all information will remain with the particular organisation, for instance with the air or train reservation system, but can be obtained by NATGRID in real time and shared with the authorised agency needing the data
- ▶ The government hopes the shared data will throw up links on a suspect and result in actionable intelligence. For example, if an agency approaches NATGRID for information on a terror suspect, the system will trace data, such as phone, bank, travel and immigration records, in real time from various organisations. This will be transferred to the agency

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Why do we need NATGRID?

- The absence of NATGRID forces the police to rely on harsh and coercive means to extract information in a crude and degrading fashion.
- After every terrorist incident, it goes about rounding up suspects—many of who are innocent. If instead, a pattern search and recognition system were in place, these violations of human rights would be much fewer.
- Natgrid would also help the Intelligence Bureau keep a tab on persons with suspicious backgrounds.
- The police would have access to all his data and any movement by this person would also be tracked with the help of this database.



Criticisms of NATGRID:

- NATGRID is facing opposition on charges of **possible violations of privacy** and leakage of confidential personal information.
- Its **efficacy in preventing terror has also been questioned** given that no state agency or police force has access to its database thus reducing

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chances of immediate, effective action.

- According to few experts, digital databases such as NATGRID can be **misused**. Over the last two decades, the very digital tools that terrorists use have also become great weapons to fight the ideologies of violence.
- Intelligence agencies have also opposed amid fears that it **would impinge on their territory and possibly result in leaks** on the leads they were working on to other agencies.

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