

## **National Improvised Explosive Device Data Management System (NIDMS)**

### **Why in News?**

The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, formally launched the National Improvised Explosive Device Data Management System (NIDMS).

This platform represents India's first comprehensive national repository documenting all IED and bomb blast incidents since 1999.

The initiative aims to strengthen counter-terror investigations, enable trend mapping, and support predictive security strategies.

---

### **Relevance**

#### **GS III | Internal Security**

- Terrorism and insurgency
- Technology-enabled policing
- Intelligence coordination

#### **GS II | Governance**

- Role of Ministry of Home Affairs
- Cooperative federalism in law enforcement
- Institutional strengthening

---

### **What is NIDMS?**

The National IED Data Management System is a secure, centralised digital platform designed to:

- Collect, standardise, integrate, and analyse data related to bomb blasts and IED incidents nationwide.
- Facilitate seamless information sharing among security agencies.

---

### **Institutional Architecture**

#### **Nodal Authority:**

- National Security Guard (NSG)

#### **Operational Centre:**

- National Bomb Data Centre (NBDC) under NSG

#### **Location:**

- Manesar, Haryana

#### **Core Function of NSG:**

- Lead agency for post-blast forensic and technical analysis in India.
- 

## **Scope and Coverage**

### **Time Span:**

- All recorded IED and bomb blast incidents from 1999 onwards.

### **User Agencies:**

- State police forces
- Central Armed Police Forces
- Central investigative and counter-terror agencies

### **Access Model:**

- Single-point digital access to data previously scattered across files and agencies.
- 

## **Salient Features of NIDMS**

### **Elimination of Fragmented Data**

Earlier, blast-related information existed in isolated silos across jurisdictions. NIDMS integrates all such data into a unified national repository.

---

### **Incident Signature Mapping**

The system enables linking of multiple incidents based on:

- Geographic location
- Type of explosion
- Explosive composition
- Circuit design and timing mechanisms

Illustrative case:

- Identical delayed circuit timers identified in both the Rameswaram café blast (2024) and the Mangaluru blast (2022).
- 

## **AI-Assisted Intelligence Analysis**

The Home Ministry plans to integrate:

- Multiple internal databases
  - Advanced AI tools for pattern recognition, modus operandi assessment, and threat forecasting.
-

## **Predictive and Preventive Capability**

The system supports:

- Identification of recurring bomb signatures
- Mapping of bomb-making networks
- Anticipation of emerging IED trends

---

## **Strategic Importance**

### **Strengthening Counter-Terror Operations**

- Enables cross-State linkage of terror incidents
- Reinforces intelligence-led investigations

### **Enhancing Federal Coordination**

- Establishes a shared information ecosystem
- Reduces duplication and investigative delays

### **Evidence-Based Security Policy**

- Supports trend analysis of explosives and tactics
- Enables data-driven counter-terrorism strategies

---

## **Governance and Technology Dimension**

NIDMS reflects India's move toward:

- Digitised internal takshashila governance
- AI-supported law enforcement
- Smart policing and national security modernisation

---

## **DPDP Act, 2023 vs RTI Act, 2005 — Attorney-General's Clarification**

### **Why in News?**

Attorney-General R. Venkataramani opined that the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 does not weaken the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

This follows criticism after the Centre notified amendments to RTI provisions in November 2025 through the DPDP framework.

The central controversy concerns whether changes to Section 8(1)(j) dilute transparency by broadening exemptions for personal data.

---

## **Relevance**

## **GS II | Polity & Governance**

- Transparency versus privacy
- Role of constitutional authorities
- Accountability mechanisms

## **GS IV | Ethics**

- Public interest and individual rights
- Ethical discretion in governance

---

### **Legal Context**

#### **RTI Act, 2005**

- Operationalises the Right to Information derived from Article 19(1)(a).
- Section 8 lists exemptions from disclosure.
- Section 8(2) provides a public interest override.

#### **DPDP Act, 2023**

- Enacted to safeguard informational privacy under Article 21.
- Draws legitimacy from the Puttaswamy judgment (2017).
- Introduced amendments to RTI's personal information clause.

---

### **Changes to Section 8(1)(j)**

#### **Earlier Framework**

Personal information could be disclosed if:

- Linked to public activity or interest, or
- Disclosure served a larger public interest.

A critical safeguard ensured that information available to Parliament could not be denied to citizens.

#### **Post-Amendment Position**

The revised wording broadly exempts "personal information" without explicitly referencing:

- Public interest linkage
- Parliamentary disclosure proviso

This raised fears of blanket exemptions.

---

### **Attorney-General's Reasoning**

#### **RTI Not Diluted**

Section 8(2) remains intact, mandating disclosure where public interest outweighs harm.

### **Balancing Competing Rights**

The DPDP Act seeks harmony between:

- Right to Privacy (Article 21)
- Right to Information (Article 19(1)(a))

### **Principle of Harmonious Interpretation**

RTI exemptions must be read in conjunction with Section 8(2).

Discretion to disclose in public interest continues to rest with information officers and appellate bodies.

---

### **Government's Position**

- Amendments clarify misuse of personal data, not reduce accountability.
- Other DPDP provisions were granted longer transition timelines.

---

### **Concerns from Transparency Advocates**

- Removal of explicit public interest language may encourage excessive denial.
- Omission of parliamentary safeguard weakens democratic oversight.
- Risk of denial of information on assets, appointments, or disciplinary actions.

---

### **Constitutional Implications**

- Article 19(1)(a): Right to Information
  - Article 21: Right to Privacy
- AG maintains DPDP restores constitutional balance rather than establishing hierarchy.

---

### **Governance Impact**

#### **Positives:**

- Stronger data protection regime
- Alignment with global privacy standards

#### **Risks:**

- Chilling effect on RTI usage
  - Greater discretion at information officer level
-



## Assam's Pride: Golden Langur Under Threat

### Why in News?

Recent studies highlight escalating habitat fragmentation threatening the Golden Langur, a rare primate species found only in Assam and Bhutan.

Concerns include infrastructure expansion, genetic isolation, and long-term species viability.

---

### Relevance

#### GS III | Environment & Biodiversity

- Endemic species conservation
- Habitat fragmentation
- Human–wildlife interface

---

### Species Profile

**Common Name:** Gee's Golden Langur

**Scientific Name:** *Trachypithecus geei*

**Conservation Status:** Endangered (IUCN)

Identified as a distinct species based on work by Edward Pritchard Gee (1964).

---

### Distribution and Population

- Restricted to western Assam and Bhutan's Black Mountain foothills
- Bounded by the Manas River (east) and Sankosh River (west)
- Elevation range: 100–1,500 metres
- Estimated Assam population: ~7,400 individuals (2024)

---

### Habitat and Behaviour

- Subtropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, and riverine forests
- Strictly arboreal, dependent on continuous canopy cover
- Lives in small social groups with one male and multiple females

---

### Cultural Importance

Revered by Bodo and Rabha communities.

Declared mascot of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

Cultural respect has historically aided conservation.

### Major Threats

- Fragmentation due to roads, power lines, and forest clearance
- Electrocution and road mortality
- Genetic isolation leading to inbreeding

---

### Conservation Measures

- Protected areas such as Chakrashila and Raimona National Park
- Community-led forest protection and reforestation
- Canopy bridges over highways to ensure arboreal movement

---

### Way Forward

- Restore forest corridors across Assam–Bhutan landscapes
- Wildlife-sensitive infrastructure planning
- Strengthen community stewardship and indigenous participation

---

### Nilgiri Tahr: The Highland Sentinel of the Western Ghats

#### Why in News?

A joint wildlife census conducted in 2025 by the Forest Departments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu estimates the Nilgiri tahr population at **2,668 individuals**, signalling cautious recovery. This improvement is attributed to focused initiatives such as **Project Tahr (launched by Tamil Nadu in 2023)** and sustained grassland restoration efforts. However, experts caution that this recovery remains fragile due to **climate stress, invasive species, and fragmented habitats**.

---

#### Relevance

##### GS Paper III | Environment & Biodiversity

- Conservation of endemic species
- Shola–grassland ecosystem protection
- Invasive species control
- Climate change impacts on mountain fauna

##### GS Paper I | Geography & Culture

- Western Ghats as a biodiversity hotspot
- Sangam literature references



- Indigenous ecological knowledge

---

### Species Profile

**Common Name:** Nilgiri tahr

**Scientific Name:** *Nilgiritragus hylocrius*

**Category:** Mountain ungulate (goat–antelope)

**Endemism:** Found only in India

**IUCN Status:** Endangered

---

### Habitat and Distribution

- Occupies **high-altitude shola–grassland mosaics** of the Western Ghats
- Typically found above **1,200 metres**, preferring rocky cliffs and open alpine grasslands
- Key landscapes include:
  - Eravikulam
  - Anamalai
  - Mukurthi
  - Silent Valley
  - Glenmorgan
- Restricted to the States of **Kerala and Tamil Nadu**

---

### Cultural and Historical Significance

- Mentioned in **Tamil Sangam literature**, particularly in the Kurinji landscape, where it is referred to as *varayādu*
- Featured in classical works such as *Silappathikaram*
- Indigenous communities—Toda, Badaga, Kota, and Muthuvan—have traditionally used tahr behaviour to:
  - Navigate foggy terrain
  - Locate water sources
  - Identify safe mountain routes
- Symbolises resilience and adaptation in highland ecosystems

---

### Physical and Ecological Adaptations

- Compact, muscular body suited for steep, rocky slopes





- Males exhibit a distinctive silvery “saddleback”
- Curved horns and strong hooves enhance cliff mobility
- Diet: Highly adaptable feeder consuming over **120 plant species**, including grasses, herbs, shrubs, legumes, and some trees
- Ecological role:
  - Maintains grassland balance
  - Facilitates nutrient cycling
  - Supports predator populations

---

### Population Status (2025 Survey)

- **Total:** 2,668 individuals
- **Kerala:** ~1,365
  - Eravikulam National Park alone hosts 841—the most secure population
- **Tamil Nadu:** ~1,303  
Indicates recovery after decades of decline, but population remains vulnerable.

---

### Causes of Historical Decline

1. **Habitat Loss and Fragmentation**
  - Conversion of grasslands for agriculture and tourism
  - Disruption of continuous shola–grassland systems
2. **Invasive Species Spread**
  - Proliferation of wattle and eucalyptus
  - Suppression of native grazing grasses
3. **Climate Change Pressures**
  - Rising temperatures forcing tahrs to higher elevations
  - Shrinking availability of suitable grasslands
4. **Ecological Vulnerability**
  - Isolated populations leading to genetic stress
  - Increased disease susceptibility

---

### Conservation Turnaround: Key Interventions

#### Project Tahr (Tamil Nadu, 2023)



- Declared Nilgiri tahr as the State Animal
  - Budget allocation: ₹25.14 crore
  - Focus areas:
    - Grassland restoration
    - Removal of invasive species
    - Long-term population monitoring
- 

### Grassland Revival Efforts

- Reintroduction of native grasses such as:
    - *Chrysopogon zeylanicus*
    - *Tripogon wightii*
  - Improved forage quality and soil health
- 

### Community Participation

- Engagement with Muthuvan tribe to:
    - Map migration corridors
    - Identify feeding and breeding grounds
    - Integrate traditional ecological knowledge
- 

### Kerala's Parallel Conservation Measures

- Intensive protection in Eravikulam and Silent Valley National Parks
  - Focus on safeguarding core breeding populations
- 

### Advanced Conservation Strategies

#### 1. Planned Translocation

- Kerala exploring relocation to ecologically suitable but under-populated habitats
- Includes habitat assessment, forage enhancement, and soft-release protocols

#### 2. Habitat Connectivity

- Corridor mapping across Mukurthi, Anamalai, Glenmorgan, and Eravikulam
  - Aimed at restoring genetic exchange and reducing isolation
-

### Key Challenges Ahead

- Translocation risks if recipient habitats are degraded
- Climate change may further compress high-altitude grasslands
- Long-term success depends on **landscape-scale restoration**, not isolated protection

---

## 5. Pesticides Management Bill, 2025: Reform in Form, Not in Substance

### Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare released a revised draft of the **Pesticides Management Bill, 2025** on 7 January 2026.

The Bill aims to replace the **Insecticides Act, 1968**, a framework over five decades old. Despite revisions, experts and civil society groups argue that fundamental regulatory shortcomings persist.

Public feedback has been invited until 2 February 2026.

---

### Relevance

#### GS Paper III | Environment & Agriculture

- Regulation of pesticides
- Environmental and human health
- Sustainable farming practices

#### GS Paper II | Governance

- Regulatory architecture
- Centre–State relations
- Accountability mechanisms

---

### Evolution of the Law

- 1968: Insecticides Act enacted
- 2008: First proposal for replacement
- 2018: New Bill introduced
- 2020: Revised Bill referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee
- 2025: Fresh draft issued with limited changes

---

### Objectives of the Bill

- Regulate manufacture, import, sale, distribution, and use of pesticides

- Reduce risks to humans, animals, non-target organisms, and the environment
  - Promote transparency, traceability, and farmer-centric regulation
  - Encourage bio-pesticides and traditional knowledge-based solutions
- 

### **Structural Changes in the 2025 Draft**

- Clauses reduced from 65 (2020 draft) to 55
  - Government cites simplification and ease of compliance
  - Critics argue dilution of regulatory strength rather than improvement
- 

### **Persistent Gaps and Concerns**

#### **1. Marginal Role of States**

- States can impose only temporary bans (up to one year)
  - Permanent prohibition rests with a Union-controlled Registration Committee
  - Undermines States' ability to respond to local agro-ecological risks
- 

#### **2. Excessive Centralisation**

- Registration Committee dominated by Union agencies
  - Weakens cooperative federalism despite agriculture being a State subject
- 

#### **3. Advisory Nature of Central Pesticides Board**

- Recommendations on manufacturing practices, recalls, and disposal lack legal enforceability
- 

#### **4. Absence of Criminal Liability**

- No explicit criminal responsibility for manufacturers or marketers
  - Weak deterrence in cases of poisoning, misuse, or environmental damage
- 

#### **5. Diluted Environmental Language**

- Shift from "minimise risk" to "strive to minimise risk"
  - Creates ambiguity and weakens enforcement
- 

#### **6. No Price Regulation**

- Bill silent on pesticide pricing
- Farmers remain exposed to exploitation

---

#### 7. **Weak Grievance Redressal**

- No strong compensation or liability framework
- Limited protection against spurious pesticides

---

### **Environmental and Health Implications**

India is among the world's largest pesticide consumers.  
Weak regulation contributes to:

- Farmer suicides
  - Water and soil contamination
  - Biodiversity loss
- Undermines progress towards **SDGs 2, 3, and 12.**

---

### **6. National Clean Air Programme: Narrow Coverage, Wider Crisis**

#### **Why in News?**

A January 2026 report by CSE–CREA reveals that only **67 cities** are covered under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), despite India having **1,878 cities** with populations above four lakh.

This raises serious concerns about the limited scope of India's air pollution mitigation strategy.

---

#### **Relevance**

##### **GS Paper III | Environment**

- Air pollution and public health
- Environmental policy evaluation

##### **GS Paper II | Governance**

- Policy design
- Centre–State coordination

---

#### **NCAP at a Glance**

- Launched in 2019
- Nodal Ministry: MoEFCC



- Target: 20–30% reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 levels from 2017 baseline (extended to 2026)
- Strategy: City-specific action plans for non-attainment cities

---

## Key Findings

### 1. Extremely Limited Coverage

- Only ~3.6% of eligible cities included
- Vast urban and industrial regions remain outside structured intervention

---

### 2. Persistently High Pollution Levels

- Cities like Byrnihat, Delhi, and Ghaziabad record PM2.5 far above WHO and national standards

---

### 3. Chronic, Not Episodic Pollution

- Nearly 44% of cities face sustained air pollution
- Driven by transport, industry, construction, and energy use

---

### 4. Overemphasis on PM10

- PM2.5—more harmful to human health—remains under-addressed

---

## Funding and Implementation Issues

- 68% of NCAP funds spent on roads and traffic management
- Limited investment in industrial emission control and clean energy transitions

---

## Structural Design Flaws

- City-centric approach ignores airshed dynamics
- Industrial clusters excluded
- Absence of binding emission reduction mandates

---

## Way Forward

- Expand NCAP to more cities and industrial zones
- Shift to regional, airshed-based planning

- Rebalance funding towards PM2.5 control and clean energy
  - Strengthen monitoring, inventories, and accountability
- 

## 7. India's Drug Challenge as Narco-Terrorism

### Why in News?

The Union Home Minister described India's drug problem as **narco-terrorism**, reframing it as a national security threat rather than a mere criminal issue.

This statement coincided with the launch of a three-year national anti-drug campaign (2025–28) and the rollout of NIDMS.

---

### Relevance

#### GS Paper III | Internal Security

- Terror financing
- Organised crime
- Border vulnerabilities

#### GS Paper II | Governance

- Federal coordination
  - Role of Ministry of Home Affairs
- 

### Understanding Narco-Terrorism

Narco-terrorism refers to the use of drug trafficking networks to finance terrorism and insurgency.

Drug profits fuel weapons procurement, recruitment, and violent operations. Recognised globally by UNODC and enforcement agencies.

---

### India's Strategic Vulnerability

- Located between the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle
  - Major trafficking routes operate along western and eastern borders
  - Drug money funds terror networks in Punjab, J&K, and the North-East
- 

### Evidence of Scale

- Over ₹1 lakh crore worth of drugs seized between 2014–24
  - Sharp increase in seizures of heroin, cocaine, and synthetic drugs
-

## Strategic Shift in Response

### From Policing to Security Doctrine

- Drugs now treated alongside terrorism and organised crime
- Focus on dismantling supply, finance, and operational networks

---

### National “Drug-Free India” Campaign (2025–28)

- Supply reduction
- Demand reduction and de-addiction
- Financial disruption of narco-networks

---

### Institutional and Technological Measures

- Financial intelligence to track narco-money
- AI-based network analysis
- Integration of CCTNS, ICJS, NATGRID, and NIDMS

---

### Why This Reframing Matters

- Narco-terrorism corrodes internal security invisibly
- Threatens youth, public health, and economic stability
- Requires sustained inter-State and international cooperation

12<sup>th</sup> January 2026: Daily MCQs

1. With reference to the Nilgiri tahr, consider the following statements:
  1. It is endemic to India and restricted to the Western Ghats.
  2. It primarily inhabits dense evergreen forest interiors rather than open grasslands.
  3. It finds mention in classical Tamil Sangam literature.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (a)

- 
2. Consider the following pairs:

Protected Area — Species association

1. Eravikulam National Park — Nilgiri tahr
2. Silent Valley National Park — Nilgiri tahr
3. Mukurthi National Park — Nilgiri tahr

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (d)

---

3. With reference to the Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, consider the following statements:

1. It seeks to replace a legislation enacted in the late 1960s.
2. It empowers State governments to impose permanent bans on pesticides.
3. It explicitly provides for criminal liability of pesticide manufacturers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (a)

---

4. With reference to the Registration Committee under the Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, consider the following statements:

1. It is constituted by the Union Government.
2. It includes representatives from ICAR and MoEFCC.
3. Its decisions regarding pesticide prohibition override those of State governments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (d)

---



5. With reference to the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), consider the following statements:
1. It follows an airshed-based approach to air pollution control.
  2. It places greater emphasis on PM<sub>10</sub> compared to PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
  3. It creates legally binding emission-reduction obligations for States.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (a)

- 
6. The limited effectiveness of the National Clean Air Programme is best explained by which one of the following?
- (a) Absence of air quality monitoring infrastructure
  - (b) Over-emphasis on rural air pollution
  - (c) City-centric planning that ignores regional pollutant transport
  - (d) Complete lack of Central government funding

**Answer:** (c)

- 
7. With reference to narco-terrorism in India, consider the following statements:
1. It involves financing of terrorism through drug trafficking networks.
  2. India's vulnerability is linked to its proximity to major global drug-producing regions.
  3. It is officially treated only as a public health issue in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (a)

- 
8. The recent reframing of India's drug problem as a national security issue is primarily based on:
- (a) Increase in recreational drug use
  - (b) Linkages between drug money, terrorism, and organised crime
  - (c) Decline in traditional law-and-order capacity
  - (d) Expansion of pharmaceutical manufacturing

**Answer:** (b)



9. Consider the following pairs:

Border region — Predominant drug trafficking

1. Western border — Heroin trafficking
2. Eastern border — Synthetic drugs and methamphetamine
3. Southern coastline — Cocaine cultivation

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** (a)

10. Which one of the following represents a **common governance challenge** in pesticide regulation, air-pollution control, and countering narco-terrorism in India?

- (a) Excessive judicial intervention
- (b) Technological backwardness
- (c) Weak Centre–State and inter-agency coordination
- (d) Absence of international treaties

**Answer:** (c)

Mains: Reframing the drug problem as narco-terrorism marks a significant shift in India's internal security doctrine. Examine the rationale behind this approach and assess the role of technology and inter-agency coordination in countering narco-terror networks. (250 words)

**TAKSHASHILA**

ESTD 2022

CREATING LEADERS OF TOMORROW