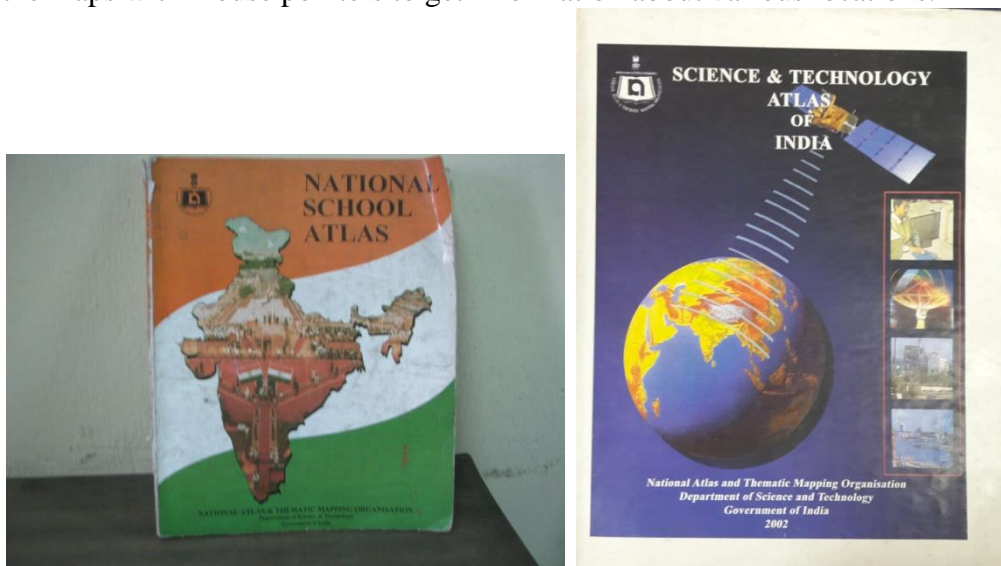


## **NATMO makes spatial data accessible for visually impaired, virtual tourists**

The National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO) is preparing a 3D geographic information system that will enable a person to undertake a virtual tour of monuments, museums, and important places in cities like Kolkata.

Such interactive maps have helped some overseas countries to boost tourism. NATMO said that they are running a pilot project and will start working with large buildings and other places of interest soon.

They said that such virtual Geographic Information System (GIS) models could be useful tools for the tourists who want to get information about any building or museum that are different from what Google maps offer, are created by fusing GIS with the Graphic User Interface (GUI), which can offer drop-down menus and widgets. The user can interact with the maps with mouse pointers to get information about various locations.



NATMO has also launched the tactile Atlas in English for the visually impaired and is now in the process of re-launching them in various vernacular languages. They have already launched the map in the Bengali Braille script.

NATMO has also taken up a pilot project on village level mapping (large Scale Mapping) to provide a database on physical and natural resources, livelihood, the pattern of agriculture, livestock, etc. of a particular village for integrated planning and sustainable development.

NATMO, a subordinate office under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, is the sole authority of depicting national framework data in the form of thematic maps and atlases to cater to the actual picture of the development and planning initiatives of the country among the users. In 1956, Prof SP Chatterjee, the doyen of Indian Geography, got the approval from the Govt. of India to compile the first ever National Atlas of India and National Atlas Organisation was formed. The Significance of National Atlas Organisation is that it has been successful in establishing Thematic Mapping, which is now used and accepted by all agencies - public and private at various levels.

## **National Atlas of India**

A preliminary edition of the National Atlas of India in Hindi popularly known as Bharat Rashtriya Atlas was brought out in 1957 by the Founder Director, Prof. S. P. Chatterjee which contained 300 multi coloured plates in 8 volumes comprised of almost every aspect of geographical environ. This was followed by the first and enlarged edition of the National Atlas of India in 1962.

With its remarkable expertise National Atlas Organisation published various Maps, Atlases, and Monographs on various themes:

**State Atlases:** Atlases of each state of our country are another notable work of this organisation. These are comprised of almost every aspect of geography.

**School Atlases:** Atlas for school children is a popular publication of NATMO. School atlases are rich in relevant themes with a graphical presentation along with informative write-ups selected based on the school curriculum. School atlases are published at different levels of education.

**The National School Atlas (NSA):** NSA is one of the most popular publications of NATMO. This was first published in 1997 while the current, i.e. the Fifth edition published in 2015. This atlas contains 46 (forty-six) thematic map series (India-wise) and 15 (fifteen) administrative maps.

**District Planning Map Series (DPMS):** The DPMS project of NATMO has covered almost 260 districts in the country. Different geographical parameters of the district are shown in nine insets, and the main map is shown on a scale of 1:250,000. It is a ready-reckoner to the planners, researchers, and students for having a complete idea about the district.

**Golden Map Service (GMS):** It involves large scale mapping of urban areas using high resolution satellite data. Locality names, police stations, the detailed network of railways and roadways, different amenities, and services available in the urban area are shown in the maps.

**State Tourist Maps:** These particular maps are made for tourism purposes. This book format, handy State wise maps cover all detailed tourist information on a scale of 1:1M.

**Other Thematic Maps:** These are mainly of special series maps representing thematic information in one page of considerable size. Different themes like Natural Hazards, Ground Water Resources, Adventure Tourism, Water Pollution, Religious Composition, Diseases, Tourism and transport, etc. have been successfully depicted through this map category.

**Monographs:** This project is dedicated to the study and research analysis on different themes. Monographs on various themes like Urban Studies, Geomorphological Mapping, Water Security Management, etc. are the mentionable efforts of NATMO.

Besides above, NATMO has also successfully compiled, Agricultural Atlas, Forest Atlas, Hydrological Atlas, Atlas on Micro-nutrient of Soil, etc. in collaboration with different ministries of the government. India ASEAN Archaeological Atlas has also been published in collaboration with the Government of Thailand.

Presently, NATMO is engaged in various extra-departmental/collaborative projects with different ministries/Organisations.