



## India's e-passports: Passport Seva Programme (PSP)

**For Prelims:** Passport Seva Programme (PSP), e-passports

**For Mains:** e-passports and its significance

### Why in News

Recently, the government of India has announced that it will soon **start issuing ePassports to citizens applying for a new passport** or renewing their expiring passport.

### Key Points

#### ▪ About:

- The announcement is under an **agreement signed between the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCS)** which will facilitate the **next phase of the PSP (Passport Seva Programme) termed PSP-V2.0**.
  - The MEA-TCS collaboration has been a **part of the passport process since 2008** and has helped in increasing digitisation of the complex process that requires multiple stakeholders across the spectrum of the vast Government network.
- Tata Consultancy Services will ensure **“support functions” like “citizen interface, technology backbone, call centres, training and change management”**.
- The Government will exercise **“all sovereign and security related functions”** in the process of issuing passports.

#### ▪ Passport Seva Programme (PSP):

- PSP is one of the **several Mission Mode Projects (MMPs)** of India.
  - A Mission Mode Project (MMP) is an individual project within the [National e-Governance Plan \(NeGP\)](#) that focuses on one aspect of electronic governance, such as banking, land records or commercial taxes etc.

#### ▪ PSP-V2.0:

- The PSP-V2.0 is an **expansion and improvement of the PSP-V1.0**, an e-government tool that brought new changes to the delivery of passport-related services to individuals.
- The new initiative is **aimed at creating a digital platform** that would be “transparent, more accessible and reliable” and that it would be backed by a trained workforce.
- This will create a **state-of-the-art digital ecosystem**, overhaul existing processes and integrate various wings of Government that are involved in issuance of passports.

#### ▪ New Features of PSP-V2.0:

- The new programme is expected to have technology upgrades including the use of the latest **biometrics technology, Artificial Intelligence**, Advance Data Analytics, Chat-Bot, Auto-response, Natural Language Processing, Cloud Enablement.

- The **newest feature** under the PSP-V2.0 will be the **issuance of the new generation of passports called e-passports**.

#### ▪ E-passports and its Significance:

- ePassport is an **upgrade to the traditional passport** and is aimed at making it more secure and ensuring smooth passage through immigration posts globally.

- The ePassports will be **embedded with a chip** that will include personal details of the holder including biographical information.
- The software for the ePassport has been developed by **IIT Kanpur and the National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
  - NIC under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is the technology partner of the Government of India. NIC was established in the year 1976 with the objective to provide technology-driven solutions to Central and State Governments.
- It will **ease immigration process across the world** and will also increase digital safety for the passport holders.
- The e-passports will follow the [International Civil Aviation Organisation \(ICAO\)](#) standards, and will be tougher, as well as harder to destroy.
  - ICAO is a **United Nations (UN) specialized agency**, established in 1944, which laid the foundation for the standards and procedures for peaceful global air navigation. India is its member.

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