

Second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP-V2.0)

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In news– Recently, the External Affairs ministry and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) signed an agreement for the second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP-V2.0).

About PSP-V2.0-

- The PSP-V2.0 is a **continuation and enhancement of PSP-V1.0**, an e-Governance instrument, which introduced unprecedented transformation in delivery of passport related services to citizens.
- To augment and improve the delivery of passport services to Indian citizens, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had launched the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) in May 2010.
- The programme was recently also connected to more than 176 Indian missions through the Global Passport Seva Programme (GPSP) to benefit the Indian diaspora.
- Under PSP-V2.0, the **e-passports, which will have a microchip with secure biometric data, are set to be unveiled.**
- The e-passport chip usually **has the holder's biographical information** that is printed on the document's data page **and a biometric identifier.**
- Such passports have digital security features to prevent unauthorized reading of data stored on the chip.
- **TCS is expected to bring in technology for e-passports but the granting and printing of passports will remain with the government.**
- It will last nine-and-a-half years and see TCS deploy the latest technologies to ease services.
- The **e-passports will be compliant with the guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),**

and the **Indian Security Press in Nashik** and the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** are involved in designing the security features.

- The key elements of PSP-V 2.0 are setting up of a state-of-art digital ecosystem, process overhauling and integration among various stakeholders and database, improving citizen interface, upgrading technology, adopting best practices and strengthening data security.
- This phase further envisages **creation of a new data center, a disaster recovery center** and a **Government Secure Repository** linked to all Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs), Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSKs), passport offices and Indian missions abroad.
- **An electronic file system** for passport processing running across the passport issuance ecosystem and round-the-clock monitoring and supervision through a **Network Operation Centre (NOC) and Security Operation Centre (SOC) will also be created.**