

INDIA HEADED FOR E-PASSPORTS



Issue

The Ministry of External Affairs and Tata Consultancy Services Limited have signed an agreement for the second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP).

Background

The programme is one among the several Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) of the Government of India. It will expand the existing PSP.

Details

- The agreement, worth \$1 billion, will focus on faster delivery of passports to the citizens and create a more effective integration between various wings of the Government like the MEA and the local police network.
- This will ensure working in harmony for verification of applicants and quick tracing in case of emergency situations.

Features of the programme

- The manual sections of the present passport application and processing are expected to go digital in the new phase.
- The initiative is aimed at creating a digital platform that would be "transparent, more accessible and reliable", which would be backed by a trained workforce.

Technology used

- Technology used will be the latest biometrics, Artificial Intelligence, Advance Data Analytics, Chat-Bot, Auto-response, Natural Language Processing, Cloud Enablement.
- The newly issued passport will be fitted with a microchip that will hold all biometric information regarding the applicants.

Required infrastructure

- Strategic assets involved in the process like Data Centres, Database and the application software will be owned by the Government.
- Other infrastructure includes Data Centre, Disaster Recovery Centre and Government Secure Repository, connected with all the Passport Seva Kendras and the Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK).

Need for the partnership

- There is a significant shortfall of Government employees in the passport offices across the country. Despite expansion programme, the vacancies are yet to be filled.
- Partnership will ensure harmony between the two wings of public and private workers and will help citizens apply and acquire passports without difficulties.

Benefits

The new programme will simplify immigration process across the world and will also increase digital safety for the passport holders.

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