

Centre's Digi Yatra enrolment takes off

January 6, 2024 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- Why in news?
- What is Digi Yatra?
- How can people avail this facility?
- What is Digi Yatra foundation?
- What are the benefits of Digi Yatra?
- News Summary: Centre's Digi Yatra enrolment takes off
- Concerns raised
- What is the stand of Digi Yatra Foundation on the issue of data security?

Why in news?

- Recently, air travellers took to social media to express their shock and anger because their privacy was being violated at airports.

- This was mainly happening due to the forceful promotion of the Digi Yatra initiative by the Union government.

DigiYatra

- DigiYatra was rolled out as an entirely voluntary programme from December 2022.
 - In December 2022, it was rolled out at three airports, including Delhi.
 - Since then, it has been implemented at 11 airports, and will be expanded to 14 more in the months to come.
- It is an industry-led initiative co-ordinated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in line with Digital India's vision to transform the nation into a digitally empowered society.
- The 'DigiYatra' is a Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel experience (BEST) based on Facial Recognition Technology.
- With this technology, the entry of passengers would be automatically processed based on the facial recognition system at all checkpoints – including entry into the airport, security check areas, aircraft boarding, etc.

How can people avail this facility?

Domestic passengers at three airports, including Delhi's, will be now able to authenticate their travel through facial recognition from today, as the first phase of the Digi Yatra system rolls out. Here's how it works. By Neha LM Tripathi

What is Digi Yatra?

Digi Yatra is a facility that allows passengers to link their travel, identity documents with a facial scan – doing away with the need for them to show their boarding passes or ID cards at the airport

WHAT IT PLANS TO ACHIEVE

It is conceived to achieve contactless, seamless processing of passengers based on facial recognition technology. Officials say it will help drastically cut down queues and waiting times at security check and boarding gates

Where is it rolling out?

The scheme is originally rolling out for domestic passengers at the airports in three cities – Delhi, Bengaluru and Varanasi – from December 1, 2022. The first phase will also cover another four airports – Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, and Vijayawada – which will get the scheme by March 2023. Later it will be implemented across various airports in the country.

HOW DOES THE NEW SYSTEM WORK?

SETTING UP THE APP

- Step 1** You download and install Digi Yatra app on your phone and complete your registration
- Step 2** You then have to either feed in your Aadhaar card to the app or link your Digi Locker app
- Step 3** You will be asked to take selfie that will record your facial features

AT THE AIRPORT...

- 1 ENTRY GATE**
 - First, you scan your boarding pass at the E-gate
 - You will be asked to stand in a marked area, facing a camera which captures your facial data
 - The gate opens as your facial data matches the boarding pass
- 2 AT THE TERMINAL**
 - You can visit the respective airline counter to drop off your check-in baggage, where your boarding pass will also be validated with a facial scan
 - If you're performing a self-check-in, then you validate your boarding pass after a facial capture and match
- 3 SECURITY CHECK AND BOARDING**
 - You stand in a demarcated area where your face is scanned by the camera
 - The E-gate opens once it matches your facial biometric with tickets and boarding pass

- To use this facility, passengers will need to first download the DigiYatra app.
- Users can register on the app using Aadhaar credentials. Then, the person will have to scan his or her boarding pass with the QR code or Bar code, after which the credentials will be shared with the airport.
- For entry into the airport, passengers will need to scan their boarding passes at the e-gate and look into the facial recognition system camera installed there. A similar method will be applicable for entry into other checkpoints.

DigiYatra Foundation

- The project is being implemented by the DigiYatra Foundation — a joint-venture company registered under the Companies Act, 2013.
- The DigiYatra Foundation will be the custodian of the passenger ID validation process.
- It will also define the criteria for compliance and guidelines for the local airport systems.

Benefits

- Passenger need not show boarding pass or ID at multiple check points.
- Minimum human intervention; Less queuing time.
- It will also ensure enhanced security at the airport as the passenger data is validated with Airlines Departure control System, thereby only designated passengers can enter the terminal.
- Airport operator will have real time information on passenger load and resource planning becomes better.
- Airlines will be benefitted by knowing the passenger position in the airport.
- Airport throughput will be enhanced.

News Summary: Centre's Digi Yatra enrolment takes off

- Recently, many air travellers expressed their shock and anger at the flagrant infringement of their privacy at airports, largely through the Digi Yatra initiative being aggressively promoted by the Union government.

Concerns raised

- Privacy violations
 - Described as the 'future of air travel', Digi Yatra is touted as a measure to enhance airport security, enable seamless travel.
 - However, concerns have been raised as the government can get access to increasing information about people's travel patterns.
 - The larger issue of data shared, along with your Aadhaar number included, is also an important concern.
- Data Security
 - Digi Yatra is collecting all facial biometric data which raises the associated security concerns.
 - Also, there is a lot of confusion about Digi Yatra as it does not answer many questions.
 - If DigiYatra Foundation is a private entity, then why is the government promoting its use?
 - Is it even resulting in cost savings on security deployment, as CISF continues to man these gates?
 - India is yet to notify its Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2023, which was passed in Parliament in August last year.

Stand of Digi Yatra Foundation

- The Digi Yatra Foundation maintains that biometric data or any other personally identifiable information is not stored in any database permanently, but in a secure wallet inside the app on the user's mobile device.
 - It maintains that while the Biometric Boarding System of the local airport has access to this data on the day of travel, it is automatically purged within 24 hours.
-

Q1) What is facial recognition technology?

Facial recognition technology uses biometrics and technology to identify human faces. It maps facial features from a video or photograph and then compares the information with a database of known faces to find a match.

Q2) What is Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel (BEST)?

Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel (BEST) is a digital initiative by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in India. It is based on facial recognition technology and aims to provide a new digital experience for air travelers.

Source: [Centre's Digi Yatra enrolment takes off as airport security staff sign up flyers without their consent](#) | [Ministry of Civil Aviation](#) | [The Wire](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/digi-yatra/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.