DigiYatra trials for international travel at 7 airports from 1 Nov – Chennai included

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News

DigiYatra, which offers paperless air travel using facial recognition, began trials for international passengers from 1 Nov to December 2026. At 7 airports – Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Mumbai, Chennai and Amritsar – Indian citizens holding e-passports and flying Air India or IndiGo international flights can use it. Scanning the passport's MRZ, reading its chip with the phone's NFC and taking a selfie creates a 'verifiable credential' stored in the phone wallet. Immigration checks continue as usual; a wider rollout is planned for 2027.

Key facts

Period	1 Nov – Dec 2026 (trial); rollout 2027
Airports	Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Mumbai, Chennai, Amritsar
Eligibility	Indians with e-passports; Air India, IndiGo international flights
Enrolment	MRZ scan → chip read via NFC → selfie → credential in wallet
Run by	DigiYatra Foundation (CEO Suresh Khadakbhavi)
So far (domestic)	26.5 million+ users; 39 airports

Background

- History: DigiYatra was launched on 1 Dec 2022 at Delhi, Bengaluru and Varanasi airports. It is an industry-led initiative coordinated by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Structure: the DigiYatra Foundation is a not-for-profit joint-venture company. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) holds 26%; the Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Cochin airport companies hold 14.8% each.
- Sci-tech: Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) – a biometric method that verifies identity by matching unique facial features. The e-passport chip stores biometric data to ICAO standards; NFC (Near Field Communication) is short-range wireless communication working over a few centimetres.
- Global link: the Foundation is working on compatibility with IATA's 'One ID' framework and ICAO's Public Key Directory (PKD). ICAO – 1944 Chicago Convention; HQ Montreal (Canada).

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai International Airport is the only Tamil Nadu airport among the 7 in the international DigiYatra trial; it is operated by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

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