

India plans facial recognition technology at airports

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Passengers on domestic flights will be able to choose whether they want to use the biometric authentication system and go paperless with the new facial recognition tech

Indian flyers will soon be able to leave their identification cards and

boarding passes at home after the government announced plans Thursday to introduce facial recognition technology at airports.

The scheme will be rolled out early next year in a bid to help congested airports deal with rapidly rising passenger numbers, the ministry of civil aviation said.

Passengers on domestic flights will be able to choose whether they want to use the [biometric authentication](#) system and go paperless, ministry secretary Rajiv Nayan Choubey said in a statement.

"Security will benefit from the ability of the technology to verify the passenger at every checkpoint in a non-intrusive way," Choubey said.

The scheme is similar to plans that Delta Air Lines announced last month when it said it would launch its first biometric terminal in Atlanta.

British Airways also recently installed [biometric technology](#) to identify customers at airports in New York, Orlando, and Miami.

Under the Indian government's proposals passengers would have their identity verified by being photographed at every stage of the check-in process from entering the [airport](#) to proceeding through security and boarding the plane.

The technology will be introduced at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports first in February 2019, the statement said.

It will then be installed at airports in Kolkata, Varanasi, Pune and Vijayawada by April.

But Devesh Agarwal, editor of the Bangalore Aviation website, told AFP

there were questions over whether the scheme had adequate privacy safeguards for passengers.

"It's a welcome move but how will the data be stored and what happens to citizens' data... if private entities start collecting biometric details?" he asked.

India has witnessed a six-fold increase in [passenger](#) numbers over the past decade as citizens take advantage of better connectivity and cheaper fares thanks to a host of low-cost airlines.

But airports are struggling to cope with the surge and analysts have warned that the government needs to spend billions of dollars to boost capacity.

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