

## Nepal launches digital visa system

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Dhaka: Nepal has introduced a digital visa system to replace its 45-year-old hand-written visa regime.

On June 28, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel inaugurated the new system under which visas are produced digitally from the integrated information system of the Department of Immigration.

The Department of Immigration said key features of the digital visa system include holograms and watermarks as security features and QR codes in visa stickers with details of the visa enabling authorities to determine whether the visa is authentic with the help of QR code readers.

The department said as the digital system generates visas, their details cannot be tempered. Likewise, the software system itself will generate visa numbers and three visas can be accommodated on a single page of the passport.

"With the new system, the security and management of visas are expected to be strengthened," said the department in a statement.

"Currently, we issue visas by writing manually on a printed copy of visa sticker and such

visa is pasted on the passport of foreigners," said Jhanka Nath Dhakal, Information Officer, Department of Immigration. "Under the new system, nothing should be done manually to issue the visa."

He said the new system would pave the way for the issuance of e-visas in the future.

On June 28, over 150 digital visas were issued to foreigners, with a Portuguese citizen being the first to receive such a visa, said Dhakal.

The Department of Immigration started the new system at its headquarters, but it aims to introduce it to all of its offices within four months after the new 2021-22 fiscal year begins in mid-July.

While the introduction of the new digital visa system, Paudel said it would make Nepali visas more credible and help ensure national security.

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