UK to introduce digital travel permit requirement for 85 nationalities

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Dhaka: Visitors from 85 countries that currently enjoy visa-free entry to the United Kingdom — including the United States, Canada and France — will be required to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) from Feb. 25, 2026, the British government said on Monday (Nov 24).

The measure is part of a wider plan to digitise the UK's immigration system and move towards a contactless border.

Once in force, all travellers will need digital permission to enter, either through an ETA or an eVisa, and carriers will be responsible for checking compliance before boarding.

The ETA scheme was first launched in October 2023 and has been used by more than 13.3 million visitors, the government said, adding that it supports "faster, smoother travel."

The authorisation is now considered a standard requirement for passengers transiting through the UK and passing through passport control.

Migration and Citizenship Minister Mike Tapp said the system improves border security and enhances the travel experience.

"ETAs give us greater power to stop those who pose a threat from setting foot in the country and give us a fuller picture of immigration," he said.

"Digitising the immigration system ensures the millions of people we welcome to the UK every year enjoy a more seamless travel experience."

Authorities said the rollout has been gradual and not strictly enforced so far, allowing travellers time to adapt — a phased approach also used in countries such as the United States and Canada.

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