

Travel smart: After Mumbai & Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyd set to get NFC cards

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Chennai: Smart travel covers new ground. After Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai commuters discovered the ease of tap-and-go cards for road and rail commute, it will next be the turn of commuters in Bengaluru, Kochi and Hyderabad to use similar travel cards that enable micro payments. Instant payments in seconds is the motto driving contactless cards, which uses near-field communication (NFC) technology. While even swiping a card at a PoS machine takes time for authentication, entering PIN, printing slip etc, NFC cards offer a swift payment option that banks, fintech players and industry bodies like the National Payments Corporation of India are looking at.

With dual functionality (a combination of pre-paid and debit/credit card), commuters can use the card for access

TAP AS U GO

> Smart cards are a combination of pre-paid cards and debit/credit cards

> Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai, metros offer two, three variants of such smart cards

> Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi next in line to offer smart cards to commuters



> Travel tap-and-go cards in line with GoI large initiative of smart cities, digital payments

> Banks, fintech players, railway authorities tie-up to offer cards

> Cards can be purchased at bank branches, railway stations, bus stands

before boarding a train/ bus. These cards can be topped-up via mobile, net banking, ATMs or at metro stations. Currently, Telangana Road State Transport Corporation is looking at such cards to enable micro payments for bus tickets between Rs 5-35. Payment for services such as visits to historical sites, malls and purchase of movie tickets is also being envisioned with the card.

In Bengaluru, BMTC has

partnered with NPCI and Axis Bank for a similar roll-out shortly. "In the first phase, we are looking at issuance of 10,000 cards. We later plan to expand the coverage. If the scheme goes through, we aim at launching such cards in 120 cities across India," said A P Hota, CEO, NPCI, in an earlier interview with TOI.

At State Bank of India, a tap-and-go travel card is getting launched in Hyderabad

after successful launches in Chennai and Mumbai.

"We are looking at four other metros for launching our unique co-branded, combo cards. There is also an option of auto-reload, where if the balance falls below a certain threshold then there will be an automatic top-up from the linked bank account. This will greatly help commuters, who don't have to stand in long lines at the metro stations, if they use our technology," said Vijay Jasuja, CEO, SBI Card.

Chennai-based Yeldi Softcom has been signed up for Chennai Metro and with 25,000 cards printed and 1,000 cards for the launch, the startup is ready to operate in 13 metro stations in the city. "The card offers a dual benefit. One can have a hassle free experience while travelling in the metro. The same card can be used for shopping," said Ra Arujunamurthy, founder, Yeldi Softcom.