# Mi Home Security Camera 360° 1080p review: Xiaomi's eye keeps watch 24/7

DECCAN CHRONICLE. | FRANCIS D'SA

*Home and office users can keep watch on their premises from anywhere in the world.*



Xiaomi's 360-degree camera runs on a simple micro USB power cord and a 5V power adapter, but when connected to the internet, it can keep an eye out for everything that happens behind your back.

Rating:

Be it office, home or any work area, a security camera is the most important accessory that needs to be deployed. With a security camera in place, unwanted incidents can be averted and you can be assured that your loved ones and your property are safe and sound. And if any such untoward incidents happen, you can still have proof to get the bad ones to book.

Deploying CCTV cameras is not as easy as one thinks — it

involves a lot of planning, cabling and installation of hardware, which are expensive and cumbersome to install. This is the main reason why most people refrain from securing their homes with such cameras. The new generation of security cameras that are based on wireless connectivity and internet cloud storage helped many secure their houses ahead. However, the price of network or IP cameras is not as cheap as one thinks.



Now Xiaomi has entered into the home automation segment in India and has planned to disrupt the market here too. With the launch of the Mi Home Security Camera 360°, Xiaomi plans to make security cameras cheaper, thus allowing every common man to secure their property with the least amount

of investments. Yes, with just a mere Rs 2,699, a single camera can take care of the entire room, while you can peacefully work around or have a sound sleep.



The Xiaomi Mi Home Security Camera 360° is a simple, yet powerful and feature-rich wireless security camera out there. It operates on wireless (Wi-Fi) and connected to the cloud for remote monitoring, remote control and remote backup. It also sports an onboard storage (micro SD card slot) where users can save the footage and access it from a smartphone at any given time and from any location around the world. All one needs is a wireless router that connected to the internet.

The Mi Home Security Camera 360° has a full HD 1080p camera that rotates 360 degrees (180 degrees in horizontally and 96 degrees vertically) and can have a coverage area of the entire room. All you need to do is place the camera in a location where the camera can rotate freely and cover view of the entire room. To provide power, you will need a simple power socket, which can be around 3-metres away from the camera. The camera receives its power from a simple 5V USB adapter that is bundled with the unit. The camera weighs just 239g and is around118mm tall.

Moving ahead, the camera is actually a two-part unit, which is cannot be separated. The top has a head or dome that houses the main camera and looks like an eyeball. It has a motorized gear that helps it turn around horizontally and vertically. The bottom or base is where all the electronics are housed. The base has a simple Mi logo up front and the rear has a reset button and a micro USB slot for the power. Coming back to the top, it again consists of two parts — the external housing/chassis and an internal movable camera/sensor. It also features a built-in speaker that is rear-facing. Both the external and internal housings can freely move and when coordinated, they can help the camera pan the entire 360-degree view. The camera can be left on a desk, on a shelf, or can be roof mounted by using the bundled mount.



Below the camera's lens is a micro SD card slot that is hidden away by default. One needs to insert a storage card by moving the lens upwards when the camera is in off

position and then insert the card in the slot. Power on the device and you are ready to help the camera catch the action.
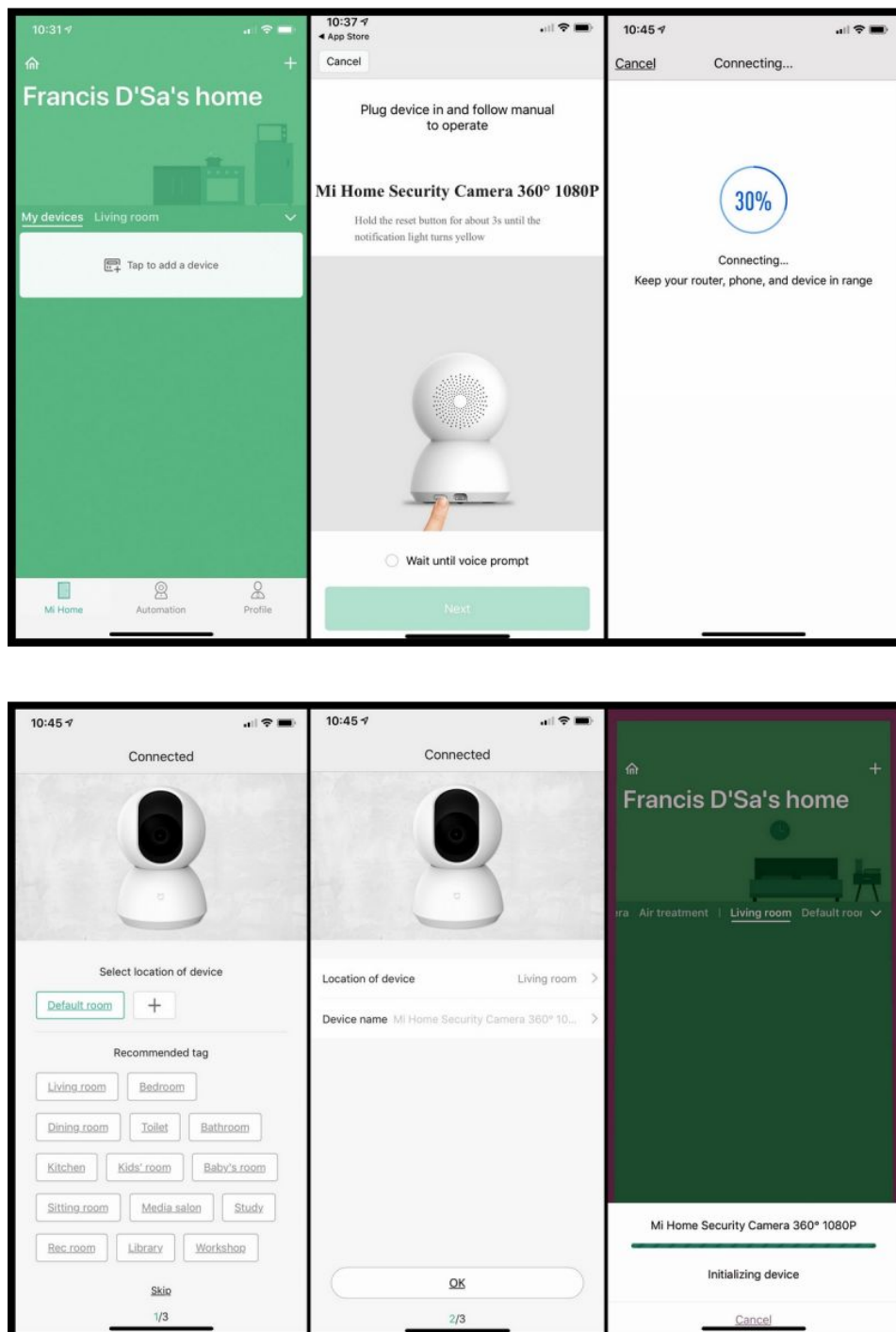
Make sure your camera, smartphone and the router are all in close range. The camera has a 2.4GHz Wi-Fi connectivity radio — so if you are using a dual band wireless router, make sure you are using a dual band or a 2.4GHz router for the camera.
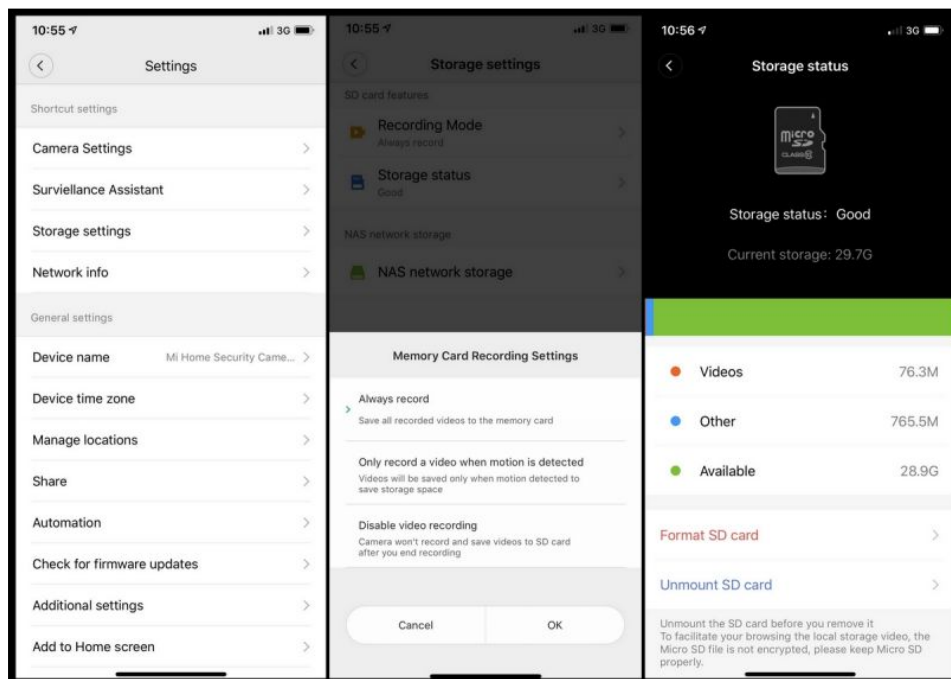


Once you are ready for installation, the steps ahead are plain, simple and very easy to follow. All one needs to do is power on the camera and wait for the initialization to complete. While that is being done, you need to download the Mi Home app from the respective app stores. Open the app, log in with your Mi account or create a new one if you don't have one. Head to the settings and ensure that your region settings are India and India server.

Next, you need to press the reset button on the camera. You will hear an audio voice from the speaker that will tell you what to do. On your app, select to add a new camera, choose the Mi Home Security Camera 360° from the list, and follow the instructions ahead. The setup process works in a unique way — you need to pass on details such as the Mi account number, the username and password, apart from the Wi-Fi name and password to the camera using a QR code that gets generated on the app during the installation process. This QR code needs to be shown to the camera and the camera then automatically sets up itself to your network and your account. Your pairing is done and your app will then allow you to further set up the camera for other features and a firmware update.
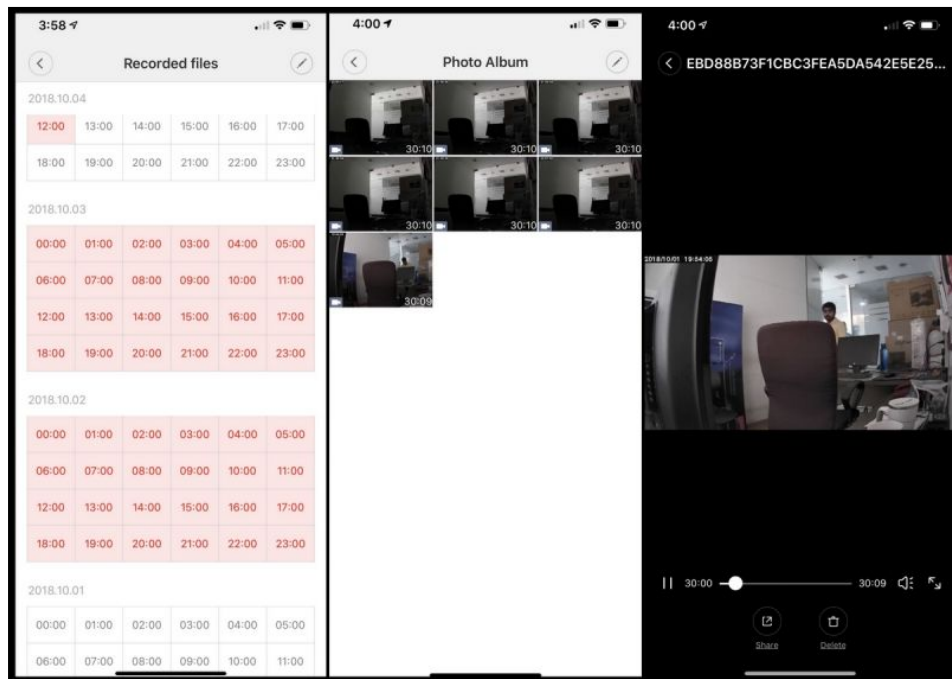
Once connected, you can play around with the settings and features for a while till you are accustomed to the interface. You will see your camera placed in the app, and you can name it as whatever you wish. You can install multiple cameras, and have them placed in different rooms and places such as home, office, garage and others. Do note, this is not an outdoor camera and has to strictly be installed in a sheltered area at room temperature.

The camera features night vision too. IR LEDs placed around the camera's lens automatically turn on when low light is detected at dusk or night. When in night vision mode, the camera's video feed turns to monochrome, which is normal. The night vision feed is very clear — thanks to the full HD sensor and the increased light sensitivity, the video is clearer and a pitch dark room is clearly caught on camera.
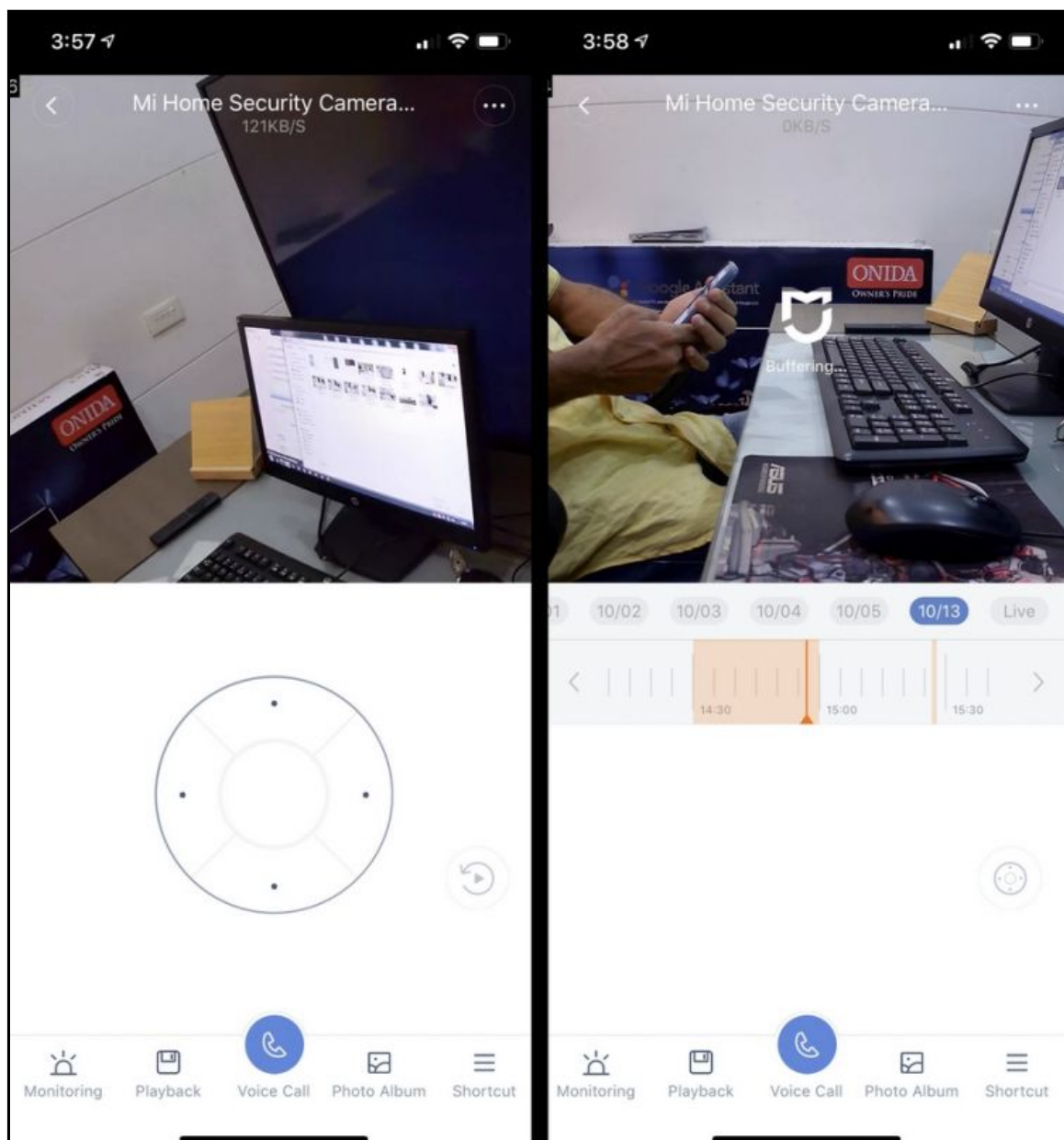
The camera also sports an AI-powered motion detection feature. This feature makes note of any movements in the video frame and starts capturing the video and saves it on the memory card. Additionally, you can also set the camera to alert you when it detects motion. The AI triggers the motion only when it detects large changes such as human or pet movements. If your video has a curtain in the frame, then the curtain's movement (caused by a wind or breeze) is not triggered. However, you can increase the sensitivity of the camera's motion detection to ensure that the camera will not

let anything go unnoticed. We did notice a flaw here though — our test camera was set to the alert mode and every time the camera would switch to night vision or vice versa, the camera would trigger an alert. Xiaomi's AI needs to be updated to make note of this so that the user is not alarmed every time, twice a day.



Additionally, the camera has features where you can set it up to only record when there is a movement or motion, or have a continuous recording and have all the video stored on the memory card. The camera cannot store or does not store any photos or videos on the cloud and will store everything on the memory card only. If you have a NAS or a shared folder on your network, you can also have the camera record and save the feeds on that network folder. This is a great value as you can treat this camera as a high-end security camera that can be connected to a larger network, with minimal configuration. The user has an option to record the feeds in 720p or full HD

1080p formats in order to save on storage and bandwidth. The videos are compressed in H.265 format that allows you to store almost double of what you can do on conventional cameras that feature H.264 formats. The camera can support up to 64GB and can store up to 5 days of footage. The camera can be remotely operated for pan and tilt and the user can also take photos remotely. These can be stored on the smartphone itself. Videos from the camera's memory card can be viewed from the smartphone too. You can permanently store or delete the recordings at will. Sadly, there is no option to access the camera or view the feeds and recordings from Windows or Mac. Additionally, it would have been nice if the app had the option to view multiple cameras in a single frame. Each time you need to view the next camera, you have to exit the current feed and get into the other camera.

Another nice feature that the Mi Home Security Camera 360° sports is buffered video. The camera stores a particular period of video, even if not recorded, in the memory card for later access. This means one can also rewind to a previous time to check out the feed. This feature also helps in motion detection as the camera uses a few seconds of the buffered video and records the motion-detected video for around 1 minute and stores it or send it to the user as an alert. You can playback the videos in normal or up to 16x speeds too.

Going ahead, the camera also features a two-way talk system on this camera. Using this feature, you can use the camera as a two-way intercom to speak to the person in the room via your smartphone. The feature is turned off by default and you need to activate the speaker and microphone from the app when you need to use it. The mic on the camera can help you listen to the remote location (live) apart from surveillance. However, the speaker on the camera could have been louder as the volume is not very high and the audio is not very clear. In a silent room, you would be able to hear, but if your room is noisy, (even with the television on) it is pretty difficult to understand anything. The feature would have been very beneficial if the camera would have had a 3.5mm audio out jack to connect to an external audio source, or of the onboard speaker was loud enough. Or if the onboard Bluetooth module could be put to use for connecting an external BT speaker system. Xiaomi — you have a job for the next firmware update or next version!

All the videos and audio passing through the internet from the camera is encrypted and the feed is only stored locally and on your phone. No data is stored on the servers apart from your account information.



The camera also has a hibernation mode where you can set up a timer for it to sleep when you know you don't want to use the camera.

As mentioned earlier, you can also mount this camera on a ceiling, apart from keeping it on a desk or shelf. The mount comes bundled with the camera and is a simple plastic plate with mounting screws. All you need to do is screw the plate/mount to the ceiling and plug in the camera. You would need to ensure that the camera has a power source nearby. Once mounted on the ceiling, the camera's settings can be tweaked to inverse (by 180-degrees) the video accordingly. Sadly, though the camera can also be wall mounted, there is no option for the video to be turned by 90-degrees. If you wish, you could mount it on a wall, but you would have to

work with a video that is tilted by 90-degrees.

Another issue we think could play up with a few users is the easily accessible reset switch. the switch could be found and pressed easily, making it easy for a person to reset the camera and rendering the security setup useless till configured back again. We think the reset switch should have been like a hidden button where one should be using a pin to carry out the reset procedure, similar to wireless routers and a few other similar devices.

In conclusion, the camera is a wonderful and a must-have add-on to your home or office. The wireless connectivity, motion detection and 360-degree pan/tilt option on such a low budget will not make anyone think twice before securing their home or office. Most of all, the installation and setup are very simple and the user can simply secure his home in a matter of minutes — no technician required.

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