

Aadhaar an identification, not profiling tool: UIDAI

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The UIDAI on Sunday sought to allay fears over data protection and privacy issues around the 12-digit biometric identifier, asserting that Aadhaar is an identification, not a profiling tool.

It also stressed that Aadhaar data is governed by strong laws.

Fielding questions on Twitter in a live chat, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey said that Aadhaar is based on minimum information and biometrics which is "least intrusive".

To a specific query on whether UIDAI will go for DNA profiling in future, Pandey said that there were no such plans.

"We take fingerprint, Iris and photo. We have no plans to take something like DNA photo, fingerprint and Iris are good enough for de-duplication, generating Aadhaar and to authenticate any person," he said.

The UIDAI chief dismissed concerns that linking of various information with Aadhaar could lead to government monitoring, surveillance or possible misuse.

"When you give Aadhaar number in the bank... UIDAI doesn't know about your bank account. Bank gives us your Aadhaar number and fingerprint and UIDAI is a matching service. It says a yes or no, or we send a limited eKYC," he explained.

The government does not get any information about the resident from the system, he said.

UIDAI further tweeted, "Aadhaar



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During the question and answer session that lasted for over 1.5 hours, Pandey took over 20 queries that ranged from privacy concerns around Aadhaar to benefits of the biometric identifier for residents, and from linking of Aadhaar to mobile SIMs (subscriber identity module) to moving the enrolment centres to government offices and banks. To another question, he said bank accounts are "property of citizens" and their linkage with Aadhaar number should not raise fears that government will one day freeze such accounts.

Maintaining that introduction of Virtual ID and limited eKYC had nothing to do with data leak stories pertaining to Aadhaar, Pandey said they were conceptualised for strengthening the privacy system.