



Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Chief Executive Officer, UIDAI RAMESH SHARMA

All telecom biometric units now have new encryption feature, says UIDAI CEO

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Nearly 13.8 lakh biometric devices in use by the telecom sector for Aadhaar authentication have been made compliant with the Unique Identification Authority of India's new encryption norms, according to CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey.

The move is aimed at adding a new device-level security layer at a time when Aadhaar-based e-KYC is being used by the telecom industry for fresh connections and re-verification of existing mobile subscribers.

"In the telecom sector, about 13.8 lakh fingerprint devices have been upgraded as registered devices with the new encryption key. The telecom industry is now fully compliant," the UIDAI CEO told PTI.

Overall, about 15 lakh devices have been "upgraded" — these devices that were being used in the field for biometric authentication, have now been secured with a new layer of encryption.

All new biometric devices, as it is, have the latest encryption norms in place, Pandey added.

"In all, about 15 lakh devices have been upgraded out of the 20 lakh such units in circulation in various sectors...many banks are also in the process of upgrading their biometric units," he added.

Lauding telecom companies for completing the "massive" task of rolling out

the new security feature in existing fingerprint devices, Pandey said the encryption key will ensure that the biometric's captured cannot be misused.

"This is like a third lock. One lock is in form of encryption at the time of biometric capture; then it gets further encrypted at the level of the telecom operator, and then we have our own encryption."

Aadhaar-based e-KYC is essential for subscribers going for new SIMs.

Further, early this year, the government asked mobile operators to reverify all the existing prepaid and postpaid customers, with the help of the 12-digit unique identity number and biometric details.

The re-verification exercise is scheduled to be completed by early 2018.

UIDAI's next priority will be to ensure compliance of new encryption norms in other user agencies such as banks and various government offices, he added.

"We will soon take stock of those who have not complied and ask them to explain why it has not been done yet," Pandey said.

UIDAI is the nodal body responsible for rolling out Aadhaar.

While more than 118 crore Aadhaar cards have been generated in the country, 45 crore Aadhaar authentications are taking place everyday.