

● AADHAAR-BASED VERIFICATION

UIDAI allows Bharti to restart e-KYC process

Gives conditional approval up to January 10; telco makes payment of ₹138 cr related to DBT subsidy

FE BUREAU
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THE UIDAI HAS given conditional approval to Bharti Airtel for conducting Aadhaar-based e-

KYC verification of mobile subscribers up to January 10 after the telecom operator made a payment of ₹138 crore related to DBT subsidy.

However, Bharti's subsidiary Airtel Payments Bank has not been allowed to use e-KYC licence key that will remain deactivated until further notice, sources said.

On December 16, the UIDAI suspended e-KYC licences of Bharti Airtel and Airtel Payments Bank following charges that the Aadhaar-eKYC based SIM verification process was

used to open payments bank accounts of its subscribers without their consent. The audit by RBI, department of telecom (DoT) and PwC is to check the veracity of these charges.

Meanwhile, Airtel Payments Bank has repaid all the subsidy amounting to ₹191 crore along with interest of 7.25% to the customers' original bank accounts linked as well as deposited an interim penalty of ₹2.54 crore with UIDAI.

"UIDAI requested RBI and DoT to conduct an audit of Bharti's systems, processes, ap-



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plications, documentations, etc to ensure that it is in compliance with license conditions. Auditor PwC as Governance Risk Compliance and Performance Service Provider (GRCP-SP) of UIDAI has also been roped in. The reports are expected by January 10," another official said.

Bharti has also been directed to communicate to all its customers within 24 hours via SMS that their bank accounts linked with NPCI Aadhaar Payment Bridge mapper for direct benefit transfer has been duly reverted from Airtel payment bank ac-

count to their previous bank accounts on the Aadhaar Payment Bridge mapper, he added.

The operator has told UIDAI that 13.80 lakhs Airtel Payments Bank account holders are already using the DBT subsidy amount and therefore their accounts have not been reversed on the mapper and it will provide an option through SMS within three days to these customers to switch to their previous bank accounts.

As per sources, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has informed that 55.63

lakh transactions have been effected for reverting around ₹138 crore from Airtel Payments Bank accounts to the previous bank accounts on the NPCI APB mapper. Funds in the remaining Airtel Payments Bank accounts of the customers are also being transferred.

On Monday, Bharti had requested NPCI to reverse the DBT credit of ₹191.4 crore along with an accrued interest of 7.25% per annum corresponding to these 30.5 lakh customers back to the previous bank account they had.