

# Govt: At least 2 SC orders on linking Aadhaar with mobile numbers

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THE CENTRE on Thursday told the Supreme Court that there actually existed orders issued by the court regarding linking of Aadhaar and mobile phone numbers.

This came a day after a five-judge Constitution bench, which is hearing a batch of petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the Aadhaar Act, questioned the Department of Telecommunications' decision to link mobile phone numbers to Aadhaar number of customers, citing its February 2017 order in a PIL.

"There are at least two Supreme Court orders and one of them is by Hon'ble Justice (D Y) Chandrachud," Attorney General KK Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, told the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra and also comprising justices A K Sikri, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Ashok Bhushan.

Making his submission as the bench was about to rise for the day, the Attorney General said he will contest the point regarding seeding of Aadhaar and mobile phone numbers when the matter is heard next week.

On Wednesday, Justice Chandrachud said that the purpose of the court's decision in the Lokniti Foundation case in February 2017 was only to ensure that users are verified in the interest of national security and that the DoT had "used it as tool



AADHAAR  
HEARING

to make Aadhaar mandatory for mobile users".

Advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for NGO Centre for Civil Society, said the linking Aadhaar with PAN for income tax will not help prevent financial frauds or curb black money.

Referring to various recent financial frauds, including the Nirav Modi scam, he said none of these could have been avoided by using PAN-Aadhaar linkage.

"Firstly, giant corporates, rather than individual players, have been the main actors in these scams. Secondly, black money is widely known to be stored by the corrupt in foreign banks which are beyond the reach of Aadhaar," he said.

The bench, however, did not agree with his contention that Aadhaar was voluntary and said if a person wanted to avail subsidy benefits, then he or she will have to possess the 12-digit unique identifier.

"Section 7 of the Aadhaar Act is not voluntary. Someone who wants subsidies will have to have Aadhaar," said Justice Chandrachud.