

Can't share Jaya's thumbprint: UIDAI

'Aadhaar Act forbids disclosure of info'

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The Unique Identification Authority of India on Friday told the Madras High Court that it cannot comply with the court's November 24 order to submit former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalithaa's thumbprints saying there is a statutory bar on sharing core biometric information provided by those who apply for Aadhaar cards.

The submission was made before Justice P. Velmurugan, who was hearing a petition that the thumb impressions reportedly affixed by Ms. Jayalithaa on the documents related to the bypoll at Tirupparankundram, during her hospitalisation last year, were not genuine. However, jailor K. N. Mohan Kumar of Parappana Agrahara prison in Karnataka submitted the thumbprints as per the judge's directive.

In order to test the correctness of the claim that Jayalithaa's thumb impressions affixed in the election documents were not genuine, Mr. Justice Velmurugan had directed the UIDAI chairman as well as the Superintendent of Parappana Agrahara central prison in Karnataka, where Ms. Jayalithaa had been lodged for 21 days after her conviction in a disproportionate assets case in September 2014, to produce her thumb impressions for cross verification.

Complying with the court order, Jailor K.N. Mohan Kumar appeared before the judge on Friday and presented a USB drive containing a soft copy of her thumb



Jayalithaa

impression. He said that the practice in the prisons in Karnataka was to record the thumb impressions of convicts electronically and obtain their signatures alone on hard copies of prison records.

He had also brought with him a register, which had been maintained in the prison between March 29, 2014 and February 22, 2015, containing the signatures of all convict prisoners who had been assigned CTP (convict prisoner) numbers between 7093 and 7693. Ms. Jayalithaa had been assigned CTP number 7402 and lodged in VVIP cell.

The judge, however, did not look into the register and took the soft copy of the thumb impression alone on file. Counsel for UIDAI Zohab Hossain contended that there was a legal bar on sharing biometric information of Aadhaar applicants.

He said that Section 29 (1) (a) and (b) of the Aadhaar Act of 2016 states that no 'core biometric information,' collected or created under the Act, should be shared with anyone for any reason whatsoever or used for any purpose other than generation and authentication of Aadhaar numbers.