

UIDAI rejects NCRB plea for Aadhaar access

UIDAI has turned down an NCRB proposal for limited access to the Aadhaar database to catch first-time offenders, arguing that the law prohibits sharing of such information. The clarification came a day after NCRB chief Ish Kumar proposed limited access to Aadhaar to catch first-time offenders and to serve as an identification tool for unidentified bodies. **P 14**

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New Delhi: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has turned down the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) proposal for limited access to the Aadhaar database to catch first-time offenders, arguing that the law prohibits sharing of such information.

In a statement UIDAI said, "As per Section 29 of the Aadhaar Act, biometrics data collected by UIDAI can be used only for the purpose of generating Aadhaar and for authentication of identity of Aadhaar holders and cannot be used for any other purpose."

The law, however, permits the UIDAI "a very limited exception" and permits access to Aadhaar biometric data in cases involving "national security" only after pre-authorisation by an oversight committee headed by the cabinet secretary.

"This is referring to reports in media about purported use of Aadhaar biometric data for the purpose

of crime investigation and in that regard it has clarified that the use of or access to Aadhaar biometric data for criminal investigation is not permissible under Section 29 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016," the UIDAI statement said. The agency further said the stand was in line with the Centre's position in the ongoing Aadhaar case in the Supreme Court. Pointing to an earlier case, UIDAI said, "It may be underlined here that when Mumbai high court gave orders to share biometric data with an investigating agency in a particular case, the matter was taken up to the Supreme Court which stayed that order."

Government officials said the NCRB chief's proposal was ill conceived and pointed out that in some countries, authorities maintained a database of people who had been convicted. "It does not mean that the police needs to access the data for all citizens. There are separate laws to deal with data on convicts and the information is collected by other agencies," a source said.