

UIDAI allows Airtel Aadhaar-based SIM verification till Mar 31

NEW DELHI: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has granted a temporary extension to India's largest telecom operator, Bharti Airtel, to conduct Aadhaar-based re-verification of its mobile subscribers, till March 31.

The Aadhaar-issuing body has, however, not lifted the ongoing suspension on Airtel Payments Bank's eKYC licence, said sources privy to the development.

The extension is "subject to compliance of activation conditions laid down by the UIDAI", said a source.

A further view would be taken on the matter on February 10 after taking into account the final report of the auditor, Department of Telecom, and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as well as the compliance status report.

An Airtel spokesperson, in an email response, said: "We can confirm that the UIDAI has permitted Bharti Airtel to continue Aadhaar based e-KYC till March 31, 2018, subject to

compliance to guidelines laid down by the authority."

Both Airtel and Airtel Payments bank drew flak after the Sunil Mittal-led firm

allegedly opened payments bank accounts of its mobile phone subscribers without seeking their "informed consent", and LPG subsidy worth crores was deposited into these accounts.



In a strong action on December 16, the government and the UIDAI temporarily barred the company from conducting Aadhaar-based SIM verification of mobile customers using eKYC process, and e-KYC of payments bank clients. On December 21, it allowed Airtel to use Aadhaar for re-verification of its mobile customers till January 10 with stiff riders.

The reprieve was given keeping in mind the convenience of customers and also the impending March 31 deadline given by the Supreme Court for mobile SIM re-verification. **PTI**