

SC says Aadhaar not mandatory for NEET aspirants

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NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered that Aadhaar will not be mandatory for registering or appearing for this year's NEET – a single-window exam to medical courses – or any other national examination.

A five-judge bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked Central Board for Secondary Education to accept alternative identification documents such as voter ID, passport, driving licence or bank account. In view of the March 9 deadline for enrolment, SC directed the board to do the needful at the earliest.

The order came after attorney general KK Venugopal said UIDAI had never authorised CBSE to make Aadhaar number mandatory for students enrolling for NEET 2018.

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Venugopal submitted before the constitution bench, which is hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the Aadhaar law, that he had received instructions from UIDAI that in states such as Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya and Assam, other identity proof documents were accepted by the CBSE to enroll students in the examination. In the same breath, however, he justified the CBSE move, saying that the authorities had received complaints of a large number of impersonation for the NEET exams.

The bench passed the order after a medical aspirant rushed before it on Wednesday challenging the CBSE decision making Aadhaar compulsory to enroll for NEET. The petitioner Abidali Yusufbhai Patel moved the top court after Gujarat HC refused to grant interim relief on his petition demanding exemption for NEET aspirants from submitting Aadhaar. Dismissing his petition, the HC had noted that the issue of linking Aadhaar to various schemes is pending before SC.