UIDAI security key in 13.8 lakh telecom biometric units: CEO

NEW DELHI: Nearly 13.8 lakh biometric devices in use by the telecom sector for Aadhaar authentication have been made compliant with UIDAI's new encryption norms, according to CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey.

The move is aimed at adding a new device-level security layer at a time when Aadhaar-based e-KYC is being used by telecom industry for fresh connections and re-verification of existing mobile subscribers.

"In telecom sector, about 13.8 lakh fingerprint devices have been upgraded as registered devices with the new encryption key. Telecom industry is now fully compliant," the UIDAI CEO said.

Overall, about 15 lakh devices have been "upgraded", meaning that these devices, that were being used in the field for biometric authentication, have now been secured with a new layer of encryption.

All new biometric devices, as it is, have the latest encryption norms in place, Pandey added.

"In all, about 15 lakh devices have been upgraded out of 20 lakh such units in circulation in various sectors... many banks are also in the pro-

cess of upgrading their biometric units," he added. Lauding telecom companies for completing the "massive" task of rolling out the new security feature in existing fingerprint devices, Pandey said encryption key will ensure that biometrics captured cannot be misused.

"This is like a third lock. One lock is in form of encryp-

tion at the time of biometric capture, then it gets further encrypted at level of the telecom operator, and then we have our own encryption," he said.

Aadhaar-based e-KYC is essential for subscribers going for new SIMs.

Further, in early 2017, the government asked mobile operators to reverify all the existing prepaid and postpaid customers, with the help of the 12-digit unique identity number and biometric details.

The re-verification exercise is scheduled to be completed by early 2018. UIDAI's next priority would be to ensure

compliance of new encryption norms in other user agencies like banks and various government offices, he added.

"We will soon take stock of those who have not complied and ask them to explain why it has not been done yet", he said.

UIDAI is the nodal body responsible for rolling out Aadhaar, the 12-digit unique identification number that identifies residents based on their biometrics.

While more than 118 crore Aadhaar cards have been generated in the country, 4 to 5 crore Aadhaar authentications are taking place everyday. PTI