'Virtual ID not a knee-jerk reaction'

## We will look at changing process and law if need be, says UIDAI chief

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Not a day goes by with news about 'Aadhaar' number not being secure, but Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Chief Executive Officer of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), feels that perceptions need to be cleared and the government is open to changes in the system, if need be.

Maintaining that Aadhaar 'data is protected' and that Virtual ID is not a knee jerk reaction, he said, "With Virtual ID (VID) for every Aadhaar number we have further stepped up security protocol. The work on VID has been happening since 2016 and now it has been introduced. VID is not knee-jerk reaction."

Asked if VID is mandatory, Pandey said, "no it is not. It is up to to the user. Privacy is
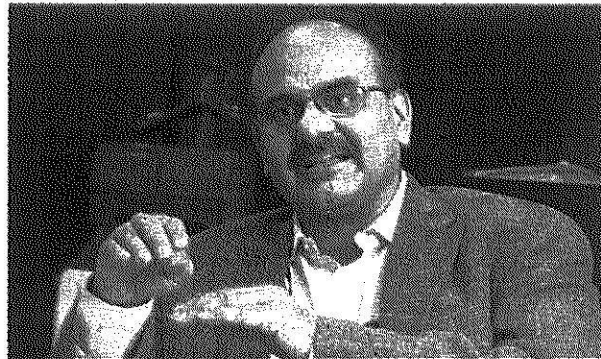
Ajay Bhushan Pandey, CEO of UIDAI, says the security protocol has been beefed up

something very personal and each user would have his/her own way of handling it."

Following the recent report on breach of Aadhaar security mechanism and the loopholes in the system, Pandey said there is in place a rigorous external as well as internal audit mechanism.

"We don't discuss security matters outside, but we have a very rigorous external as well internal system. We do continuous audit. Yes, continuous is the word. We keep full track of from where the enrolment

has happened and how many are happened and who is doing it? We track everything," he added.

According to Pandey, at any point in time, there are approximately 30,000 enrolment centres across India, which are running. "But, one thing is important that each operator is linked to Aadhaar. So once we suspend an operator, then he can never come into our Aadhaar system and work ever for us."

Elaborating he said, "It's not that I suspend and tomorrow

he changes his name and comes back. So once we take investigation against an operator, he is expelled from our system forever. That is what we follow in our system."

On whether the government will look at any further changes in the UIDAI Act, he said, "Aadhaar is a very new concept. So whenever there is requirement to understand the law we are always open to suggestions and feedback and based on that if certain technological change has to be made, we make those changes."

"There are always three-four changes that keep happening - security, convenience and functionality - and based on suggestions we will keep changing and upgrading our system. If there is a requirement of changes in the law we will look at that as well.

"These things have to be continuously reviewed and for that there requires certain technology, process and changes in rules and regulations for the Act or all of these," said Pandey.