



Finance Secretary Ashok Lavasa at an Assocham meet in New Delhi on Wednesday. Also seen are Assocham President Sandeep Jajodia and Secretary General DS Rawat. KAMAL NARANG

## Don't undermine Aadhaar platform: Ashok Lavasa

### OUR BUREAU

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Finance Secretary Ashok Lavasa on Wednesday said the Aadhaar project should not be undermined as it has brought significant savings and efficiency in schemes.

Terming it a revolutionary measure that has not been done anywhere in the world, Lavasa said it has huge potential to change how we transact with each other and with the government.

"The platform of Aadhaar should not be undermined," he said while addressing an Assocham conference, adding that it has provided a unique identity to 105 crore people. It will eventually be the only identifier required, he said. "This becomes a distinct possibility in India."

His comments come at a time when Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in the amendments to the Finance Bill, 2017, has sought to make the 12-digit number mandatory for filing income-tax returns,

and link Aadhaar and PAN.

Lavasa further noted that Aadhaar-seeding of bank accounts of beneficiaries under Direct Benefit Transfer has also had some "palpable achievements". "There have been savings to the order of ₹34,000 crore in schemes where DBT is used," he said.

At present, there are about 90 schemes of 20 ministries — including MGNRE, Pahal for cooking gas subsidies as well as various scholarship schemes — that give direct cash transfers in the beneficiary's account instead of a subsidy.

### Destination GST

Urging the industry to work towards the rollout of GST, Lavasa said: "There is a divergence of view (on the rollout date) of GST, but we must work towards July 1."

Some sections of the industry have been seeking a September 1 launch to ensure that there is sufficient time for preparation.