

Link SIMs to users' Aadhaar IDs: Court

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Supreme Court directed the Union government on Monday to register identity details of all 105 crore mobile phone users by linking their SIM cards to their Aadhaar number.

While giving this direction to the Centre, a bench of Chief Justice J S Khehar and Justice N V Ramana commended advocate Ashok Dhamija for filing the PIL on behalf of NGO 'Lokniti Foundation' seeking 100% verification of cell phone subscribers with regard to their identity and address by linking their phone numbers to their Aadhaar cards.

Attorney general Mukul Rohatgi said the Union government was agreeable to the idea. "But the task is gigantic as more than 90% of the 105 crore subscribers are using prepaid SIM cards. These SIM cards get recharged at roadside kiosks, making it difficult to register them," he added.

The bench said, "The gov-

ernment has to devise a method. The person who comes for recharge of the phone should be given a form to give his details including Aadhaar number. He should submit the filled form the next time he goes for recharge. You can give him more time. May be three or four recharges before he furnishes the details. But make it mandatory that he must furnish details or else there would be no recharge of prepaid SIMs."

The AG said, "Taking coercive measures immediately could be difficult. After demonetisation, cell phones are used for several activities. How long it would take to register each and every cell phone user is difficult to estimate." The bench would have none of it and told the AG that the government may take one year to complete the task but it has to do it. When the AG said the government would put in place an effective mechanism to register details of all subscribers, the bench disposed of the petition saying it would be done not later than one year.