

Aadhaar to be voluntary for mobiles, bank a/cs

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New Delhi:

The government on Monday decided to move amendments to at least three laws to allow voluntary use of Aadhaar for getting a mobile connection or opening bank accounts. At the same time, consumers will have the option to use any other identity or address proof for availing of these services.

The Union Cabinet has proposed amendments to The Telegraph Act, Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and Aadhaar Act in a move to provide convenience to individuals who were willing to share their details. The amendments will once again open the doors for e-KYC, a biometric authentication facility for those who are open to share their Aadhaar details.

The plan will also help telecom companies, banks and financial technology firms that were worried about massive paperwork after the SC ordered that Aadhaar could not be mandatory for services other than direct benefit transfer, social welfare schemes or issuing of PAN.

Kids can withdraw Aadhaar info on turning 18

The SC had said the provision in the law had no legal backing, though it had held constitutional validity of Aadhaar for the distribution of state-sponsored welfare subsidies. The amendments proposed by the government also include a provision that gives a child the option to withdraw her Aadhaar details and thereby ask the UIDAI to strike down all the details from its servers once she turns 18. This will mean the UIDAI will have to delete all the data, including biometrics of the person who withdraws from the scheme.

“The amendments will enable the use of Aadhaar in the state’s interest and it will also ensure privacy of Aadhaar information,” an official said, adding that changes are in compliance with the SC order.

Sources said the government has also accepted some of the recommendations of Justice Srikrishna Committee along with the SC ruling and is proposing to penalise those who do not comply with the norms related to deletion of details or denial of service.

Conceptualised under the previous UPA regime in 2009, under the extraordinary Aadhaar programme provides for giving every resident a biometric ID by assigning a unique 12-digit identification number after collecting their biometric data and photographs.