

AADHAAR SECURITY

'Do not blow up issue of data breach, privacy'

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AS THE row over alleged breach of Aadhaar raged, the Centre on Thursday said innovations taking place in the country cannot be killed under the "garb of privacy", even as the scheme's architect, Nandan Nilekani, claimed that there is an "orchestrated campaign" to malign it.

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said fingerprint and iris data stored in the Aadhaar system are safe and cannot be breached even by "billions of efforts". He also made an appeal not to "overblow" the issue of data breach. The alleged breach of Aadhaar brought to the fore in a recent report by *The Tribune* newspaper has triggered privacy and security concerns.

Delhi Police filed an "opened FIR" following a complaint by the UIDAI against the newspaper and its reporter.

"Travelling is your private affair. But everything is recorded if you take public transport like



Law Minister Prasad

flights. What you eat is your personal choice, but if you eat in a restaurant it is recorded by a bill," Prasad said. "Therefore, let us not overblow this issue of privacy."

He also said, "Innovations happening in the country as part of digital revolution cannot be killed under the garb of privacy."

Speaking at the inauguration of the sixth Annual International Commerce Conference in Delhi, Prasad said, "What is strictly private is medical and banking records. When you talk about privacy, there should be a balance between data availability, data utility, data anonymity and

data privacy."

Prasad also said that many fake accounts and teachers were identified with the help of Aadhaar cards, thus helping the government save resources.

"Aadhaar does not contain community, religion, medical, educational or income reports," he said. "The system instead contains iris and fingerprints kept in a safe and secure encrypted form which cannot be broken into even by the billionth of efforts."

Stating that Aadhaar is here to stay, Nilekani said in Bengaluru that the issue of its alleged breach has been blown out of proportion as there are far too many security layers and it is not possible to randomly pore over it. "There is 100 per cent an orchestrated campaign to see how Aadhaar gets maligned... yes, absolutely," the former chairman of UIDAI told ET Now channel on the sidelines of an Infosys event.

Referring to the FIR filed in *The Tribune* case, he said negative views on Aadhaar will have negative reactions and thus it would be better for people to have a constructive view on it.