

AADHAAR-BASED eKYC

‘UIDAI restores Airtel’s authorisation, with riders’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 30

THE UNIQUE Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has restored telecom operator Bharti Airtel’s authorisation to conduct Aadhaar-based verification of its mobile subscribers subject to specific conditions, sources said.

The company will have to submit quarterly reports on compliance with Aadhaar Act and adhere to directions issued by UIDAI from time to time. Sources privy to the decision told *PTI* that the suspension on Airtel Payments Bank’s eKYC licence has not been lifted.

The telecom service provider Airtel - whose eKYC licence has been conditionally restored - will be required to submit quarterly compliance reports “till further orders” and the UIDAI “re-

serves its rights to verify such reports on its own or through an auditor appointed by the authority”, one of the person familiar with the development said.

Airtel did not offer any immediate comments on the issue.

Both Airtel and Airtel Payments bank came under fire late last year after the Sunil Mittal-led firm allegedly opened payments bank accounts of its mobile subscribers without seeking their “informed consent”, and LPG subsidy worth crores was deposited into these accounts. In a strong action in December, the government and the Unique Identification Authority of India temporarily barred the company from conducting Aadhaar-based SIM verification of mobile customers and eKYC of payments bank clients.

It later allowed Bharti Airtel to use Aadhaar for re-verification of its mobile customers for a

fixed duration, with stiff riders attached. However, with the latest move, the UIDAI has now conditionally restored the eKYC licence key of Bharti Airtel.

Sources said the UIDAI wanted to ensure that Airtel customers do not face any inconvenience. Additionally, the Aadhaar-issuing body has taken note of regular compliance updates provided by Airtel and Airtel Payments Bank. UIDAI observed that Airtel complied with “critical issues”, the source said. The order has also takes note of audit report of DoT that was received by UIDAI on March 7. “This report has been duly examined by the UIDAI. As per the DoT audit report, it was noted that, at present, the processes and applications used for mobile customer’s re-verification and new acquisition are in compliance to DoT’s instructions,” the source said.