

UIDAI files FIRs against eight sites over user info

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The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has filed FIRs against eight unauthorised websites for promising Aadhaar-related services and illegally collecting Aadhaar numbers and enrolment details from people.

The crackdown marks the first instance of FIRs being lodged by the authority against fraudulent and illegal websites touting Aadhaar-related services. The sites are aadhaarupdate.com, aadhaarindia.com, pvcaadhaar.in, aadhaarprinters.com, geteaadhaar.com, downloadaadhaar-card.in, aadharcopy.in, and duplicateaadharcard.com.

These websites were collecting Aadhaar numbers and enrolment details illegally from residents and promising Aadhaar services posing as entities authorised by UIDAI.

"We found that even after we ordered the shutting down of some unauthorised websites, some new websites had come up. This time, we have lodged an FIR against the erring websites," UIDAI CEO

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Ajay Bhushan Pandey said.

These websites and companies extending these unauthorised services tantamount to violation under the Information Technology Act 2000, Section 38 of Aadhaar Act 2016, and Section 409 (Criminal breach of trust) and Section 420 (cheating) of IPC, according to UIDAI.

Pandey said the authority will continue to take stringent action against such sites and also asked the public to use UIDAI official website (www.uidai.gov.in) for all Aadhaar-related services.

Section 38 of the Aadhaar Act deals with penalty for unauthorised access to the Central Identities Data Repository.

The punishment under this section is imprisonment of up to three years and fine not less than ₹10 lakh. IPC's Section 420 provides for an imprisonment of up

to seven years and a fine.

Earlier this year, UIDAI had got shut down 12 websites and 12 mobile apps available on the Google Playstore, for offering Aadhaar services illegally and charging excessive money from the public. It had also directed authorities to close another 26 such fraudulent and illegal websites and mobile applications. At present, any Aadhaar-related demographic information can only be shared following the procedures laid down in the Aadhaar Act, 2016.

Last month, taking serious note of the public sharing of Aadhaar details of MSDhoni, the UIDAI had blacklisted for 10 years the entity that had enrolled the ace cricketer, for leaking Aadhaar receipt which carried his personal information.

The UIDAI is the nodal body responsible for rolling out Aadhaar, the 12-digit unique identification number that identifies residents based on their biometrics. Over 113 crore Aadhaar IDs have been generated in the country so far and Aadhaar authentications have crossed 500 crore, while 100 crore e-KYCs have been done on the platform.