Law minister says card big step towards ensuring good governance

Defending Aadhaar, Prasad says Data Safe in Encrypted Form

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New Delhi: Amid reports of leakage of Aadhaar data, law and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said the data is "safe and secure in encrypted form" and emphasised that the card is a big step towards good governance.

"The Aadhaar card contains minimum information but provides optimum utilisation. It does not contain the mobile number, parentage, community, caste, religion, income, medical record or educational qualification. The Iris and fingerprint data are kept safe and secure in encrypted form. No profiling or pooling of Aadhaar data can be done," Prasad told ET.

He underlined that having a Aadhaar card is not a proof of citizenship. Asked about instances of Aadhaar data being leaked,

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STEEP PENALTIES

Prasad says anybody found leaking data can be jailed for 3 years and fined ₹10L

the minister said anybody found guilty of leaking the data can be jailed for 3 years and fined ₹10L.

"There is a proper Aadhaar Act under which even I as a minister cannot disclose my Iris and finger-print details. Any agency that pilfers Aadhaar data- say a bank- will be prosecuted. Aadhaar with a safe and secure network only promotes good governance," Prasad said.

However, Aadhaar data was leaked in Jharkhand and the matter even came up for discussion in Parliament in the budget session. On Tuesday, Aadhaar numbers of beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana were put on the website of the Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. In Gujarat, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry website had put up names, addresses and Aadhaar numbers of students.

An advisory has reportedly been issued by the Centre to all concerned departments to ensure that Aadhar data is not shared and the consequences that will follow in case of breach of law.