

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

Press Statement

3rd July 2018

New Delhi: Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) referring to the news reports of a Hyderabad SIM vendor's arrest for fraudulently issuing SIM cards today said that in this case, in fact it is the UIDAI which traced the fraud through its strong inbuilt security mechanism and lodged an FIR against the SIM vendor and got him arrested. UIDAI reconfirms that its system is safe and secure and at the same time robust enough to trace any such fraudulent activity or attempt which used to go untraced earlier.

UIDAI said that no system in the world can claim that it has completely eliminated the possibility of fraud. Given that no system can be built that can avoid fraud 100%, the only meaningful metrics to measure performance are what frauds are prevented and how quickly, accurately and fully, those which cannot be prevented, are detected. Aadhaar not only prevents frauds but in case where frauds are attempted, it is able to trace such activities quickly and bring the culprits to the book.

UIDAI further said that in Aadhaar, people always get notified instantly through email (and also by their authentication history) so that they can report if someone else attempted a fraudulent authentication on their behalf. In this case, Aadhaar holders contacted UIDAI to complain that they had not authenticated for SIM cards on those dates and that is how within few hours, UIDAI could trace the offender and got him arrested. Also, UIDAI has security features like biometric lock wherein people can lock their Aadhaar biometrics.

UIDAI added that in pre-Aadhaar scenario, large numbers of SIM cards were reported to be issued on the basis of forged documents and it was impossible then to trace the culprits responsible for those frauds. The SIM vendor would simply get away by saying how he was supposed to know whether a proof of address or identity given at the time of applying for SIM cards was forged or genuine. The person in whose name SIM cards were issued would never come to know as to how many SIM cards were issued in his name. But with Aadhaar in place, an Aadhaar holder can know how many SIM cards have been issued against his name as he knows where all he has done his biometric authentications.

UIDAI underlined that people have been using signatures and thumbprints for centuries and at the sametime, miscreants and culprits have been forging signatures and thumbprints. Yet, the use of thumbprints and signatures were not abandoned. Instead, other security layers were introduced to counter such attempts. For example, when one issues a high value cheque, he gets a confirmation call from his bank whether he has indeed written that cheque. The design of Aadhaar is such that by providing traceability and notification to Aadhaar holder, a fraudster knows that if he ever attempts to do any mischief, he will be caught and that, itself, discourages him from attempting to do such frauds. Those who still dare to commit frauds are destined to get caught sooner than later. Aadhaar has therefore made the system safer, more secure and trustworthy as compared to what it was obtaining before introduction of Aadhaar.

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