New 'liveness' check to be done for Aadhaar fingerprint scans: Centre

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NEW DELHI: The biometric authentication of Aadhaar numbers via fingerprint scanning has been made "more robust and secure", the Union government said, announcing a new artificial intelligence mechanism that can detect whether a fingerprint being scanned is genuine.

The change comes after several cases were found of fingerprints being cloned. In March last year, UIDAI told Parliament that attempted unauthorised access to the authentication system using a gummy finger of an authorised operator had seen a steep rise in financial transactions. In 2019-22, 4,088 such unique counts equalling 13,864 transactions amounting to around ₹10 crore were found.

The new mechanism uses "a combination of finger minutia and finger image to check the liveness of the finger print captured", the statement said on Friday. "This is making Aadhaar authentication transactions even more robust and secure."

"The move will be of immense use in segments including banking and financials, telecom and government sectors," it said. "It shall also benefit bottom of the pyramid by strengthening the Aadhaar enabled payment system and curb malicious attempts by unscrupulous elements."

Aadhaar is a 12-digit number that links to the biometric and iris data of an individual, creating a unique identity. It is linked to the person's bank details, phone number, government schemes and other services.

"By the end of December 2022, cumulative number of Aadhaar authentication transactions had crossed 88.29 billion and clocking an average per day transactions of 70 million," the statement said.