

‘Enforcement Powers for UIDAI a Good Move’

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New Delhi: “This is good for Aadhaar and good for people,” Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) chief executive Ajay Bhushan Pandey told ET on the amendments proposed by the Justice Srikrishna Committee in its report on data protection.

Pandey, who was also part of the committee, said the amendments would be a “substantial enhancement” to the security and privacy of Aadhaar data. The committee has proposed enforcement powers to UIDAI like other regulatory bodies and the power to impose civil penalties – which will add more teeth to the agency that manages the Aadhaar data. “If there are provisions for privacy and data protection, there also have to be enforcement of those provisions. You cannot enforce the requirements of privacy without enforcement powers,” Pandey said.

He also welcomed the new provision of ‘offline verification’ proposed by the committee in which Aadhaar holders do not have to disclose their Aadhaar number for routine



transactions. “This will have two advantages – one, in remote areas where there is problem of connectivity and because of that if there was some authentication failure, services can be given through offline verification. It will help people. Also, everyone does not go through online authentication, especially with those private entities which are not mandated under the law – if they want to verify someone’s identity, they can do it offline,” Pandey told ET.

Under the new proposed regulatory powers, UIDAI can conduct inquiries and impose a civil penalty of up to ₹1 crore on any entity that violates the Aadhaar Act, besides powers of search, seizure and requisitioning help of the police to stop such a violation.