'Service providers can use offline verification modes of Aadhaar'

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SERVICE PROVIDERS can use offline verification tools like eAadhaar and QR code that leverage the unique ID without authentication, any access to biometrics, or revealing the 12-digit number, the Aadhaar-issuing authority UIDAI said Friday.

The statement comes against the backdrop of the Supreme Court judgement restricting the use of Aadhaar.

In an interview to *PTI*, Unique Identification Authority of India CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey said as per legal understanding of the authority so far, offline options are in conformity with the recent SC ruling. The Aadhaar-issuing body now plans to create an awareness around these verification methods, starting with an active engagement with technology industry next week.

"The UIDAI has come out with offline options which will be in line with the SC order. People can choose to get their Aadhaar ID verified without hitting the UIDAI server, by downloading electronic version of their Aadhaar card (eAadhaar) ... they have option of masking their Aadhaar number, and there is a QR (quick response) code which does not carry their Aadhaar number too, that can be used," Pandey said.

Using any of these options will allow service providers to establish the identity of an individual, and security layers can be added to such verification including 'One Time Password' mechanism, he said. "Based on the discussion we had with our legal team, we are given to understand so far that it is in tune with the SC order. The most important thing is that the information which is given (through these options), contains only name, address and photo, which is anyway available in any other ID document. The Aadhaar number can be masked or redacted, and so it addresses concerns of privacy," the UIDAI chief said.