"Birds born in a cage think flying is an illness."
Alejandro Jodorowski, filim director

AADHAR ANATOMY

Even eight years after it was launched, Aadhaar – the biometric-based, 12-digit unique identification number – is caught in controversy, with the government insisting that it is necessary for social spends to reach beneficiaries and many citizens worrying about its potential misuse. Recently, the Centre told the court that it will extend the deadline for mandatory linking of Aadhaar to avail benefits of government schemes to March 31, 2018. Even as further clarifications are awaited, we take a look at the Aadhaar architecture:

LAUNCHED ON
JANUARY 28, 2009

FIRST AADHAAR ID ISSUED ON
SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

ISSUED BY
Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), set up in July 2016 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

AADHAAR DATA CENTRE LOCATION
Industrial Model Township (IMT), Manesar, Gurgaon

NO. OF PEOPLE ENROLLED
1.18 bn
as on Oct 20, 2017

BUDGET
$1.4 bn
up to Jul 2017

AADHAAR IN COURTS

Ever since the unique identity was launched, there have been attempts to link it to various government schemes. The objective is to remove ghost beneficiaries, eliminate fraud, uniquely identify each user of a bank account or a mobile number and so on. Some activists believe that expanding the use of Aadhaar goes against the August 24, 2017, Supreme Court judgment that ruled privacy as a fundamental right.

The SC will hear multiple petitions – one of which is by the West Bengal government – related to Aadhaar, including those for scrapping the Aadhaar Act, stopping biometric profiling as well as seeding bank and mobile databases with Aadhaar.

The Supreme Court will decide whether you need to mandatorily link your bank accounts and mobile number with Aadhaar.

The government wants to make Aadhaar mandatory for Public Provident Fund, National Savings Certificates, Kisan Vikas Patra and more than 130 welfare schemes. These include:

- ☑ NREGA
- ☑ PDS
- ☑ RTE/Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- ☑ Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) Scheme for Women
- ☑ Ujjwala Scheme, free cooking gas (LPG) to poor women
- ☑ Saakshar Bharat
- ☑ Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) Scheme
- ☑ Central Sector Scholarship Schemes for education of students with disabilities
- ☑ Skill Training of Persons with Disabilities under the Central Sector Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disability Act, 1995
- ☑ National Career Service, registration at employment exchange etc

LINKING AADHAAR

For bank accounts, Aadhaar can be linked online, through a text message, or by visiting the bank branch

IN 2017, AADHAAR LINKING WAS MADE MANDATORY FOR MULTIPLE SCHEMES/SERVICES

For availing benefits under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). Will help 800 million people get subsidised food

Till March 2017, 72% beneficiary households had linked Aadhaar to ration cards

The government notified on July 1 that linking Aadhaar and PAN is mandatory for filing of income tax returns

1.08 crore I-T assessees have linked Aadhaar and PAN. There are 25 crore PAN card holders and 1.13 billion Aadhar card holders. Only 6 crore people file I-T returns

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill links Aadhaar to driving licences & vehicle registration

DoT has asked telcos to re-verify mobile phone users via Aadhaar. But a petition in the SC has challenged the move

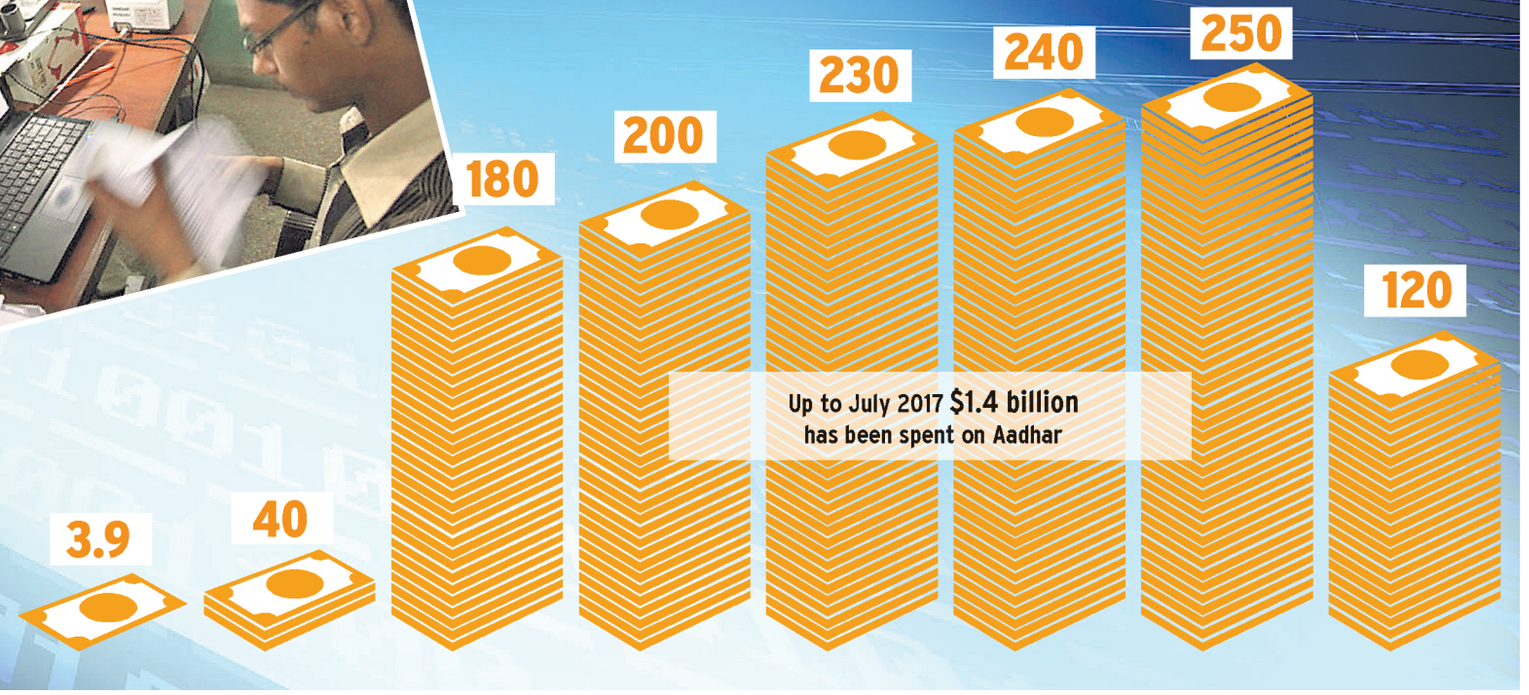
Banks to enable Aadhaar Pay. This will help those who don't have debit cards, mobile wallets or smartphones to go cashless

SOME OTHER USES OF AADHAAR

It is the only document needed to open a Jan Dhan account

It leads to a quicker processing of passport

It makes it supereasy to buy news sim cards as the verfication process can be quickly completed.

SPENDING ON AADHAAR

Expenditure ($ million)