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# Rajya Sabha too clears Aadhaar Bill

## Opposition raises concerns over delay in enacting law on data protection

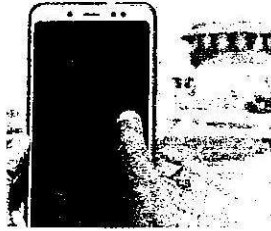
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Parliament on Monday cleared the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which allows voluntary use of Aadhaar as proof of identity to open bank accounts and get mobile phone connections.

The Rajya Sabha cleared the Bill through a voice vote on Monday. It was cleared by the Lok Sabha on July 4.

However, the Opposition questioned the government's "intentions" on clearing the Bill without first bringing in a law for data protection.

Answering the Opposition



The Lok Sabha cleared the Bill on July 4.

questions, Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Rajya Sabha that the legislation on data protection was a "work in progress", and the government would bring in a comprehensive law after further consultations with

the stakeholders.

"Data sovereignty is important to us and it will not be compromised," Mr. Prasad said.

He said that India in future would become a centre of data refinery and the government was taking due precaution in constructing the data protection law because the world was looking at India to take the lead on the issue. Mr. Prasad sought to remind the opposition that it was the Congress that had first brought in Aadhaar, but it had no legislative basis. To the allegation that the new law distorted the Supreme Court judgment, he

said, "I would like to gently remind this House that the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have the right to undo a Supreme Court judgment."

He said Aadhaar was completely safe and sound with all necessary encryption.

"No core biometric information collected or created for this act shall be shared with anyone for any reason whatsoever," Mr. Prasad said, quoting from the legislation. The only exception will be made for reasons of national security, he said.

The Bill provides for a ₹1 crore penalty and a jail term for private entities violating provisions on Aadhaar data.