

₹200 cr earmarked to fund Aadhaar enrolment machines for schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Government agency UIDAI will offer Rs 200 crore assistance to states to fund enrolment machines in sub-districts (talukas) that can be used for Aadhaar enrolment and updation of school students.

The move comes just days after the Aadhaar-issuing body instructed schools not to refuse admission to students for lack of the 12-digit biometric identifier, while placing the onus on the educational institutions to arrange for enrolments and biometric update facility for such students.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has now decided to go a step further to enable such enrolment through provision of Aadhaar machines and accordingly, it will facilitate the availability of two machines per taluka.

"It has been decided that UIDAI will provide fund for two Aadhaar enrolment machines to every taluka, which will work under the supervision of district administration," UIDAI CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey told PTI.

The whole idea is that the machines can go from school to school, for enrolment and updation activities, and is in tune with the UIDAI's instructions that Aadhaar enrolment camp be organised in all the schools at least twice a year by making a school-wise roster for the same.



The move comes just days after the UIDAI instructed schools not to refuse admission to students for lack of the 12-digit biometric identifier

Pandey said that UIDAI will set aside Rs 200 crore from its budget as one-time cost of funding these machines meant for schools.

"We have just approved the scheme and we will be able to provide this funding to all the state governments. This is to ensure that no child is denied right to education on account of not having Aadhaar," Pandey added.

Earlier this month, UIDAI had asked schools not to refuse admission to students for lack of Aadhaar and said such denials are "invalid" and "not permitted under the law".

There have been instances where parents and students were left in the lurch when schools insisted on Aadhaar number at the time of admission. Taking a stern view of cases where few schools had denied admission to children in the absence of Aadhaar, UIDAI had said "it must be ensured that no children are deprived/denied of their due benefits or rights for want of Aadhaar". For children who are not yet assigned an Aadhaar number or those whose biometrics are not updated in the database, the UIDAI has asserted that under Aadhaar rules it will be the "responsibility" of schools to arrange for enrolments and biometric update facility for such students.

In fact, the UIDAI has said that it is "obligatory" on the states to arrange -- through its education department and district administration -- Aadhaar enrolment camp in all schools at least twice a year. A roster should be drawn up for this, it had noted.