THE MENDU

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Page 1 of 2

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Karnataka - Bangalore

School attendance goes hi-tech

Special Correspondent

Government to use biometric method in select primary, secondary schools

- Pilot project launched in Shivanahally Government Primary and Secondary School in Rajajinagar
- About 60,000 government schools to be covered under the project
- Move planned to streamline administration and ensure attendance

BANGALORE: It had to begin in the country's hi-tech hub. Children in select government primary and secondary schools, and their teachers, will now mark their attendance through a biometric method.

The State Department of Primary and Secondary Education has planned this to streamline school administration and ensure attendance, which is the criterion for many welfare schemes for underprivileged children.

For the past 10 days, a pilot project on biometrical attendance recording has been on at the Shivanahally Government Primary and Secondary School in Rajajinagar. The children have to place one of their fingers, usually the thumb or forefinger, one a programmed keypad, which will match the impressions with the date stored.

The biometric project is also to be tested at four other schools at Madhanayakanahally near Basaveswaranagar, Harohalli and Sanjay Gandhi Nagar in the next three months, according to officials in the Education Departments. "We are now in the process of fine-tuning the hardware and software used, and the existing biometric machine is likely to be upgraded for larger data storage," they said.

The machines in individual schools are to be connected to a server in the block or district education office and in the next phase, the data from the districts will be linked to a central server in Bangalore. Any school administrator can eventually access the attendance data related to a particular school. When fully implemented, close to 60,000 government schools with 12 lakh students and three lakh teachers will be covered.

The data stored in the regional servers will be useful in monitoring welfare schemes such as free midday meals, textbooks and uniforms. The administrators can also find out average school day attendance in real time and the figures of dropouts at various

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Stories in this Section

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- Corrupt politicians hindering progress, says Lokayukta
- Mixed feelings about celebrations'
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- Schoolchildren steal the show at Independence Day celebrations
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- Hasina, a superior film on many counts
- Vajpayee, Advani pay last respects to Seshadri
- Training children to become global citizens
- School attendance goes hi-tech
- COMED-K to offer scholarships for meritorious students
- NICE to rope in strategic partners for BMIC
- Maran pitches in for improving infrastructure
- Engineering student nabbed while stealing mobile phone
- IT hubs may come under city police limits
- Two injured as police open fire at armed gang
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- thoughts on freedom

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- of returning home

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- Antony to take decision on Congress leaders attending meeting of Backward Classes
- Attendance at `At Home' thin
- Three persons drown in Mekedatu
- Man arrested
- Around the City
- In Bangalore Today
- Reporter's Diary

Archives

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