



Indian rural employment project uses biometrics

The Indian government is taking advantage of the power of biometrics to help register rural residents for a national guaranteed employment program called NREGA.

NREGA provides an opportunity for adult members of rural households to obtain 100 days of public work-based employment annually. The implementation and management of the program is handled by BeST, a joint venture company between Beltron (Bihar State Electronics Development Corporation) and IL&FS.

Cross Match Technologies has said in a statement that, along with technology partner Smart ID, it is working with the Indian government to help register rural residents in areas such as Bihar.

To enrol Bihar's citizens into the NREGA program, Beltron selected Cross Match's Guardian applicant livescan and fingerprint enrolment systems. The Guardian devices are in use throughout remote locations in Bihar, capturing citizens' fingerprint images as 25 million residents register for the rural employment guarantee program.

"We are working with Smart ID on this project, where upon completing the biometric registration process, residents' identities can be easily verified when applying for jobs through the NREGA program," explains Bill Dumont, Senior Vice President of Worldwide Sales and Marketing at Cross Match.

According to Cross Match, using Guardian, Smart ID has been able to capture forensic-quality images, despite harsh environmental conditions. "Bihar is flood prone and experiences heavy rainfall annually and very extreme temperatures," states Nirmal Prakash, Managing Director at Smart ID. "We have experienced temperatures in excess of 113 degrees Fahrenheit (45° C)."

Dr. Dinesh K. Tyagi, CEO (CSC), IL&FS said that the Guardian systems are so easy to use that operators were trained in 3 working days and are able to enrol 10,000 citizens per day. To date, the government has collected 1.35 million records in the Patna District.

NREGA

With a view to providing guaranteed employment to rural house hold of the country who volunteers to do unskilled manual work in their native places, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted on 2nd February 2006. Initially the programme was taken up by the Ministry of Rural Department (MORD), Government of India, in 200 districts which was extended to additional 130 districts in April 2007 and thereafter to the remaining 285 districts of the country in April 2008.

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