



Holy Pilgrims to Trek the Biometrics Route

Bartronics has bagged the contract to implement the biometric driven access control system at the Vaishno Devi shrine; the next in line is Amarnath.

HYDERABAD: The journey to the Vaishno Devi shrine located atop Trikuta mountains in Jammu & Kashmir will soon be routed through an access control system. Hyderabad-based Bartronics India Ltd has bagged the contract to implement the biometric driven access control system at the shrine. The 14 km arduous trek to the shrine visited by 25,000 pilgrims a day will have a single window clearance in Jammu and Katra where pilgrims will register themselves and from thereon at various points, identity of the pilgrims will be matched, through thumb impressions and photographs, with the original registration and also against the database of the known anti-social elements and terrorists.

Coming close on the heels of a similar project at Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam (TTD), the Vaishno Devi implementation is at a smaller scale with 12 scanners deployed at Jammu and Katra apart from check points on the trek and the final destination. "However, it is likely to be scaled up and the registration facility extended to other cities as well," said MD of Bartronics India, Sudhir Rao. TTD has 60 such centers so far, five of them being outside Andhra Pradesh, which take care of advance booking and verification on reaching the shrine. For the Vaishno Devi shrine, the company will work closely with the shrine board for 12 months and will train the board employees in operating the system. According to Rao, the difference between the two implementations is that the shrine board owns the Vaishno Devi implementation, whereas the Tirupati implementation is owned by Bartronics. At Tirupati, the company takes a rupee per pilgrim as revenue in a currently running two-year contract.

Rao also informed that there is another fairly complex biometric implementation under discussion for Amarnath. The holiest of shrines is open only for two months in July and August every year and is increasingly becoming high risk because of increased terrorist threats. According to Bartronics country manager, Bhanu Prakash, the senior officials of the company will soon be personally checking out the Amarnath route to map the project.

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