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Young Achiever : The Robo Boy

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Ashish Bhat (extreme right) demonstrating Neutra to defence officials including defence minister AK Antony.

Remember the innovative flying surveillance camera in '3 Idiots' movie that Rancho works on? It is actually a brainchild of Ashish Bhat and his team. The techie talks about how he developed Neutra, the device that has been employed by the Indian paramilitary forces

Pratima Shantaveeresh

Ashish Bhat, a 28-year-old former IITian and co-founder of Mumbai-based ideaForge which founded Neutra, a flying surveillance camera, received an award for Young Indian Leaders presented by IBN Network. Neutra is developed in collaboration with DRDO. It is now being used by the BSF and CRPF in counter-insurgency operations. It can be used in hostage situations like the 26/11 terror attacks, border infiltration monitoring, search and rescue operations, disaster & crowd management and aerial photography. Ashish shares his experience and more with Young Hans.

Tell us about your journey so far.

I graduated from IIT- Bombay. Since my IIT days, my friends and I loved to experiment with new things. Immediately after passing out of IIT, we launched a company called ideaForge. All members of our team had a great passion for robotics. As we had participated in many competitions where we interacted with the users, we got to know that there is great potential for this technology. So we started developing it.

What inspired you to invent Neutra? How many days did it take to complete it?

Our quest to put technology to use inspired us to work on the robot and make it into Neutra. It's been years since we are working on Neutra. Since our first attempt in IIT, we are working on it. As technology has no bounds, it's still developing. It's been around four years since we are working on it to get it to this level.

Is Neutra the only product you have invented or have you worked on other products too?

As an end use product, this is the only one we invented have right now. But apart



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from this, we have developed some other technology too.

What was your reaction when you got to know that Netra will be used in the movie '3 Idiots'?

The device used in '3 Idiots' was the older version as they wanted it to look like students project. Some newspaper had covered us. The crew of the movie saw the article and contacted us. We met them, demonstrated the product. They said they want to use it for their movie and we agreed. After that whenever we go to some any remote or urban place people recognise us.

Did you ever expect that you will win this award?

No (laughs). It was a surprise to us. One fine day, we got a call saying we are getting this award and that was a great moment.

How do you think will this award help you in future?

I think it will get us good publicity and make our product popular.

What are your future plans?

We keep interacting with users and we get feedback so development will keep happening. Currently we are looking to develop bigger products which are portable and with more endurance.

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