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News

"Honoured": 28-year-old Odisha engineer Anil Pradhan on winning third Rohini Nayyar Prize

The youngster is the co-founder of the Young Tinker Foundation and launched the idea Tinker-on-Wheels, a lab on wheels that extends hands-on experiences



Meet Anil Pradhan (Pic: <https://www.instagram.com/anilpradhanedu/>)

EdexLive Desk

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The third Rohini Nayyar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development goes to 28-year-old engineer Anil Pradhan who hails from Odisha. This is for his relentless work to promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education among students in rural India.

"Honored to share that we received the Rohini Nayyar Prize 2024 for our work in advancing STEM education in rural India," he said, taking to his Instagram.

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Honored to share that we received the Rohini Nayar Prize 2024 for our work in advancing STEM education in rural India. This award celebrates the Young Tinker Foundation's commitment to reaching students at the grassroots level, empowering them with the skills of tomorrow. Vaishali Sharma and I were privileged to accept this award at India International Centre, New Delhi.

It was inspiring to receive this recognition from such esteemed figures as Dr Deepak Nayyar, former Chief Economic Adviser; Dr Ashok Khosla, renowned environmentalist; and Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, former Director General of CSIR and chief guest of the ceremony—each a true role model in their own right.

The Rohini Nayar Prize, founded in memory of the visionary economist and administrator Rohini Nayar, honors exceptional contributions to rural development across India, with recipients from civil society, government, enterprise, and academia. Along with a citation, the prize includes ₹10 lakh in support of our mission.

A heartfelt thanks to the Nayar Foundation for recognizing and championing the work of rural youth in advancing rural development.

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The youngster is the co-founder of the Young Tinker Foundation and launched the idea Tinker-on-Wheels, a lab on wheels that extends hands-on experiences in fields like robotics and 3D-printing in school students from rural regions of Odisha, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.

His initiative has reached out to over 2.5 lakh students to date.

"I pursued my engineering from a government college in Odisha. When I began working as an engineer, I realised there is a huge gap between what is being taught in schools and what is actually happening in the industry," Pradhan told *PTI*.

"While students in metro cities still have exposure to hands-on learning, it is very limited for students in rural areas. That's why I thought of starting this. We began with 200 students, and we have helped 2.5 lakh students so far," he added.



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He was also the chief designer of Asia's first university rocket team, VSLV, and built a team of students from India who ranked third in the world at the NASA Rover Challenge in 2021, making them Asia's first Under-19 team to achieve such a feat.

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