

Mangalore boy's work features on Google homepage

Deepa Kurup Anisha Sheth



YOUTHFUL VISION: Akshay Raj, 14, the winner of the Doodle4Google competition with Nikhil Rungta, Google India's Country Marketing Manager, in Mumbai. Photo: Special Arrangement

Winning entry was chosen from over 1,08,000 doodles with India theme

Internet users logging on to the Google homepage on Sunday will find a 'doodle' that showcases what is termed as the 'New India.' With a scholarly hat perched atop Google's G and a satellite bearing India's name on its way to the moon, the doodle, Google's creative logo that marks Children's Day, is designed by a Mangalore schoolboy, 14-year-old Akshay Raj.

A Class IX student of the St. Aloysius High School, Akshay will find his work displayed on the homepage of the popular search engine throughout Sunday. Titled 'Technically and Naturally

Growing India,' his entry was chosen from over 108,000 doodles submitted by students for the Doodle4Google competition from across the country.

Artistic merit

A statement from Google India said that the selection was based on “artistic merit, creativity, and expression of the theme.” Besides the privilege of seeing his work featured on the page, he will also take home a Technology Starter Package and a Rs. 2 lakh technology grant for his school.

The winners were chosen by Dennis Hwang, the original Google Doodler and graphic artist who is the creative force behind the festive logos that appear periodically on the homepage.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Akshay's proud mother, Mamatha Rajesh, said Akshay and his father had left for Mumbai to attend the awards ceremony. “Akshay has always loved drawing. It was only in Class 7 he started learning art formally when he evinced an interest in charcoal drawing.”

Father Melwin Pinto, the school's headmaster, said they are all very happy and excited for Akshay.

It took 90 days to trawl through the entries for India to get its second ‘Made in India' Doodle. Dennis Hwang and Jennifer Hom — the designers of the Google Gandhi doodle — chose the Indian winner from 41 semi-finalists.

The theme provided was ‘My Dream for India.' The submitted doodles were shortlisted by partner art schools from across the country, after which 9051 doodles entered the quarter-final round. Faculty from the Sir J.J. School of Arts then shortlisted the 600 doodles that made it to the semi final round.

Besides the national winner, three group winners were also chosen through an online poll in which Google users participated. Khushi Mahender, of Ryan International, New Delhi, won the Group I prize; Tahera Sohail of Young Horizon School, Kolkata, topped Group II and Chennai's V. Vinoth Kumar of SBOA Matriculation School bagged the award in Group III.

Special Judges' Awards were given to Anwesh Saha from Kolkata, Nishi Bordia from Indore and Sanjali Desai from Mumbai in Groups I, II and III respectively.