ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Book a bicycle to commute in campus, thanks to a students' start-up

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Students of National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) in Mangaluru taluk can now just pick a bicycle from a docking station and commute inside the campus by paying a nominal rent.

Wheels on Roll (WoR), a students' start-up by four second-year students of engineering at NITK, provides the option of using the bicycle inside the campus at a rental of ₹5 for the first 15 minutes. Pratyush Giri, one of the co-founders of WoR, told *BusinessLine* that the aim of the start-up is to deliver bicycles at a nominal rental in academic campuses, starting with NITK.

The start-up serves students in the campus, who are not allowed to keep a two-wheeler in the premises. Recently, NITK Alumni Association contributed 50 more bicycles to the start-up.

He said that the plan is to have around 500 bicycles in the NITK campus in the coming years.

The docking stations include an app-based automatic bicycle key-vending machine and a customized bicycle parking space. The users are provided with the option of booking a ride either with the android app or a smart card.

To a query on the safety of these bicycles, Giri said each bicycle will be equipped with RFID (radio frequency identification) tags. They are connected through the wi-fi modules inside the campus. The bicycle can be tracked within 100-ft radius, even if there is no internet. Added to this, WoR is planning to make these bicycles GPS-enabled in the coming days, he said.

Giri is supported by other co-founders – Piyush Bansal, TK Jeshventh Raja and Amartya Gupta – in this venture. The student chapter of IEEE at NITK is providing the technical expertise and financial support to build the technology.

IBM has provided Bluemix cloud platform free of cost to the start-up. Anmol Nautiyal, Director (cloud computing) of IBM, is mentoring WoR, Giri said.

(From Left to right bottom) Piyush Bansal, TK Jeshventh Raja, Amartya Gupta, and Pratyush Giri (co-founders); (Second row) Rohan Surve, Abhishek Thigale, Tarun Mittal, Mohita Chowdhury, Santosh Kodali, Hrishikesh Hiraskar and Salman Shah (tech team members)