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Indian robots to fight crime in US

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Developed by M-Bots, they will be manufactured at BEL's Bangalore facility.

BANGALORE: Sneaky robots designed by Indians could soon help fight crime in the United States.

M-Bots Inc, a robotic firm founded by Indians in the US, has designed an affordable robot on wheels fitted with a high-resolution camera to help law-enforcement agencies tackle crime in dangerous zones.

The pizza-sized robots called Sneaky, which adopts open architecture to make it competitive, will be manufactured by India's state-run defence electronics major Bharat Electronics Ltd at its facility in Bangalore for the world market.

"Our robot will be available in the market for around \$5,000 while a comparable robot could cost around \$30,000," Sridhar Lakshmanan, vice-president, product development, M-Bots Inc, told DNA Money.

M-Bots, a self-funded start-up, aims to ship the first product built at BEL by January next, and aims to eventually sell around 30,000 units a year.

BEL officials confirmed that its export-manufacturing division worked with M-Bots to freeze a final design and is gearing up to produce the robots. BEL did not disclose the terms of the transaction, but helped

M-Bots in firming up standards and protocols for commercialising the robot. The robots can wheel underneath a car to snap and beam images through wireless internet to mobile devices and monitors through controlled access on a virtual private network. The robots can be guided through joysticks from a tablet-shaped monitor or through restricted web pages and access to controls could be personalised.

"We have got purchase orders from some police departments (stations) in the US," Lakshmanan said, adding that BEL is the sole manufacturer of the robot.

The US has over 20,000 police departments and the Michigan-based M-Bots hopes that the market potential for the robots is huge in the military and also law enforcement agencies across the world.

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