

IN FOCUS | HITESH WARDHAN

SUCCESSFUL SHORTCUT

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Almost everybody in India would agree that they have dreamed about answering a bunch of questions and becoming a crorepati while sitting opposite the one and only Amitabh Bachchan. 22-year-old Hitesh Wardhan got it all too easy. While others dream, this young gentleman answered a simple question and won the Pepsi Ek Crore Ka Shortcut campaign which had been launched by Pepsi in collaboration with the hit television show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC). Calling his good fortune a stroke of luck Wardhan says, "I have seen people try again and again in these competitions but I guess I was just lucky and that it was my time to win."

When last Diwali, Wardhan purchased a bottle of Pepsi, little did he know that the question on the back of the wrapper would bring him ₹1 crore and make him into a crorepati. Like many of us in this country, Wardhan is a cricket fan and loves to play the game. Moreover, his favourite cricket player is the Indian captain MS Dhoni, which made the question "In which city did Mahendra Singh Dhoni score his first century?" All the more easier. Wardhan quickly picked up his cellphone and sent a message with the answer



"Vishakhapatnam". Even though he kept the wrapper carefully, he never expected to be the one to win the draw of lots which would bring him the ₹1 crore. On November 1, he received a call from Pepsi asking him to present some form of identification proof to an executive who would be visiting him soon. The caller failed to mention the reason and Wardhan neglected asking as well. The next day, he presented the required proof of identity to the executive and was still not informed of his victory. It was only after the verification had been done that he was told.

He was flown over to Mumbai and to the sets of KBC where he was presented with his prize by ace Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh and Amitabh

Bachchan. Although the after tax amount is less than ₹1 crore, Wardhan still got a whopping ₹70 lakh.

On being asked about what he plans on doing with the money Wardhan smiles and says, "I really have no plans with it as such. My father invested some of it for me by buying property and a part of it has been put in a fixed deposit. I've kept a little for myself so that I can party with my friends."

Currently pursuing his Masters degree from Delhi University, Wardhan aspired to become an IPS officer, but he still fails to mention any concrete plans for the money.

If one thing can be said, it would be that the young man hasn't let the wealth go to his head.