Written by Anu
Monday, 20 February 2012 09:27

'Aakash', the world's cheapest tablet, will be fully indigenous soon and its improved version will be launched by the government at the same price.

Telecom and HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said Datawind – the manufacturer of the product -- will not be associated with it anymore and the Government has roped in C-DAC and ITI in further development of the tablet computer.

"There have been some problem with Datawind I must confess. Therefore, I have got into the act. IT Ministry has got C-DAC and ITI into the act and I am going to ensure that this product is fully indigenous and truly an Indian product," he said.

On whether the new tablet will be available within the same price range as that of the earlier product, he said, "Yes that's what we hope. It is to be upgraded."

On the possible timeline for launching it, he said, "Well, 2012 should seen the sun... Aakash-II should be launched. There have been some hiccups in the way.Remember when you do a project of this nature and when your dream is as big as this, things are never that smooth."

Welcoming competition from market for development of the tablet, he said the ultimate objective is to give a quality product to the children.

"I think its a great thing if there is competition. Ultimately my objective is to get a quality product in the hands of the children. I have set the benchmark, it has changed the mindset of the world, I can tell you that," the Minister said.

Everybody now wants to produce a tablet which is of quality and which is reasonably affordable, he noted. "So if the whole world wants to produce, I don't care who produces, if ultimately it is produced by somebody for children," he underlined.

The Aakash tablet is priced at approximately USD 49 (Rs 2414).