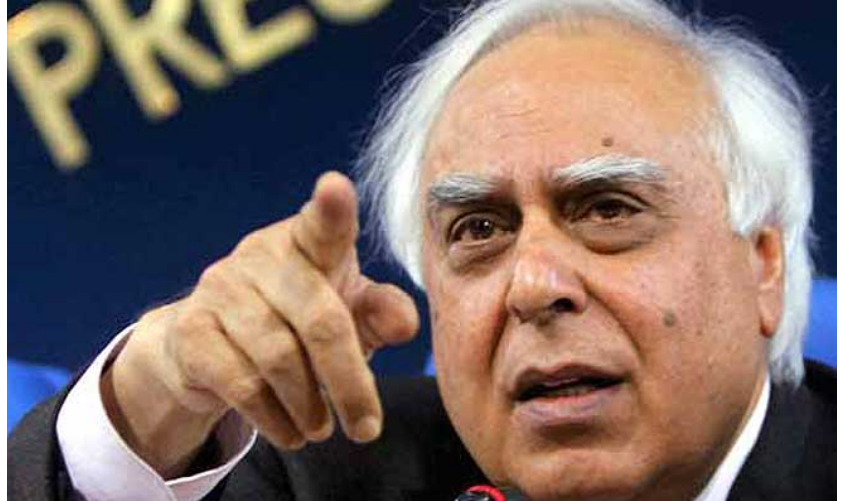


Kapil Sibal: Aakash tablet is my unfulfilled dream

"Some departments did not support me but despite that we are bringing the Aakash tablet," Kapil Sibal said. PTI

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Calling low-cost tablet PC Aakash his unfulfilled dream, Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal today said he has pursued the project despite not getting support from some government departments and that the tender for manufacturing the latest version will be finalised in January.



"Aakash tablet was my dream but it was not fulfilled, I tried hard...some departments of my government did not support me... despite that I continued to strive and then I brought the project in my ministry and now specifications for Aakash 4 have been completed," Kapil Sibal said at the launch of 'e-inclusion' project here.

"Some departments did not support me but despite that we are bringing the Aakash tablet," Kapil Sibal said.

The Aakash project was Kapil Sibal's brainchild when he was the HRD Minister. The idea was to provide low-cost computing device at subsidised rate to students to enable them access Internet for educational purposes.

Canadian company DataWind had bagged the contract to produce the first and second versions of the Aakash tablet.

"The specifications of Aakash 4 has been finalised. DGSD has floated a tender, which will be finalised sometime in January. All those entities which will meet the tender conditions will be entitled to manufacture the Aakash and depending on the volume of production, it will be available to anybody who wants to buy it," Kapil Sibal said.

The Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGSD) procures products for government supplies.

Asked about the price of the tablet PC, Kapil Sibal said: "We will see what the price is. Originally what we wanted was around Rs 2,500 but that is without excise, without any of the other transportation costs and other things. So once you add those on I don't know what it may come to," he said.

He, however, added those who can afford it can buy and those who cannot, the government

departments like Human Resource Development Ministry and Rural Development Ministry can provide subsidy if they wish to.

"Those who can afford it can buy, those who cannot afford it, if government departments intend to buy it and give subsidies they can give it," he added.

Kapil Sibal launched the 'E-Inclusion: IT training for rural SC/ ST/ women beneficiaries' project.

He also released a handbook containing profiles of 50 beneficiaries who have successfully undertaken the basic IT training programme under the E-Inclusion project.

Kapil Sibal also felicitated ten beneficiaries by distributing certificates to them on the successful completion of the programme.

The project is part Government's initiative under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) for creating a transparent and accountable governance model for enabling service delivery at the doorstep of citizens.

To achieve this mission, DeitY has setup over 100,000 Common Services Centers (CSCs) on a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model.