

India Proposes JV with Turkmenistan to Manufacture Aakash

[The Gazette of Central Asia](#)

19 Sep 2012

NEW DELHI (PTI) – India on Tuesday proposed forming a joint venture with Turkmenistan to manufacture low-cost tablet *Aakash* for supply to students in the CIS nation.

The device was initially called the *Sakshat* tablet, later changed to *Aakash*, which is derived from the Sanskrit word *Akasha* with several related meanings, ether, empty space, and outer space. In Hindi, it means “sky”.

Indian telecom Minister Kapil Sibal, who is on a visit to Turkmenistan, suggested forming a joint venture company which may manufacture Aakash, according to an official release. Indian side will design the necessary hardware and software of the tablet fulfilling the Turkmen side needs, it added. “Besides supplying the low-cost tablets, the joint venture company can market the product to other international markets,” he said.



Aakash is an Android device with a 7-inch touchscreen, 3-hour battery life, and 32 GB of storage. It comes pre-loaded with a few apps, but it's not an app platform since it can't access the Android Marketplace. The tablet has been extensively tested in 48° C conditions to replicate summers in northern India.

UbiSlate7 is the name for the commercial version (non-subsidized) made available for all. Both version can be connected to the Internet using WiFi while Ubislate7+ gives the added option to connect to use GPRS via a SIM card.

The device was developed as part of the India's aim to link 25,000 colleges and 400 universities in an e-learning program. Originally projected as a “\$35 laptop”, the device will be sold to the Government of India and distributed to university students – initially at US \$50 until further orders are received and projected eventually to achieve the target \$35 price. The Indian government also plans to purchase and give away 100,000 to schoolchildren and hopes to have millions in use within a few years.

[Datawind](#), a small British tech company which makes Aakash, is named among World's 50 Most Innovative Companies for making the world's cheapest tablet computer.
