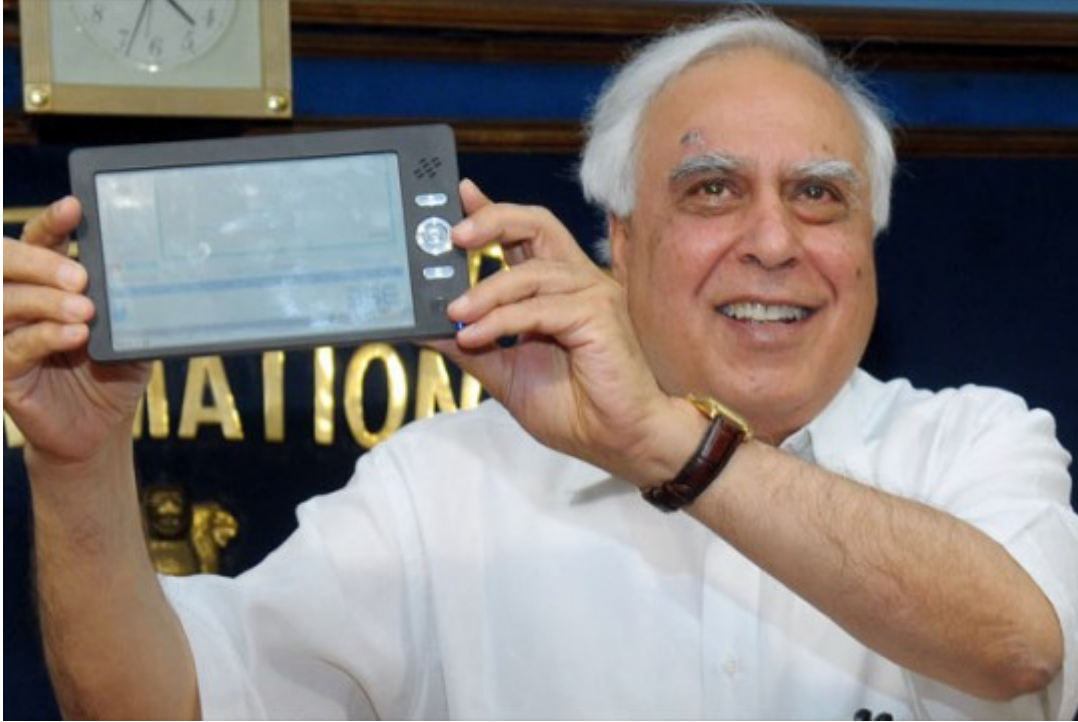# Aakash lurches toward another crisis as India loses patience with DataWind

BY Daniel Cooper @danielwcooper February 22nd 2012, at 12:37:00 pm ET 0

The conflicts and behind-the-scenes drama surrounding India's Aakash project once again threaten its existence. Despite a record-breaking 1.4 million pre-orders gained in under a fortnight, maker DataWind has only shipped 10,000 units to nearly universal derision. Early adopters have found the processor too slow, battery life too short and the resistive touchscreen difficult to use. Kapil Sibal's Human Resource Development ministry now plans to re-open tendering for a replacement contractor and withdraw DataWind's deal for a further 90,000 units. An anonymous ministry official has said that they've seen "sufficient interest [...] to get better specifications at the same or lower price."

In response, DataWind has claimed that its development-partner, the Indian Institute of Technology, pulled a bait-and-switch, demanding at the eleventh hour that the tablet meet US military criteria for durability -- including being able to withstand four inches per hour of "sustained rain." Work has been on hold since then but neither party can afford another delay. DataWind promised it would sell the commercial version of the slate this month, while Kapil Sibal has promised that a second edition of the Aakash would be announced in April.