

Indian Government Unveils Aakash 2 Tablet; Aakash In Education

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It's a [few months late](#), but the Indian Government has finally unveiled Aakash 2, the successor to the [original Aakash tablet launched in October last year](#). The tablet was launched by the Indian president Pranab Mukherjee and the Human Resources & Development (HRD) Minister MM Pallam Raju on the occasion of National Education Day at Vigyan Bhawan.

Similar to the original Aakash, this Android based tablet has been designed, developed and manufactured by [Datawind](#) for supply to IIT Bombay, under the HRD Ministry's National Mission on Education through Information & Communication Technology (NME-ICT).

Distribution: According to the press statement, Datawind will be **providing 100,000 units of Aakash 2 to IIT Bombay in the first phase**, which in turn intends to distribute these tablets to Engineering students across various colleges and universities. The government intends to distribute these tablets to over 220 million Indian students in the coming years.

Pricing: Datawind said that the tablet will be distributed to students at a subsidized cost of Rs 1,130, as indicated by a [Times Of India report](#). The company mentioned that the market price of the tablet is Rs 2,236, however the Government has subsidized its cost by 50%, allowing them to offer the tablets at a subsidized cost.

Apps on Aakash Tablet: As per the media statement, IIT Bombay has developed several applications for engineering students on the Aakash 2 platform. These include 3D Modelling, C++ programming, remote and collaborative training applications, robotic control and live assessment tools. It is currently not clear if the institution has developed these apps in-house or it has partnered with any firm to develop these apps. That being said, the Institution mentioned that it had partnered with the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) for hardware testing and logistics.

Device Specs: Aakash 2 runs on Android 4.0 'Ice Cream Sandwich' and features a 7" multi-touch capacitive display with a resolution of 800*480. Other specs include a 1GHz Cortex A8 processor, 512MB RAM, 4GB internal flash memory and connectivity options like micro USB and micro-SD slot with support up to 32GB memory cards.

Commercial Version of Aakash 2: Datawind also stated that Aakash 2 tablet will be available commercially as UbiSlate 7Ci, which was [launched](#) by the company in September 2012 and is currently available for purchase from [Datawind website](#) and the [UbiSlate website](#) at Rs 4,499. When we checked, we noticed that both the sites currently allow users to purchase the tablet through various payment options like Online payment, Cheque and Demand Draft (DD) and Cash On Delivery (COD). The company has tied up with the payment gateway [CCAvenue](#) for online payment, which currently [offers](#) various payment modes like net banking for several banks, cash card payments through [Done card](#), [iCash Card](#), [Itz Cash](#), and [OxiCash](#) cash cards and mobile payments through [State Bank Of India](#) and [Paymate](#).

The company claimed that tablets booked through online payment mode will be shipped in one week

from the date of purchase, while the tablets booked through cheque and demand drafts will be shipped in 3-4 weeks from the date of purchase and the tablets booked through COD will be shipped in 8-12 weeks from the date of purchase.

Aakash in Education Initiative: A Deccan Chronicle [report](#) also suggests that the Government has selected 244 engineering colleges across India to set up remote centres for a new initiative called 'Aakash in Education'. While the details on this initiative are a bit sparse at the time of writing this article, the report indicates that it is an online learning platform which will offer live interactive classes from IIT professors to Engineering students. The government seems to have partnered with IIT Bombay for this initiative.

It's worth noting that the Indian Government had launched a similar education portal called [Sakshat](#) which was meant to offer high-quality educational content in form of e-books, e-journals and video lessons to facilitate self-learning and open sharing of free, high-quality educational content to students, teachers and others. However, unlike Aakash in Education initiative, this portal was intended to offer learning materials across all fields of study including vocational education and learning for life skills from Kindergarten up to College. At the time of writing this article, the site offers live streams of IGNOU's educational television channels Gyan Darshan 1, Gyan Darshan 2 and FM radio station Gyan Vani.

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