

# Newspaper Clips

## October 17, 2011

FINANCIAL EXPRESS ND 17/10/2011

p-10

# Will Aakash see many takers in India?

India's much talked about Android-based tablet has the potential to reach out to masses with its impressive range of features. However, useful and relevant content for the consumer along with Net connectivity will be the key to its adoption

Diksha Dutta

NO Indian wants history to repeat this time. Three important initiatives have been taken by the Indian government in the past decade to enhance connectivity, Aakash being the third attempt. Simputer, a low-cost Linux based handheld computer and one laptop per child (OLPC) were the previous two. To boost digital education, encourage connectivity in rural India and provide a fillip to e-commerce has been the primary endeavour of these initiatives.

The government's much-touted cheap computer, Aakash, has created immense excitement in the tablet industry, which is nascent, yet growing fast. As per the latest CyberMedia Research study on the Indian tablet computer market, India sales touched 1.58 lakh units in the 9-month period ending June 2011. The study points out that the tablet market has emerged very quickly with 10 vendors lining up 27 models for the consumers.

Though there are enough chal-

lenges and competitiveness among tablet makers, analysts feel that coming months will see even more players entering the tablet market, that too at low prices. Olivepad launched the first tablet in India in July 2010. The first major brand to launch followed in October 2010—the Samsung Galaxy Tab. The Apple iPad, the most well recognised tablet, arrived in India only in January 2011. HCL Infosystems joined the bandwagon recently.

Step back and understand what went wrong in the past. The Simputer, first released in 2002 was envisioned as a low-cost alternative to personal computers. With initial goals of selling 50,000 devices, the project had sold only about 4,000 units by 2005. The second big hope was the OLPC pilot programme launched in India in Khairat-Dhangarwada village in Maharashtra. Although the pilot programme was successful, analysts say that the human resource development ministry was highly skeptical about OLPC, and expressed concerns about the

health implications of prolonged laptop use among students. Net result being, the project did not pick up too.

Cut to present: Aspirations on Aakash are big. At present, Datawind, the British company manufacturing the tablet has an order for supplying 1 lakh units to the government. "The government also plans to sell 10 million tablets in the next 6-7 months and

the next tender will come next month," says Suneet Singh Tuli, CEO, Datawind. The government is buying the tablets for ₹2,276 per unit and giving them to education institutes at a 50% subsidy.

At the same time, the government is taking a lot of precautions for adoption for Aakash. It has asked Datawind for a special replacement warranty. The government wants the compa-

ny not to repair the Aakash tablet, but replace it if any problem is faced, which will be a big cost to the company.

### Challenges, opportunity and repercussions

Tuli explains that the focus on Aakash had issues within the company as well. "There was a big conflict at the board

level as we were concentrating on Aakash before getting the tender. At a time when there was heavy demand in markets like the US and UK for laptops, we were focusing on this. But I knew we had to make it happen," says Tuli.

Analysts reckon that the India tablets market has many more models available with a range of features and at a variety of price points, compared to six months ago. However, for the tablet to become a common man's device, usage tariffs for high speed data services need to be brought down even further along with useful and relevant content for the consumer. Hemant Joshi, partner, Deloitte Haskins and Sells says, "Wi-Fi and 3G connection is prerequisite for Aakash to work and we still need the basic infrastructure to support these connectivity devices."

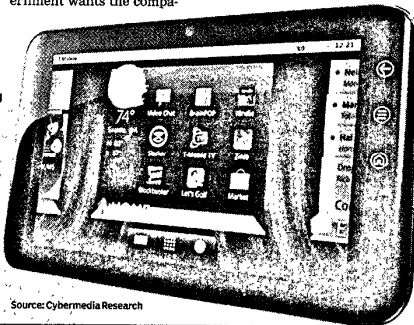
Naveen Mishra, lead analyst, telecommunications practice, CyberMedia Research notes, "The three factors that will drive the growth in the tablet market are connectivity, content and device. All the three are partially developed till now. We need to take into

account that this is a new founded market that manufacturers are still exploring and it is at an experimental stage. Right now there is no segmentation, but soon the consumer segment will get defined." At present, the main market for tablets is consumer segment to watch movies, chat etc and the enterprise segment is still picking up. Analysts feel that there is need digital content for school and college education, which is still at a nascent stage in the country and education institutes are not open to its adoption. The good news is that the main idea behind using tablets for education purposes is for browsing and not downloads of heavy files.

"Rural broadband initiative might take off soon. But definitely by 2012, there will be a plethora of tablet makers," says Joshi from Deloitte. Even other players like Reliance, Olive, Beel are aggressive plans to tap the low-cost tablet market, once Aakash gets commercial. It will be intriguing to see the combination of connectivity, content and communication device to succeed here.

### STACKING UP THE SLATES

- Tablet computer sales touched 1.58 lakh units in the 9-month period ending June 2011 in the country
- It is expected that shipments of tablets will touch 2,75,000 units in India in CY 2011
- RIM's Playbook, Apple's iPad2, Motorola's Xoom and Samsung's Galaxy Tab 7 are some of the key MNC tablet brands available in the country
- Tablet models range from ₹8,000 per unit, going up to ₹47,000 per unit
- The challenges remain to be broadband connectivity and local language content availability



Source: Cybermedia Research

Hindustan Times ND 17/10/2011

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## HANDHELD POWER

# After students, panchayats to get tablets

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NEW DELHI: It's not just students who would flash their low-cost PC tablets. Six months from now, villages across the country will scale up and monitor development work, primarily the corruption-ridden Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), with hi-tech handheld PC tablets.

The rural development ministry plans to give away 6.04 lakh handhelds, which it is currently procuring for socio-economic caste census work, to all village panchayats in the country free of cost, once the exercise is



■ The HRD ministry's tablets for students. FILE PHOTO

over. The below poverty line and caste census, which started in July this year, will end in January 2012.

"Once the census is completed, the handhelds will be given to gram panchayats so that they can use them in electronic tabulation of works like MNREGA," a senior ministry official told HT.

The HRD ministry had last week unveiled a \$50 PC handheld, which it plans to give to school and college students at a discounted price of ₹1,400.

The open source Android-enabled handheld developed for the below poverty line-caste census costs ₹4,000, and is made by Bharat Electronics.

The cost of the 6.04 lakh equipment is ₹300 crore. The total budget for the first ever caste census being

done along with below poverty line census is ₹3,500 crore, as approved by the cabinet.

On an average, each panchayat will get two handhelds. Officials say data such as quantum of work, muster rolls and bank payments for MNREGA can be entered instantly on the field, which will help check corrupt practices like 'ghost workers' and tampering of data.

The SECC is completed in Puducherry and is underway in Chattisgarh, Tripura and Chandigarh.

The exercise will soon start in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra, and more states will follow, officials said.

Times of India ND 17/10/2011 P17

# Antarctic ozone hole is as big as North America

**Washington:** The first significant ozone hole above the Antarctic is now as big as North America, scientists have claimed.

Spanning about 25 million square kilometers, the ozone hole over the South Pole reached its maximum annual size on September 14, becoming the fifth largest on record, they said.

The largest Antarctic ozone hole ever recorded occurred in 2006, at a size of 27.5 million square km, a size documented by Nasa's Earth-observing Aura satellite, LiveScience reported.

The Antarctic ozone hole was first discovered in the late 1970s by the first satellite mission that could measure ozone, a spacecraft called POES and run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The hole has continued to grow steadily during the 1980s and 90s, though since early 2000 the growth reportedly leveled off.

Even so scientists have seen large variability in its size from year to year.

Intense cold in the upper atmosphere of the Arctic



## GROWING CONCERN

last winter activated ozone-depleting chemicals and produced the first significant ozone hole ever recorded over the high northern regions, the scientists reported in journal Nature.

On the Earth's surface, ozone is a pollutant, but in the stratosphere it forms a protective layer that reflects ultraviolet radiation back out into space, protecting us from the damaging ultraviolet rays. P11

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Oct 17, 2011; Section: Times Nation; Page: 16;

## Jindal, company gift \$2.5 m to his alma mater Univ of Texas

New Delhi: Industrialist and parliamentarian Naveen Jindal and Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL), his flagship company, have gifted \$2.5 million (Rs 12.25 crore) to his alma mater, the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), following which the university has renamed its school of management after him.

Jindal, a 1992-batch MBA alumnus of UTD, gifted \$200,000 from his wealth, while JSPL contributed \$2.3 million to the university. A UTD statement said Jindal, with two others, "contributed combined gift of \$30 million," which is "the largest alumni gift in the university's history". AGENCIES

Economic Times ND 17-Oct-11 p1

# The dark side of Bangalore Shining: It's No.1 in suicides in country

SARITHA RAI

BANGALORE, OCTOBER 16

**E**ARLIER this week, Baldev 'Baldy' Singh, 58, a distinguished test pilot and a director with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, hanged himself on the outskirts of Bangalore. A few weeks ago, a 24-year old MBA student, Malini Murmu, killed herself in her IIM-Bangalore hostel. Both cases made national headlines. But in Bangalore, hundreds

of lesser-known suicide cases are catalogued in police records. According to the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) chief statistical officer Akhilesh Kumar, for many years Bangalore has been India's number one city in suicides. The data for 2010, as yet unreleased, reinforces that India's Silicon City is also its Suicide Capital.

In 2009, Bangalore recorded 2,167 suicides versus 1,051 in teeming Mumbai, and 1,215 in

the more-populous Delhi city. Data published by the NCRB shows that Bangalore is also number one in suicide rate (suicides per 100,000 population), a trend that the big city shares with smaller towns like Jabalpur, Rajkot and Coimbatore.

Dr N Satish Chandra, the director of NIMHANS, blames it on rapid socio-cultural changes in the face of furious development. Bangalore is a city of wannabe achievers

### SILICON CITY AS 'SUICIDE CAPITAL'



- » As per National Crime Records Bureau, Bangalore India's No. 1 city in suicides
- » Its suicide rate (suicides per 100,000 population) is also highest in country
- » It accounts for about 16% of all suicides in India's 30 biggest cities
- » Most of the suicides are by those in their prime — between the ages of 16 and 40

« Malini Murmu, a recent statistic

who want the maximum, he says. "It is a city where failure is not an option."

Every Tuesday afternoon, counsellor Anita Gracias becomes "Anu" and works the sui-

cide helpline at SAHAL. "Bangalore has a large population pouring in from every remote corner to study and work. They ask, 'Who do I trust?' Where can I make a genuine friend?," Many callers at the helpline, she adds, dial in to ask about the most painless form of suicide.

Bangalore is the country's third most-populous city alright. But it is also India's loneliest city, says Gracias.

Dr Mohan Isaac has extensively studied the suicide trend

in Bangalore. Now at the School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Western Australia, he points to the data from Bangalore and Kolkata. During the past few years, Bangalore has seen more than 2,000 suicides annually, a rate of 38 per lakh population. Kolkata's annual number of suicides during this time was around 200. Slow-to-modernise Kolkata has retained the lowest suicide rate amongst 35 Indian cities, says Dr Isaac.

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Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Oct 17, 2011; Section: Education Times; Page: 45;



# Destination UK

THE UK, a popular academic destination for Indian students, is known for its high standards and performance measures for education. All nationally recognised qualifications offered in the UK are subject to strict quality standards. Whatever course a student chooses in the UK, he/she can expect quality teaching substantiated by rigorous quality assessment.

The UK has two distinct education systems: one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and one for Scotland. Each is compatible with the other.

The Scottish Parliament is responsible for education in Scotland. The broader base of Scottish education may provide easier access for students whose education is not as specialised as is normally required for entrance

to the first year of a university elsewhere in the UK.

Qualifications gained at the end are of an equal level and degree of specialisation as those obtained in England, Wales or Northern Ireland — this is made possible by the extra year of study involved in following a degree at a Scottish university. Students could regard this extra year as an alternative to following a foundation programme in preparation for the usual three-year degree course offered at the majority of UK institutions.

UK qualifications are recognised and respected throughout the world. British universities and colleges provide a diverse, creative and inviting environment, which will support a student to reach his/her full academic potential.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Students from overseas make up approximately 30% of all UK postgraduates. With over 50,000 diverse programmes and with UK universities and colleges boasting of exceptional teaching standards and flexible, cost-effective study, options for students could hardly be broader. Wherever one decides to go in the UK, he/she will have access to modern, world-class qualifications of exceptional quality.

Next week: Teaching and assessment methods in the UK and more on how you can benefit from an UK education

Your opinion: Why has studying abroad become attractive to Indian students? Give it a thought and post your replies at [destination.uk@indiatimes.com](mailto:destination.uk@indiatimes.com)

## ENGLISH TEST

TOEFL is now an alternative English language test for students travelling to Australia, likely to come into effect on November 5. Australia has now accepted the test score equivalences for the TOEFL test when compared to IELTS scores.

## PLANT BIOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

The Indian National Science Academy, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the German Research Foundation (DFG) have joined hands to co-organise an Indo-German Symposium on Plant Biology from October 18-20 in the Capital. It will be attended by 26 leading scientists (10 from Germany, 16 from India) and will start with a lecture on 'The role of gene technology in enhancing crop productivity.' It would also cover presentations in genetics and genomics, regulation biology, developmental biology, etc. The 26 lectures will be open to discussion allowing exchange of views and development of a roadmap for future collaboration.

## CONVENTION

Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) held its National Convention on Oct 13 at Agra. It was inaugurated by BL Joshi, governor of UP. Arun Jaitley, MP, delivered the valedictory address. About 1,200 delegates and professionals from India and abroad participated in the convention.

## OXFORD SCHOLARSHIPS

Clarendon Fund Scholarships have enabled 50 Indians to study at Oxford over the past 10 years. It provides around £7.5m in funds for fees and expenses each year to assist the best overseas students in studying for a graduate degree at the University of Oxford. The scholarships are funded by an annual transfer from Oxford University Press and are awarded for academic excellence, with awards worth on an average more than £30,000 in funding each year.

**HindustanTimes**

**Title : HRD ministry to take action against its official A HRD ministry official**

**Author :**

**Location :**

**Article Date : 10/17/2011**

soup over his remarks against Bhimrao Ambedkar during his visit to Ambedkar University. The ministry is expected to initiate action against him when HRD Minister Kapil Sibal returns from his US visit, where he has gone to participate in the Indo-US Education Summit. Official in concern has been in the ministry for the last few years although he is not in-charge of any important portfolio.

**HRD ministry to take action against its official**

A HRD ministry official, Anant Kumar Singh, is in a