

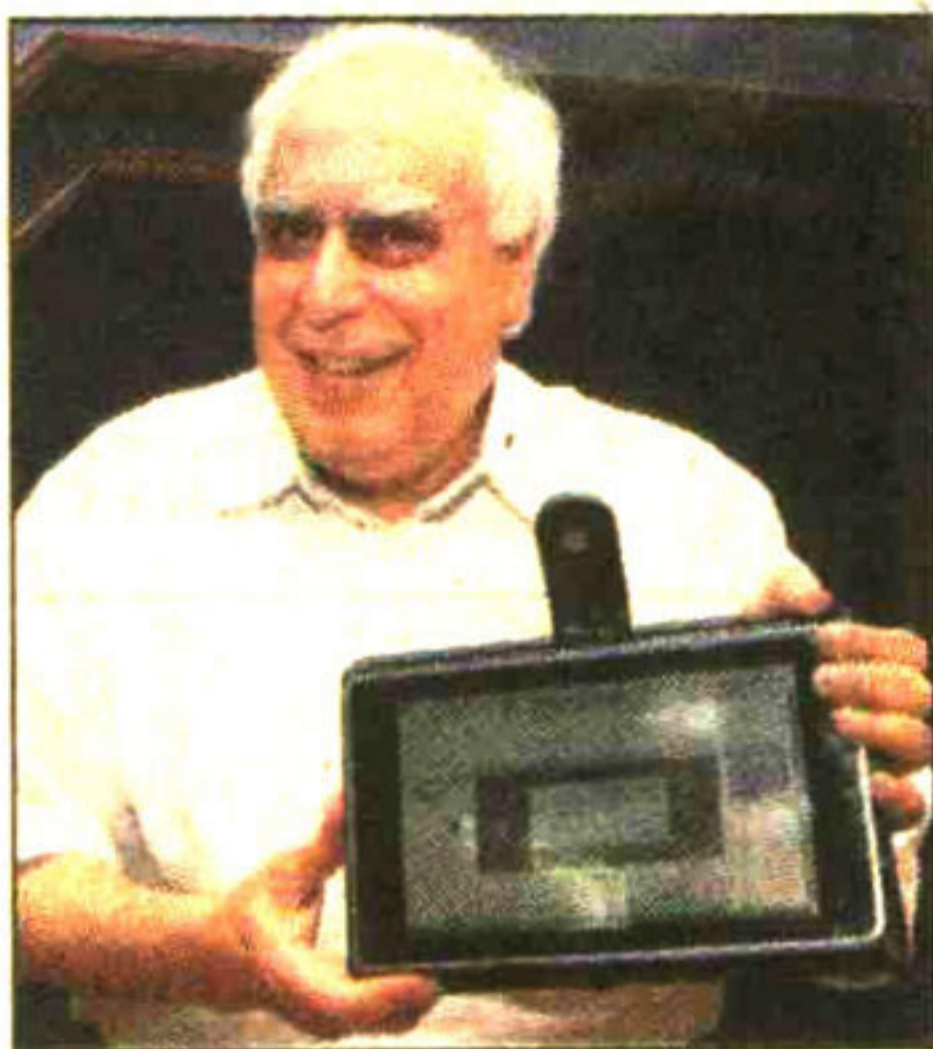
An IIT, IISc-designed laptop for just ₹1500

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: More than five years after it was conceived by then education secretary Sudeep Banerjee to take on Nicholas Negroponte's \$100 laptop and one-and-half years after his demise, HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Thursday unveiled access-cum-computing device priced at Rs 1,500 or \$35 for students but can be eventually owned by public at large.

The sleek-looking device — a cross between I-Pad and tablet PC and charged by an equally sleek solar panel — is designed by experts at IIT, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The upper price limit for the device is pegged at \$35. HRD ministry has made an open invitation to one and all to come up with more variants that fulfils specifications spelt out by it. The ministry has set up several separate teams, which are involved in bringing out their prototypes. In the next few months — by then more innovations will emerge and even price can come down to \$20 or \$10 — the ministry will issue an international expression of interest for manufacturing of these devices.

“Initially manufacturing



MADE IN INDIA: Sibal displays the cheap computing device

might be done in Taiwan or some other place but eventually it will be done in India,” Sibal said. He said there are already enough offers for lower price. The \$35 price, he said, is inclusive of cost of manufacturing abroad. However, the cost of the solar panel has not been factored into the price yet. The ministry is in talks with a company to bring down the cost of solar panels.

One reason for the low cost — apart from the falling prices of chip — is the sheer number of students who will get this device. Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan alone, there are over 11 crore children, who are the likely recipients. Add to that lakhs of aided and unaided schools in the primary and secondary sector.