

Up for grabs: PCs for Rs 10,000

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NEW DELHI: Marking a great leap in the area of computer technology, Indian scientists have come up with new mobile desktop computers which are much cheaper than the currently available products and run on batteries, thus doing away with the need for electricity.

The products have been developed under the New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) being implemented by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, in partnership with Encore Software Ltd, Science and Technology Minister Kapil Sibal announced here on Wednesday.

"The development marks India's leap in the area of IT and PC technology," he said.

What is significant is that these products are suitable for Indian conditions being able to run without electricity, using battery, he said adding market would be created worldwide as millions would like to use affordable products.

The products launched are Mobilis, a Linux-based mobile desktop and two of its variants - Mobilis Wireless and SofComp, an ultra-compact desktop.

Mobilis, with a 7.4-inch LCD screen, has a six-hour battery life. It delivers outstanding mobile performance and powerful connectivity options.

It comes with an innovative carry-case...

...that, while ingeniously hiding a full size flexible, roll up keyboard when on the move, opens up as a desktop stand, Encore Chariman Vinay L Deshpande said.

Mobilis Wireless additionally offers build-in GPS receiver. Both devices offer integrated smart card read/write capability as well, he said.

The third product, SofComp, is a very compact desktop designed for officers that don't really need the cost and bulk of today's GHz-speed PCs for their day-to-day work.

The three products would be in the market in three-four months time and would be priced between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000, he said adding all have built-in local language support and a choice of everyday applications such as word processing, spreadsheet, personal information manager, e-mail, web browser, PC synchronisation and text-to-speech capability at no extra cost.

The total cost of ownership is very low, he said.

Currently there are only 13 million PCs in India. Cost is a major problem, Deshpande adding most of the capability of PCs is not used by day-to-day users.

Already these products had been tried in pilot projects with partners like Habitat Technology, a US company which used it for...

... home security, and ITC Chaupal, which wanted to extend it to the whole country, he said.

Mobilis' innovative features had already been used in the electronic dashboard of country's indigenous electric car, REVA, Sibal said adding Some other car manufacturers had shown interest in the technology to make it part of their cars' dashboards.

The product is also likely to be used by four universities in India and South Africa each, he said.

When asked about 'Simputer', a similar product launched about two years back, Sibal said it was beginning to be widely used.

Indian Navy was likely to use it for diagnostics in Naval aircraft while it was being used for keeping records of cancer patients in Mumbai. It would also be used for doorstep banking.

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