

Delhi University to launch cheap wi-fi devices

Sarah Zia

■ sarahz@htlve.com

NEW DELHI: The Institute of Informatics & Communication (IIC), University of Delhi in collaboration with ZCom, a Taiwan-based IT solutions provider announced the launch of low-cost carrier-graded wi-fi devices recently. The collaborative project has seen the design, development and manufacturing of the devices in India with the University of Delhi providing research and insights while the commercial partners provide the infrastructure.

According to stakeholders, the partnership aims to use the two typical strengths of the partners - India's edge in software and Taiwan's strength in hardware.

The project announcement was made in the presence of Ambassador Chung-Kwang Tien, Ambassador of Taiwan and Representative, Taipei Economic & Cultural Centre, in India.

The pilot launch will involve the unveiling of two products which include outdoor access points and indoor access points for Wi-Fi. The products are expected to hit the markets in the next quarter with the partners aiming to bring at least a million devices in the market in the next two years.

Apart from Z-Com, other part-

ners for the project include local manufacturing firm, Cloudataix and Frontline.

According to Rajesh Kapoor, managing director, Z-COM India, "The collaborative project with IIC - University of Delhi is a strategic alliance to not only to make the current range of Wi-Fi components, software and services for make in India but also include the joint research and development of next generation products and solutions for the Wi-Fi hotspot market". He added that using local inputs and infrastructure will help bring down the costs and make the product among the most competitively priced in the Indian market.

Sanjay Sharma, managing director of Cloudataix, "India needs over 80 lakh hotspots as against the availability of about 31,000 hotspots with a view to reach the global level of one Wi-Fi hotspot penetration for every 150 people and this project can help create the next-generation infrastructure required for a connected community." He added that cost had remain a key challenge for vendors in introducing moderately-priced models and achieving a sustainable monetization model for these devices was imperative.

The stakeholders are planning to use the devices to strengthen wi-fi connectivity in at least 2.5 lakh villages in India by the end of 2018 as part of the 'village wi-fi' project.