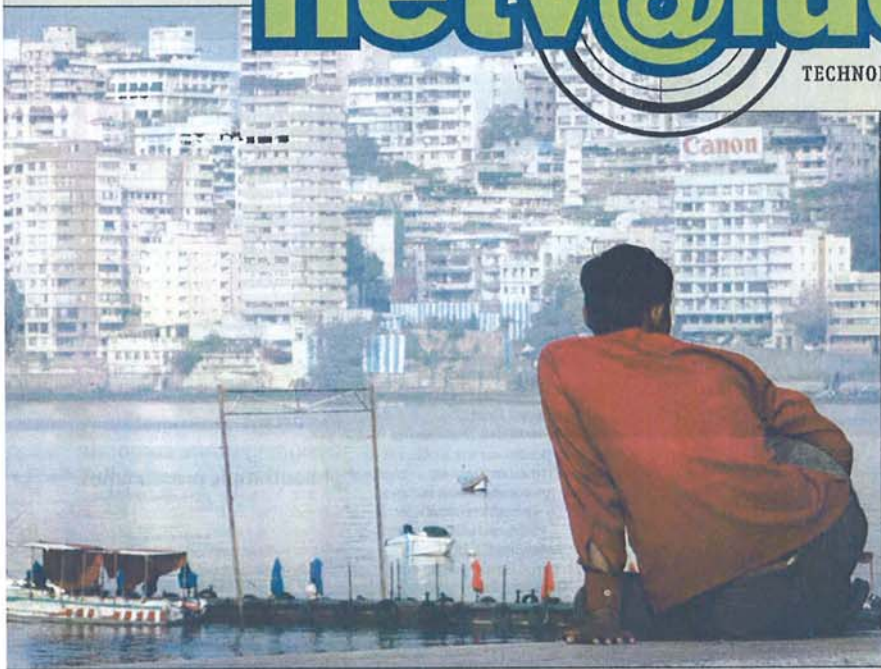


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The Mumbai skyline... India is proving to be a hungry market for high-speed connectivity. Malaysian wireless broadband player The Red Snapper is aiming to feed that hunger.

## From Ipoh to Mumbai

| BY LEE WEI LIAN |

**W**ireless broadband service provider The Red Snapper (M) Sdn Bhd is set to benefit from the Indian market through a joint venture with Mumbai-based Indian Internet service provider You Telekom India Pte Ltd. The 50:50 joint venture will see a new company, YouSnapper Pte Ltd, created to cover at least 26 cities in India with WiFi broadband service modelled after The Red Snapper's (TRS) existing WiFi service available in Ipoh under the Wireless Perak initiative.

Rais Husin, TRS' executive chairman, says there is a tremendous upside to be gained from the Indian market. He says initial sales

of prepaid broadband packages have been beyond expectation at about US\$500,000 (about RM1.6 million) a week. He expects YouSnapper to rake in sales of US\$12 million by December.

"Consumers there are willing to pay in advance for one year's worth of broadband subscription. Executives at Citigroup Venture Capital International, which owns an 85% stake in You Telekom, could not believe the preliminary sales," says Rais. "Even I had to go to India to see the results for myself as it seemed almost too good to be true."

According to its website, You Telekom is one of the leading broadband providers in India. It has 170,000 broadband subscribers spread over 11 cities and has invested Rs4

billion (about RM300 million) in the business. The company is also one of India's ISO 9001:2000 certified companies in the dedicated broadband business.

You Telekom was established in Surat in 2001 and offers high quality Internet solutions for data and voice services in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Pune, Surat, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Gurgaon, Navi Mumbai and Vizag, with plans to roll out services to other cities across the country in the future.

The joint venture is also further endorsement for TRS' broadband strategy — tie up with existing wireline broadband providers to extend their reach via wireless technologies and share the revenue. "Why invest millions or billions in duplicating infrastructure

or laying new fibre-optic cables?" asks Rais. "It is better to work with existing wired infrastructure owners and extend their coverage with wireless technologies like WiFi. It is much more cost effective. I always say we want to be the AirAsia of broadband service providers."

YouSnapper's immediate plan is to build clusters around each You Telekom fibre node that is unreachable by fibre due to any number of reasons.

YouSnapper's cost per installed wireless customer is US\$75 versus US\$100 per installed fibre customer. It is also intended to reach customers that will be difficult to serve using fibre due to right-of-way issues (wire-

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