

# Measat: Satellite to broaden connectivity in rural Sarawak

Ronnie Teo

**KUCHING:** MEASAT Satellite Systems Sdn Bhd (Measat) is leveraging on its unique satellite services to serve as a rural broadband service provider – including in Sarawak – through its CONNECTme NOW satellite broadband service.

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CONNECTme NOW is Measat's 30Mbps high-speed WiFi Hotspot service leveraging on its innovative satellite broadband system. CONNECTme NOW hotspots are being deployed nationwide through a network ecosystem of distributors and authorised agents.

According to Measat chief operating officer Yau Chyong Lim, CONNECTme NOW is rapidly connecting the public with 100,000 broadband connections nationwide.

Today, Measat is connecting the unconnected rakyat in Sarawak with over 50,000 broadband connections and over 10,000 in Sabah, empowering rural communities to be part of the digital economy," he told The Borneo Post in an interview.

"The numbers of those being connected are rapidly growing as we speak. In fact, we have just reached our milestone of connecting 1,000 sites nationwide."

Measat is a Malaysian incorporated company and a telecommunications



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Yau Chyong Lim



Ganendra Selvaraj

licensee under the purview of Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Malaysia (MCMC). Since 1996, the firm has been providing premium satellite solutions to customers within Malaysia and across the Asia-Pacific region.

To date, it has invested over RM7.6 billion in satellites and ground infrastructure, to create an internationally

recognised organization with coverage over 150 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East and Australia, representing 80 per cent of the world's population.

Today, Measat-3, Measat-3a and Measat-3b satellites co-located at 91.5°E support close to 20 million subscribers across South East Asia and India.

Soon, the Measat fleet will be

further strengthened with the addition of MEASAT-3d at 91.5°E in 2022 which will enable 100 per cent high-speed broadband coverage throughout Malaysia and serve the growth requirements of Malaysian 4G and 5G mobile networks; increase video distribution capacity across the Asia Pacific region; and provide unrivalled in-orbit satellite redundancy for the region.

Measat's associate vice president (sales) Ganendra Selvaraj added that living remotely does not mean you have to forgo connectivity.

"Especially now with the Covid-19 pandemic, the gap between those with and without good Internet connectivity severely impacts our "new norm" lifestyle," he added.

# CONNECTme NOW a paradigm shift for satellite service

Ronnie Teo

**KUCHING:** Having served the satellite communication and broadcasting markets for more than 25 years, MEASAT Satellite Systems Sdn Bhd (Measat) is now focused on its synergistic proposition with terrestrial services via CONNECTme NOW.

CONNECTme NOW is focusing on areas where there is no other alternative wireless broadband service provider. Measat sees its services as complementary to the terrestrial service providers, whereby they have a focus in more urban/densely populated areas and CONNECTme NOW has a focus in the rural/remote areas.

"Whilst the brand name of CONNECTme NOW may be relatively new in the market, we have an excellent track record in providing premium solutions locally and internationally," said Measat chief operating officer Yau Chyong Lim.

"Our strength lays in quick deployment of services in the remote and interior areas. With the vision of empowering digital inclusion nationwide and with the recent Covid-19 pandemic which makes connectivity crucial given most of us are working or studying at home, we have been focusing a lot of our resources in the last two to three months to bridge the digital divide in the country.

"We are prepared to work with other wireless broadband service providers to improve their coverages as we see CONNECTme NOW as an enabler for other wireless broadband service operators as well."

CONNECTme NOW is a paradigm shift in how satellite services are being offered, Measat's associate vice president (sales) Ganendra Selvaraj said, as it provides fiber-like speeds of 30 Mbps and prepaid vouchers



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as low as RM10 per GB which is only marginally higher than some mobile prepaid plans.

"It is also a scalable, consumption based model which can work for communities as small as 50 people and can be scaled up from there. End-users will only pay for what they use," he added.

"It is also a demand based model, as a result we have communities consuming 1TB of data per month and others at 100GB per month. In both cases the quality of service for the user is equal."

When asked about how Measat can provide coverage for uncovered areas, the duo said they can be there first to install if broadband solutions are needed before any other technology provider can.

"Recently you would have heard the plight of students in the communities of Kg Bukit

Petai Tujuh and Kg Gusi, Ranau. Within days, we had deployed our services to the delight of the communities there.

"They are now able to benefit from internet connectivity while awaiting terrestrial services to be deployed in the near future, making satellite services a first resort rather than last.

"We require nothing more than consent from the local community. However, as we are not in the business of competing with terrestrial services, we do have some basic site criteria to ensure the service is viable such as no 3G/ 4G coverage, minimum 50 Internet users or a population of 100 people, and access to a power source.

"If these simple criteria are met, within a matter of days broadband connectivity could be established and people can start enjoying Internet

services by merely logging on to the CONNECTme NOW WiFi hotspot."

Whilst the roll-out is on-going, satellite technology can be used immediately to support Jendela's National Aspirations in achieving 100 per cent 4G coverage in populated areas; and up to 100 Mbps speeds in areas without any terrestrial network.

Once the roll-out is completed, Yau and Ganendra said the remaining 3.1 per cent of populated areas and beyond can continue to enjoy CONNECTme services.

"When Measat-3d launches in 2022, our broadband speeds will be raised from 30Mbps today to 100 Mbps. Through this new satellite, we expect 1,000,000 Rakyat to be able to benefit from Internet services when they couldn't before CONNECTme NOW came into the picture.