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Pernec in talks with WiMAX operators on rolling out WiWi

By **Kamarul Yunus**

PERNEC Corp Bhd, a unit of Permodalan Nasional Bhd, is talking with several WiMAX operators to rollout WiWi, a hybrid WiMAX-WiFi wireless router in the country.

It is understood among companies Pernec has been talking to are Green Packet Bhd, REDtone International Bhd and Asiaspace Sdn Bhd.

Pernec managing director Shaharom Md Shariff said the company expects a commercial roll-out of the WiWi products by year end.

"There's interest for WiWi. We have started a pilot project. We are working with Mimos, the technology owner to carry out this pilot project. We already putting some 100 sets for Mimos to distribute to prospective customers," he told Business Times in an interview.

Pernec's unit Pernec Integrated Network Systems Sdn Bhd (PINS) is one of five companies awarded by Mimos the technology application licence.

PINS received the Mimos WiWi Gen 1.5 technology and Internet Protocol Version 6. WiWi Gen 1.5 is a customer premises equipment (CPE) that connects two wireless technologies, namely WiFi and WiMAX into one.

Since the WiWi technology is a combination of WiFi and WiMAX, Shaharom said the product can have one box interfacing between WiFi and WiMAX.

"By using WiWi, the use of WiMAX can be shared using one WiMAX account within the WiFi coverage area," he said.

By virtue of the licence, Pernec also has rights to commercialise, upgrade and man-



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ufacture the product at Pernec's factory in Tikam Batu, Sungai Petani.

"We have started to assemble the products at our factory in Tikam Batu. We expect a big requirement for WiWi products from the operators. It is not only for the local market but we can also market it overseas," said Shaharom.

Meanwhile, Shaharom said Pernec plans to apply for the Network Service Provider (NSP) licence to allow the company to operate as a full service provider, particularly under the Government's Universal Service Provision (USP) project which is to boost telecommunications coverage in rural and remote areas, especially in Sabah and Sarawak.