

# Putting remote sensing technology to good use

By Adrian Lim

**KUCHING:** Remote sensing technology through RazakSAT is being put to a variety of uses.

The country's second remote sensing satellite, launched into space on July 14, can capture six good shots of images as it passes through Malaysia daily.

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti) Deputy Minister Fadillah Yusof said it can capture images for the use of economic and development activities in Sarawak.

"The satellite can provide data to manage the land but more importantly from the perspective of security. For example, the technology can help us collect data for better planning for our forests, agriculture sector, boundaries and oceans," Fadillah told reporters after launching the Remote Sensing Technology Consumer Awareness Workshop at a hotel here yesterday.

Mosti aims to utilise the satellite surveillance system to monitor the entire state, manage information and allocation of natural resources, and help in preparation of masterplans.

Fadillah said the remote sensing technology is offered to all industries which includes the government and private sector as well as for Southeast Asian countries located along the equator.

He said in Peninsular Malaysia, the technology is being tested in the fishing industry to help fishermen locate plankton, which is food for fish. Satellite images of planktons are sent to fishermen associations for distribution to members to help them track fish in the sea.

When asked the use of remote sensing technology for the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE), Fadillah said it can assist in terms of project



**APPRECIATION:** Darius (right) presents a memento to Ismawi witnessed by Fadillah after the opening of the Remote Sensing Technology Consumer Awareness Workshop.

implementation.

"The technology can be used for planning the usage of land. From there, you can use it in categorisation. At the same time, you can monitor whether the implementation is done timely, correctly and efficiently," he said.

Fadillah said the satellite is in its initial stage of application with more feedback required to fine-tune the system.

The developmental aspect including the research work on RazakSAT took about seven years.

Only the optical part of the technology—the camera—is jointly developed with Korea while most of it is developed by local engineers.

He hoped the satellite would be fully operational by December this year.

The remote sensing technology can track economic activities so as to

cut costs and is time-saving.

"Eventually, the next development connected to it is how to manage our forests, for example, illegal logging. If you can tag all our trees, you can monitor them by satellite.

"So these are the things we are looking at in the future. It will provide us with more tools to manage our state more economically and efficiently," he said.

Asked the amount of funds Mosti is providing for the remote sensing technology for the state and whole country, Fadillah said he did not have the exact figure.

"What we can offer right now is in terms of technical support and training for our people so that they can become experts and researchers in enhancing the development of the technology.

"We (Mosti) need more scientists to develop the technology so we can have a

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Fadillah Yusof, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

centre or branch office in Sarawak linked to the headquarters in Peninsular Malaysia.

"This is to enable better usage of the technology which can go online," he said.

Fadillah said Mosti provides assistance for the development of human capital in the technology field.

He encouraged those interested to venture into the technology field to apply for assistance under the National Science Fellowship.

Mosti will hold an innovation and creativity carnival with robotics as the theme at the Sarawak Tourism Centre from Aug 14 to 16. The carnival is to obtain database and feedback on the technology from the community and the public.

Earlier State Planning Unit director Datu Ismawi Ismuni said the remote sensing technology can monitor the haze situation in the state as well as forest management, natural resource management, urban planning and flood mitigation. It will enhance the state's productivity.

Also present at the launch were Malaysia Remote Sensing director Datuk Darius Ahmad and representatives from various agencies and departments.