



Lee (centre left) and others give their thumbs-up for the facilities at one of the control posts in Kuala Baram.

## Minister: Drone use among strategies to monitor bushfires

**MIRI:** The use of drone technology and the setting up of three control posts are the latest strategies undertaken by Miri Divisional Disaster Management Committee (MDMC) to monitor and control bushfires here.

Minister-in-charge of MDMC, Datuk Lee Kim Shin, said the monitoring via drones would be conducted by Natural Resources and Environment Board (NREB) and the Department of Environment (DoE), with the cooperation of private landowners.

On the other hand, he said the three control posts – two in Kuala Baram and one near Curtin University Malaysia here – would house members of the People's Volunteers Corps (Rela) to control and monitor fires in the areas 24/7.

"As we all know, Miri faces the

haze due to open-burning every year, especially in Kuala Baram, Permyjaya and Tudan. Last year, the MDMC discussed in details the strategies, which are expected to be more effective for use this time.

"We also have the support of Sarawak Disaster Management Committee (SDMC), through its chairman (Deputy Chief Minister) Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah, who has already assisted and approved an application to place the three control posts (using containers) at the strategic locations here," he said after a visit to the one of the control posts in Kuala Baram yesterday.

Lee, who is the state Transport Minister, said Rela members had been assigned to patrol areas where frequent fires would occur every year.

"Each container is equipped

with a power generator and a portable toilet for the use of the patrol team.

"This time, we will strengthen control by using drones from NREB, DoE and private landowners; they (drones) have advanced features such as being able to record videos and pictures, emit warning sounds, and also (have) audio to warn smalltime farmers conducting open-burning," he added.

Lee hoped that these two new strategies would bring impact this year in ridding Miri of the yearly haze.

Acting Miri Resident Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusuf, Miri Fire and Rescue chief Supt Law Poh Kiong and NREB Miri officer (environmental control) Joseph Uyo were among those who accompanied Lee during the inspection.