

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ECRL PROJECT ACHIEVES 30 TUNNEL BREAKTHROUGHS**

*Three ECRL tunnels record breakthrough in Bentong district in a single day*

**Bentong, 12 March:** The East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) Project has reached another milestone with three tunnel breakthroughs in a single day within the Bentong district, bringing the total number of tunnels that successfully completed excavation works to 30 tunnels along its rail alignment to date.

The three ECRL tunnels, namely 'Bentong 1 Tunnel' with a total length of 561 meters, 'Kampung Lentang 1 Tunnel' (270 meters) and 'Kampung Lentang 2 Tunnel' (478 meters) recorded their breakthrough achievements ahead of schedule via the "drill and blast" tunnelling method yesterday.

The permanent lining for 'Bentong 1 Tunnel' has progressed to a commendable 348 meters prior to breakthrough, while preparation of trolley lining for permanent lining construction is underway for 'Kampung Lentang 1 Tunnel' and 'Kampung Lentang 2 Tunnel'. Each tunnel has an average height of 12 meters and width of 13 meters, hence providing the space for two standard gauge railway tracks upon completion.

The construction of ECRL tunnels in the Bentong district will enable the railway track to comply with its maximum gradient of 0.9 percent as well as to significantly reduce open forests cutting and minimise the impact on wildlife in the area.

The ECRL Project features the construction of 41 tunnels with a total length of approximately 69 km along its rail alignment, of which 21 tunnels are located within Section A (Kota Bharu-Dungun) and Section B (Dungun-Mentakab) while the remaining 20 tunnels are situated in Section C (Mentakab-Port Klang).

Of the 41 tunnels along the ECRL alignment, all 21 tunnels in Section A and Section B have completed their excavation works since August 2023, while nine tunnels in Section C have also followed suit to date. For the record, the ECRL Project registered its first tunnel breakthrough at the 1.1-km long Paka Tunnel in Terengganu back in April 2021.

Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) Chief Executive Officer Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak said the ECRL Project has hit a new milestone with 30 tunnel breakthroughs, noting that the achievement was supported by the adoption of advanced tunnelling technology as well as the dedication and teamwork among its ECRL personnel along its 665-km alignment.

"We are optimistic that the construction of the ECRL alignment from Kota Bharu to ITT Gombak will be completed by December 2026, considering tunnel excavation works which are both challenging and contingent on geological conditions have progressed smoothly and as per schedule," he said in conjunction with the latest tunnel breakthrough achievements in the Bentong district.

On the ECRL Project's progress, Dato' Sri Darwis said it had achieved an overall progress of 62.40 percent as of February 2024, underpinned by rapid infrastructure works that included tunnel excavation, beam launching, track laying and station construction. The ECRL Project is backed by some 23,000 workers at about 1,900 works sites across the states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, and Selangor.



MRL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Minister of Finance (Incorporated) [MOF (Inc.)], is the project owner of the ECRL while China Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC) is the engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning (EPCC) contractor for the project. The ECRL is scheduled for operation in January 2027 and expected to link Kota Bharu to ITT Gombak in 4 hours as compared to 7 hours by road transport or some 12 hours or more during festive seasons.

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Released by the Corporate Communications Department of Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd. For further information, please contact: Yong Min Wei (03-6411 5800 ext. 5835 / [mwyong@mrl.com.my](mailto:mwyong@mrl.com.my)) or Puteri Hadeeja Sofea Hasbullah (03-6411 5800 ext. 6084 / [hadeeja.sofea@mrl.com.my](mailto:hadeeja.sofea@mrl.com.my)).