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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **ECRL GOMBAK TUNNEL BREAKS THROUGH ONE MONTH AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

## *ECRL Project registers 36<sup>th</sup> tunnel breakthrough*

**Gombak, 29 October 2024** : The East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) Project's 959-meter Gombak Tunnel has achieved a tunnelling breakthrough one month ahead of schedule, becoming the 36<sup>th</sup> ECRL tunnel to successfully complete the excavation process to date.

The final blast at the Gombak Tunnel punched through the last barrier some 38 meters from the tunnel's entrance portal. The achievement is a culmination of approximately 5,813,560 man-hours and the adoption of the drill-and-blast method of tunnelling that bored through primarily weathered granite.

The permanent lining for the Gombak Tunnel has progressed to a commendable 892 meters prior to today's ceremony. The tunnel has an average height of 12 meter and width of 13 meter, hence providing the space for two standard gauge railway tracks upon completion.

Excavation works for Gombak Tunnel commenced back in June 2023 and scheduled for breakthrough in the fourth quarter of 2024. All related civil works for the Gombak Tunnel is expected to be fully completed by March 2025.

The construction of the tunnel will enable the ECRL railway track to comply with its maximum gradient of 0.9 percent as well as avoid major open forest cutting at the Batu 11 Gombak area.

Selangor Chief Minister, Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, officiated the 'ECRL Gombak Tunnel Breakthrough' ceremony at the tunnel's exit portal today. Also present were Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, Deputy Transport Minister, Datuk Hasbi Habibollah, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Malaysia, Ouyang Yujing, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak, China Communications Construction (ECRL) Sdn Bhd (CCCECRL) Managing Director, Kong Qi, Selangor State Executive Councillors, and senior officials from the ECRL Project.

The ECRL Project features the construction of 41 tunnels with a total length of about 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 20 ECRL tunnels in Section C, a total of 9 tunnels are located within Selangor. They include the 3.50-km Serendah 1 Tunnel and 9.85-km Serendah 2 Tunnel which are both under excavation.

For the record, the ECRL Project registered its first tunnel breakthrough at the 1.1-km Paka Tunnel in Terengganu six months ahead of schedule back in April 2021. In contrast, the first tunnel breakthrough in Selangor was achieved at the 469-meter Sungai Buaya 2 Tunnel in May 2024.

MRL Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak, said the Gombak Tunnel breakthrough further showcased advanced tunnel excavation technologies and strong dedication by the ECRL team



involved, noting that the achievement will drive the excavation of the remaining ECRL tunnels to be completed within the time frame.

“The ECRL Gombak Tunnel breakthrough marks another milestone in the project's progress as it is an integral component for the completion of the ECRL alignment from Kota Bharu, Kelantan to the Gombak Integrated Terminal, Selangor by December 2026. We are optimistic to commence ECRL operations from January 2027 onwards to align with the aspirations of the people and the business communities by providing seamless transportation for passengers and freight respectively,” he added.

Dato’ Sri Darwis also expressed his gratitude to the Selangor State Government, State Agencies and Local Authorities for their close cooperation and support in the implementation of the ECRL Project which will feature 5 stations and cover some 92 km of main alignment in the state.

CCCECRL Managing Director Kong Qi stated, “The successful breakthrough of the Gombak Tunnel is a significant milestone for our project and reflects the dedication and expertise of the entire team. This achievement underscores our commitment to employing advanced tunnelling technologies and fostering strong collaboration among all stakeholders. We are focused on maintaining this momentum to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation solutions. Together, we are building a brighter, more connected future for Malaysia.”

MRL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Minister of Finance (Incorporated) [MOF (Inc.)], is the project owner of the ECRL while CCCC is the engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning (EPCC) contractor. The 665-km ECRL will traverse the East Coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang before linking with Selangor on the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The ECRL will cut travel time and expected to link Kota Bharu with the Gombak Integrated Terminal in 4 hours as compared to some 7 hours by road transport.

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