



PRESS RELEASE

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ECRL COMPLETES EXCAVATION OF 38 TUNNELS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Project on track to achieve 41 tunnel breakthroughs by Q3 2025

Kuala Lumpur, 8 April: The East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) Project has completed excavation works for 38 tunnels along its rail alignment to date, following two tunnel breakthroughs in Selangor early this week.

The significant milestone was achieved with the successful breakthrough of the 3.50-km 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' on 7 April 2025 – two months ahead of schedule – making it the 38th ECRL tunnel to complete its excavation process to date.

The ECRL had registered its 37th ECRL tunnel breakthrough a day earlier, on 6 April 2025, with the completion of excavation works for the 189-meter 'Rawang-Bestari Jaya Tunnel'.

With the two tunnels broken through, the ECRL has achieved 38 tunnel breakthroughs out of the 41 tunnels featured along its rail alignment. The three remaining tunnels currently under excavation are the twin-bore 16.39-km Genting Tunnel and the 9.85-km 'Serendah 2 Tunnel'.

The twin-bore Genting Tunnel, which is in its final stages of excavation using two state-of-the-art tunnel boring machines (TBMs), is expected to break through in mid-2025. Moreover, the 'Serendah 2 Tunnel', which is being excavated using the drill-and-blast method, is targeted to break through in the third quarter of 2025.

On 7 April 2025, the final blast at the 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' punched through the last barrier some 2,046 meters from the tunnel's exit portal. The remarkable achievement is a culmination of approximately 894,920 man-hours and the adoption of the drill-and-blast method of tunnelling that bored through primarily weathered granite.

The permanent lining for the 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' has progressed to a commendable 2,500 meters prior to the breakthrough. The tunnel has an average height of 12 meter and width of 13 meter, providing space for two standard gauge railway tracks upon completion.

Excavation works for 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' began in November 2022 and originally scheduled to break through on 31 May 2025 instead. All related civil works for the 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' are expected to be completed by January 2026.

The construction of the 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' will enable the ECRL railway track to comply with its maximum gradient of 0.9 percent, as well as to minimise impact to the water catchment areas like Batu Dam and reduce open forest cutting at the Sungai Tua Recreational Forest.

Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak, said the smooth excavation works at 'Serendah 1 Tunnel' and 'Rawang-Bestari Jaya Tunnel' were attributed to the outstanding effort and commitment of the ECRL Project team at Section 8 and Section 9 respectively as well as adoption of advanced tunnelling techniques and safe construction practices.

"We achieved a major milestone with the smooth excavation of the 3.50 km long 'Serendah 1 Tunnel', which is central to the ECRL alignment linking Gombak to Port Klang in Selangor. Some 512,582



cubic meters of soil and rock were safely removed with minimal ground movement and minor inconvenience to the road users throughout the excavation period using the drill-and-blast method,” he noted.

He added that the ‘Rawang-Bestari Jaya Tunnel’ was excavated via “benching” method to facilitate a bypass for the ECRL alignment instead of having to cut through a main road along Jalan Rawang-Bestari Jaya.

Dato’ Sri Darwis also said extensive progress had been achieved in rail tunnel design and construction, which are at the forefront of the ECRL Project, adding that the mega infrastructure’s alignment necessitated cutting through hilly terrain and dense forests to connect the East Coast with the Klang Valley.

China Communications Construction (ECRL) Sdn Bhd (CCCECRL) Managing Director, Deng Bo, stated, “As the construction of the ECRL enters the new phase involving system installations, we remain focused on maintaining momentum and ensuring timely delivery. We are committed to deliver Malaysia’s national mega railway infrastructure with the highest standards of safety and quality, strengthening connectivity between the east and west coasts”.

The construction for Phase 1 of the ECRL Project spanning from Kota Bharu, Kelantan to the Gombak Integrated Terminal, Selangor is scheduled for completion by December 2026, with operations set for January 2027 onwards. Furthermore, the construction for Phase 2 linking Gombak with Port Klang is expected to be completed by December 2027 and fully operational by January 2028.

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. 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 electric multiple unit (EMU) train for passengers can travel at a maximum speed of 160 km/h and is expected to link Kota Bharu with the Gombak Integrated Terminal in 4 hours as compared to some 7 hours by road transport or more than 12 hours during festive season.

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