



PRESS RELEASE

24 AUGUST 2025

MRL COMPLETES PLANTING 3,000 TREE SAPLINGS THROUGH 'RAIL TO ROOTS' DRIVE

This Programme Boosts Economic Prospects for the Orang Asli Community

Bentong, 24 August: Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) continues to strengthen its commitment to environmental sustainability and community well-being through the implementation of the 'Rail to Roots: Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest & Capacity Building' programme, which successfully completed the planting of 3,000 tree saplings at Hutan Simpan Kekal Lentang.

The Rail to Roots programme is part of MRL's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiative, focusing on two core pillars: environmental conservation (Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest) and community capacity building. This initiative is undertaken in collaboration with the Yayasan Hijau Malaysia (YHM) and the Pahang State Forestry Department (JPNP).

Through this programme, a total of 3,000 tree saplings, including species such as *merbau*, *meranti bukit*, and *nadir hutan*, have been planted in Hutan Simpan Kekal Lentang as part of restoration efforts to preserve forest biodiversity. A total of 600 tree saplings were planted during Phase One of the Rail to Roots programme, which commenced on 19 December 2024. Phase Two, involving the planting of 2,400 tree saplings, has been implemented in stages since the first quarter of 2025.

To commemorate the 68th Merdeka Day, a total of 68 participants comprising MRL's Board of Directors, senior management, and employees, planted 68 saplings during the Rail to Roots Tree Planting Ceremony today, marking the completion of the overall target of 3,000 saplings. This effort underscores MRL's commitment to preserving the nation's natural heritage while serving as a symbolic gesture in conjunction with this year's Independence Day celebration.

The ceremony was officiated by the Chief Secretary to the Government cum Chairman of MRL, Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, accompanied by MRL Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak. Also present were the Secretary General of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability, Datuk Dr. Ching Thoo A/L Kim, Director General of Forestry Peninsular Malaysia, Dato' Zahari Ibrahim, Bentong District Officer, Dato' Mohammad Shahid Ismail and the Director of Pahang State Forestry Department, Zainuddin Jamaluddin.

From a development capacity perspective, MRL has fully sponsored 15 nurseries for the Orang Asli community in Kampung Ulu Chemperoh coupled with support from JPNP in the form of training and guidance. The seedlings produced can be repurchased through a "Buyback Guarantee" initiative, thereby enabling the Orang Asli community to generate income and create sustainable economic opportunities.



The "Buyback Guarantee" initiative paved the way for MRL to be awarded Gold at the ESG Positive Impact Awards 2024: Innovative Partnership (Large Companies Category) in July 2025, which emphasised circular economy principles that benefited the community in its assessment.

MRL Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Sri Darwis Abdul Razak, said the Rail to Roots programme, which involves the planting of 3,000 saplings at Hutan Simpan Kekal Lentang showcased MRL's commitment in striking a balance between infrastructure development and environmental sustainability.

"The programme aligns with the green initiative and has successfully sown more than 17,000 seedlings through 15 nurseries as of May 2025. This development opens a new chapter for the Orang Asli community to generate income as well as build a more sustainable future," he said.

MRL, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Minister of Finance (Incorporated) [MOF (Inc.)] is the project and asset owner of the ECRL. The 665-km ECRL network will traverse the East Coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang before linking the Klang Valley on the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

-Ends-

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), Ani Azureen Zainuddin (03-6411 5800 ext. 6122 / azureen@mrl.com.my) or Puteri Hadeeja Sofea Hasbullah (03-6411 5800 ext. 6084 / hadeeja.sofea@mrl.com.my).