

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### ECRL's Kuantan Tunnel achieves tunnelling breakthrough ahead of schedule — MRL



Photo by Mohd Izwan/The Edge

KUALA LUMPUR (Oct 17): The East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project's 2.8-kilometre-long Kuantan Tunnel achieved a tunnelling breakthrough two months ahead of schedule on Monday, becoming the 12th ECRL tunnel to complete the excavation process to-date, said Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL).

MRL chief executive officer, Datuk Seri Darwis Abdul Razak, said the ECRL project has achieved another major milestone with the breakthrough at Kuantan Tunnel, the longest of the 12 ECRL tunnels to have made breakthrough.

"The successful breakthrough of 12 ECRL tunnels to-date demonstrates the project team's ability in addressing engineering challenges and adopting advanced tunnelling

technology. An additional three ECRL tunnels currently undergoing excavation are expected to break through by the end of 2022.

"The steady progress in tunnel excavation work, which is considered among the most complex parts of the ECRL project, will pave the way for completion of the rail infrastructure from Kota Bharu to the Integrated Transport Terminal in Gombak by December 2026," he said in a statement.

The final blast at Kuantan Tunnel punched through the last barrier of about 1,700 metres from the tunnel's entrance portal. The tunnel traversed two east coast states, with approximately 976 metres of the tunnel's length in Pahang with about 1,890 metres within the Terengganu border.

Nevertheless, the tunnel's entrance portal at Kg Alor Batu Jabor and exit portal at Bukit Galing Forest Reserve are both under the Kuantan district in Pahang.

The construction of the Kuantan Tunnel will enable the ECRL railway track to comply with its maximum gradient of 0.9% as well as to avoid major open forest cutting in Bukit Galing Forest Reserve.