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# 'ECRL WILL BOOST PAHANG'S ECONOMY'

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Unimaginable benefits for state with 600km-rail line, says Najib

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**T**HE East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) mega project is an iconic game changer set to trigger major progress in Pahang and the entire east coast.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said construction of the 600km-rail line scheduled to begin in the middle of the year, was estimated to boost the state's economy by 1.5 per cent annually.

"The ECRL project that crosses the borders (of Selangor, Pa-

hang, Terengganu and Kelantan) will bring major changes to the state. It is iconic and a game changer for Pahang and the east coast."

The project is slated to form a vast rail network linking the Klang Valley with key growth areas in Pahang, including Bentong, Mentakab, Maran, Gambang, Kuantan Sentral and Cherating.

The expansive rail line would connect ports in the east and west coasts, including Port Klang and Kuantan Port, which are undergoing expansion to accommodate the project.

"Even though the railway does not pass through Pekan directly, it is not far from here. Local industries (in Pekan) can export (their products) through Kuantan Port or Port Klang.

"It (the project) will bring unimaginable changes to the landscape," Najib said at the handing over of the Ganchong

Water Plant from the East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) to the Pahang government yesterday.

Najib, who is also Pekan member of parliament, said 96 per cent of Pahang residents were supportive of the project.

Najib expressed confidence that the ECRL project would spur a progressive mindset among Malaysians towards economic competitiveness.

"The railway will not only bring physical development. Upon experiencing such modern development, what will the impact be on our way of thinking?

"The mind will undergo a shift and bring about a new generation capable of being competitive."

On the Ganchong Water Plant, Najib described the project as "Infrarakyat", or a people-centric infrastructure development, which was built with an allocation of RM255.1 million, adding that it was a key project under the 10th

Malaysia Plan.

It is capable of producing 80 million litres of water daily, which is sufficient to meet the demand for water here for the next decade.

Construction of the plant began in March 2014, and was completed last month. It would ensure uninterrupted supply of treated water to 80,000 people here.

The facility had led to growth of investments in Pekan.

"This high-impact project (Ganchong Water Plant) has convinced investors to increase investment in Pekan Automotive Park and Tanjung Agas (Oil and Gas Industrial Park)," Najib said.

During the event, Najib also handed out participation certificates to 79 participants in the Agropolitan Pekan Batu 8 programme in recognition of their six years of participation in the poverty eradication initiative.

The programme was aimed at

resettling selected Bottom 40 participants and employing them in oil palm and sheep-rearing industries.

Najib also handed out ownership certificates to 26 participants in the Rancangan Tanah Kelompok Permatang Besar, where participants from the low-income group were given land managed by Felcra Bhd.

Present were ECERDC chief executive officer Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John, state Public Amenities and Environment Committee chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Soffi Abdul Razak, Pulau Manis assemblyman Datuk Khairuddin Mahmud, Peramu Jaya assemblyman Datuk Sh Mohmed Puzi Sh Ali, Bebar assemblyman Datuk Mohammad Fakhruddin Mohd Ariff, Chini assemblyman Datuk Abu Bakar Harun and Pengurusan Air Pahang Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Mohd Zahari Md Isa.