

Malaysia, China to set up JV to run, maintain ECRL

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia and China have agreed to participate in the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) through a joint-venture company.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the joint venture company would be formed between Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd and Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC), with each having an equal stake.

"CCCC will provide the technical support and share the operational risk after the project's completion.

"This arrangement will ease the financial burden on Malaysia, which previously would have had to bear the entire cost of the O&M.

"In addition, Malaysia can also leverage CCCC's expertise in O&M, hence improving the long-term viability of the project.

"We are confident that CCCC's involvement will attract and spur investment along the rail link corridor, especially from China," he said yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the percentage of local participation had been raised to 40 per cent in respect of civil works from 30 per cent in the original deal.

The improved ECRL deal, he said, would cost RM68.7 million per kilometre, compared with RM95.5 million per kilometre previously.

He listed key technical aspects of the ECRL, including maintaining the standard gauge and double-track line, having 640km in-



An East Coast Rail Link project construction site in Bentong, Pahang. ECRL will pass through five states and Putrajaya under the new deal. FILE PIC

clusive of spur lines and comprising 20 stations.

"Therefore, instead of passing through four states, it will now pass through five states and Putrajaya. This will allow more states to partake in the economic benefits of the improved deal."

Dr Mahathir said the new southern alignment would also

provide a direct land link from Kuantan Port to Port Klang, serving as a land bridge between the two ports.

"The new alignment will leverage the KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) Express Rail Link, as well as the future MRT2 SSP (Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya) Line with an interchange

in Putrajaya Sentral.

"This will improve passenger connectivity to other parts of the peninsula's west coast, as well as provide a direct link to KLIA.

"This is a significant improvement to the single interchange via the LRT at the Gombak Integrated Transport Terminal as per the previous arrangement."

He said the new alignment prioritised cultural, heritage and environmental factors by avoiding the Klang Gates Quartz Ridge in Gombak, Selangor, the world's longest pure quartz dyke.

The ECRL's new date for completion is Dec 31, 2026, extended from the original deadline of June 30, 2024.