

Reports by TARRENCE TAN and BENJAMIN LEE

# ECRL project a showcase of close cooperation

**KUALA LUMPUR:** In a display of bilateral unity and cooperation, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim came together to officiate the groundbreaking ceremony for the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) Gombak Integrated Terminal Station.

The ceremony marks an important step in the completion of the 665km-long ECRL project, which has reached 67.09% completion as of last month, according to a statement from the Transport Ministry yesterday.

Situated less than a five-minute walk away from the existing Gombak LRT station, the planned site of the ECRL Gombak station is part of the 20-station ECRL project that looks to improve the connectivity between the states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and Selangor.

With planned covered walkways, commuters will also be able to seamlessly traverse between the Gombak ECRL station, soon-to-be completed Gombak Integrated Transport Terminal and the existing Gombak LRT station.

Owned by Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd, a

wholly owned subsidiary of the Finance Ministry, the ECRL project is expected to cut travel time between Kota Baru in Kelantan and Gombak in Selangor to four hours compared to the current seven hours via road transportation.

With China-based contractor China Communications Construction Company Ltd in charge of the project's engineering and construction, the ECRL's rail alignment from Kota Baru to the Gombak Integrated Terminal Station is scheduled to be completed by December 2026 with operations set to start in January 2027.

Anwar repeatedly expressed his thanks to both companies and Li's attendance as a showcase of the two nation's close bilateral relationship.

"This event marks an important milestone in the working relations between China and Malaysia, which shows how we are able to collaborate together.

"This will also help us prepare our economy to be in a better position and develop the underdeveloped areas in the east coast," he said at the ceremony here.