

## ECRL to help create RM50b of GDP impact — project owner

BY CHESTER TAY

KUALA LUMPUR: The RM55 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) is expected to help create RM50.1 billion of gross domestic product (GDP) impact, project owner Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) said yesterday.

In a statement, MRL said the World Economic Forum estimated that every dollar spent on a capital project, such as transport, would generate economic returns of between 5% and 25%.

"The ECRL project was undertaken with such an objective to allow more townships across the four states (Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and Selangor) to have greater

access to trade and business opportunities produced by not only our nation, but also the greater regions in Southeast Asia, Asia and the world," said MRL.

MRL chief executive officer Darwis Abdul Razak said the 600.3km rail link is expected to lower cost of production by reducing the cost of freight transportation.

"This way, we are able to increase the competitiveness of Malaysian products and services. With ECRL's vast coverage, connecting East Coast cities to the Greater Klang Valley demand centre, we also anticipate an increase in commercial activities across the region," he said.

Darwis confirmed that the first

of ECRL's 23 stations is Wakaf Baru, Kelantan, while the final station is Gombak, Selangor, where passengers would then have to transit by using the light rail transit Kelana Jaya Line to connect to the city centre.

Previously, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan told the media the high construction cost is because the ECRL alignment is extended to reach Port Klang.

Darwis said that together with the Land Public Transport Commission, MRL is committed to keeping the four-hour travelling cost on ECRL "affordable", and to provide a safer alternative to travelling on roads.