

KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 9 OKTOBER 2022

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 7

ECRL to mitigate projects impact on wildlife

ECRL to mitigate projects impact on wildlife

By MENG YEW CHOONG
ycmeng@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Progress on the 3.88km railway bridge across Sungai Kuantan took another step forward with the successful “stitching” of the span that goes above Jalan Kuantan-Sungai Lembing, or Route C4.

China Communications Construction (ECRL) Sdn Bhd (CCC-ECRL), the engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning contractor for the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project, said the achievement was notched on Thursday, at the spot near Kampung Padang, Pahang.

“The highway is one of the busiest in Kuantan, and one that is also flood-prone. To avoid disruptions and ensure the safety of road users, the section was built using the balanced cantilever method, where a 48m continuous beam was constructed in five segments with a final closure segment completing the stretch,” it said in a statement.

“This milestone is the first of its kind along the construction of the 665km ECRL alignment, scheduled for completion in December 2026,” it added.

The construction of the Sg Kuantan Bridge, considered a major bridge, began in July 2020 and is expected to be completed by August 2024.



Fits like a puzzle: ECRL's Kuantan Bridge was successfully constructed across Jalan Kuantan-Sungai Lembing.

Just last month, CCC-ECRL inked a supplementary agreement with the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) to improve the implementation of the Wildlife Management Plan, an initiative for wildlife conservation and mitigation works along the entire ECRL alignment.

The ceremony was attended by Perhilitan director general Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) CEO Datuk Seri Darwis Abdul Razak, and CCC-ECRL managing director Kong Qi.

In the first memorandum signed between CCC-ECRL and Perhilitan in 2018, more than RM9mil was allocated for Perhilitan's Wildlife Management Plan.

The recent supplementary agreement covers the extension of the collaboration period to include the construction phase of ECRL, and also the alignment from Kota Baru, Kelantan, to Jalan Kastam (Port Klang), among other environmental protection programmes.

Abdul Kadir said: “Funds pledged will go towards the Wildlife Mana-

gement Plan initiatives, which include wildlife mitigation and conflict control, human-elephant conflict study, public awareness and habitat enrichment.”

Meanwhile, Kong said the purpose of the fund is to establish environmental safeguards and ensure that environmentally-friendly initiatives are carried out during the construction of the ECRL.

“We are dedicated to developing the project without endangering the natural habitats of wildlife along the alignment. Several significant steps have been taken by the environmental experts of the ECRL project and the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry, such as improving the alignment and design to reduce the impact to natural habitats as much as possible.

“By tunnelling through forest areas, we avoid cutting forests full of wildlife and damaging the natural habitats. Tunnels with a total length of 15.22km will also be constructed to reduce deforestation of seven forest reserves areas that the ECRL will traverse under,” Kong said, adding that mitigation measures include building 58 tunnels, 128km of viaducts and 20 wildlife crossings.

Through tunnelling and fine-tuning of design, the project was able to reduce forested land usage by 90%, from the initial forecast of 2,000ha of forest land loss, to 276ha.