

ECRL to boost activities at Kuantan Port, says Pahang MCCC chief

KUANTAN, May 18 — The decision by the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government to continue with the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project not only facilitates transportation, but will also boost activities at the Kuantan Port here. Pahang chapter of the Malaysia-China Chamber of Commerce chairman Datuk Andy Chiew Yoke Theng said the ECRL alignment that would connect Kuantan Port and Port Klang in Selangor, the two main ports in the country, would boost cargo transportation at both ports.

What's more, he added, Kuantan Port having been upgraded to a deep-sea terminal and a free trade zone, and not far from the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) in Gebeng.

In addition to the steel manufacturing company, Alliance Steel (M) Sdn Bhd, he said, a tyre company was also keen to invest there. "Hence, the decision to continue the ECRL project will attract more investors to MCKIP as it will have access to good land and sea transport, apart from the cost of rail transport is cheaper," he told Bernama when contacted here today.

The ECRL project was initially suspended following a change in the government after it was found to be costly, however, on April 12, the Prime Minister's Department (JPM) confirmed that the project would continue with a new route alignment and at a cheaper cost.

Besides attracting more investors, Chiew said ECRL project, once completed, would boost Kuantan's image, especially Kota SAS, which would be turned into the state's administrative centre.

"One step towards becoming a developed state is by having an effective transport system, Pahang already has its own airport and port, so the railway will complement the transport network," he said. Chiew said it would also bring economic spillover to other sector, such as tourism, that would provide business opportunities for local residents.

Meanwhile, a businessman Yusri Yusof said the government's assurance that more opportunities to be given to locals in the implementation of ECRL should be optimised by contractors, especially Bumiputera, to acquire new experiences and knowledge.

Yusri, who is Pahang Malay Chamber of Commerce president, said G3 class contractors, comprising those eligible for projects not more than RM1 million and those in G7 (RM10 million and above) should register as ECRL's contractor or supplier if they were keen to participate in the project implementation.

However, the most important thing was for them to prepare themselves with knowledge and capital, he added. — Bernama