

Industrial training programme to continue despite review on ECRL

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An information display of the ECRL project that is currently under review. — Bernama

KUALA LUMPUR: The East Coast Rail Link Industrial Skills Training Programme (PLKI-ECRL) will continue despite the proposal for the government to review the ECRL project.

Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) Rail Industry Academy Director, Dr Fadzil Mat Yahaya said intake for the programme was continuing as scheduled.

"Since its launch last year, we have conducted two intakes for the degree, diploma and certification levels, involving 400 trainees," he said.

Fadzil said 49 of the trainees have been employed by companies in charge of the project, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) and China Communication Construction Company Ltd (CCCC), while another 130 were expected to report for duty this month.

"The next intake for the programme will be conducted in July, involving 80 students," he said when contacted by *Bernama* today.

The university targeted an intake of 700 trainees this year for the PLKI-ECRL programme, a collaboration between UMP, MRL and CCCC, which aimed to equip up to 3,600 students with railway technology skills.

"The graduates will have an advantage compared with other students as they will have specialised skills in railway technology, which is not taught at any other higher institutions of learning in this country.

"Trainees will also get hands-on training to operate heavy machinery during the certification programme – a valuable skill in the construction field," said Fadzil.

Meanwhile, civil engineering graduate Mohd Johanaqar Mohd Zain, 26, said cancellation of the ECRL project would be a loss as it provided jobs for the people.

"I have friends who are still unemployed, and a large-scale project such as this gives us a ray of hope.

"I think it will be such a loss if the project is cancelled, as the people living in the East Coast are hoping for public infrastructure projects like this one to drive the region's economic growth to be at par with the West Coast," he said.

He hoped the government would look for ways to reduce the project's construction costs, instead of terminating it.

UMP graduate, Nurul Haziqah Jabar, 24, echoing the same view, said the project acted as a medium to create more local workers skilled in railway technology.

"Our on-the-job training sessions exposed us to railway technology, which is not taught in any university in this country, and it is a new technology brought in from China.

"It will be such a loss if the project is cancelled, but I have faith that the new government will make the best decision for the people," she added. — *Bernama*