

M'sia to continue supporting China's Belt and Road Initiative

By **DAVID TAN**
davidtan@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Malaysia was one of the earliest supporters of China's Belt and Road Initiative in developing infrastructure and connectivity, and will continue to support the initiative, says Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

In his pre-recorded speech to open the Global Chinese Economic and Technology (GCET) Summit here yesterday, the Prime Minister said Malaysia offers unparalleled advantages for investors, not just as a gateway to Asean but also to markets of the world.

Ismail Sabri also recognised the importance of China and the Chinese diaspora to Malaysia's economic development.

"China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009 and accounted for 18.6% of Malaysia's

total trade in 2020," he said in his welcome speech.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong who also delivered a pre-recorded speech at the event, said having Section C of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) revert to its original northern alignment will make the project economically competitive while reducing its social and environmental impacts.

"The ECRL is part of the Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative, and it will be the landbridge that will link the peninsula's East and West coasts and spur growth.

"It is meant to close the development and economic gaps between the East and West coasts," he said at the summit organised by the KSI Strategic Institute For Asia Pacific (KSI).

Dr Wee also said the Transport Ministry had implemented several port clearing exercises during the

Covid-19-triggered movement control order to ensure unhindered movement of goods from the country's ports, with adequate and uninterrupted movement of goods for conventional marketplaces and e-commerce activities.

"The Port of Tanjung Pelepas had successfully achieved 10 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in container handling on Nov 23 this year.

"This is an impressive achievement as it had not only exceeded last year's 9.85 million TEUs but exceeded it even before the year ended.

"We are also thankful that Port Klang has been recognised as having the most efficient operations among 22 of the world's biggest and most prominent ports, handling an average of 131 ships weekly and taking just 1.7 days to service each vessel, compared with 1.3 days in 2017 to 2019 before the pandemic

occurred.

"This is quicker than our regional competitors at a time when 77% of ports are experiencing abnormally long turnaround times, according to a Bloomberg report," said Dr Wee to the audience that included the Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak, KSI president cum organising chairman Tan Sri Michael Yeoh, and GCET Summit founder and patron, Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew.

China's Ambassador to Malaysia, Ouyang Yujing, also delivered a pre-recorded speech at the event, which saw Ahmad Fuzi presenting the World Chinese Excellent Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of KSI to 13 recipients.

The recipients were Star Media Group Bhd chief content officer, Esther Ng; Lim Seong Hai Capital Bhd non-executive chairman, Tan

Sri Lim Keng Cheng; MTT Group of Companies chairman, Datuk Seri Kenny Ong; East West One Group founder and CEO, Datuk Dr Jessie Tang; Gama Sogo Group of Companies executive chairman, Datuk Andrew Lim Tatt Keong; and AIMSMET Executive Education president and CEO, Prof Datuk Dr Jayles Yeoh.

Other recipients include Revenue Group Bhd managing director and CEO, Datuk Eddie Ng Chee Siong; Kuala Lumpur International Healthcare Centre CEO, Jocelyn Sim Kok Fang; CBRE/WI'W managing director, Foo Gee Jen; Leader Energy Holding Sdn Bhd CEO Gan Boon Ilean; Innoprise Plantations Sdn Bhd managing director Tan Aik Kiong; Open Road Group of Companies founder and adviser, Datuk David Goh; and Bioplus Life Corp chairman, Datuk Dr Chin Yew Sin.