

Government to Build Railway Tracks for Jakarta-Surabaya

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Government has targeted to build railway tracks for Jakarta-Surabaya route for next year to increase the nation's competitive power and reduce costs of logistical flow.

Transportation Minister, Budi Karya Sumadi, said the speedy trains on Jakarta-Surabaya route would minimise the travel time from 9 to 5.5 hours. "The trains will be able to go back and forth in one night," said the Minister, opening a seminar on the construction of the Jakarta-Surabaya railway tracks on Thursday (7/12) at UGM Graduate School.

The Minister admitted the high costs of the construction. He is currently considering options such as the ones in Japan, Korea and Germany.

"We want to have a smart technology choice for the railway tracks construction here," he said.

Currently, three proposals related to the construction have been submitted from JICA, BPPT and Germany to the Ministry. He hoped the project would spur economic growth as well as economic and social impacts for cities alongside the route. "The high costs of construction will give more economic

impacts and increase competitiveness,” he said.

According to the Minister, trains are a transportation mode that is most liked by people and is considered environmentally friendly. The Ministry will therefore arrange integrated and massive system that will connect cities in Java.

Meanwhile, Head of Study and Implementation of Technology Agency (BPPT), Unggul Priyanto, said the BPPT appreciated the plan to develop the Jakarta-Surabaya railway tracks because this will accelerate the flow of goods so that commodity prices will get cheaper.

Even so, said Unggul, the government needs to pay attention to technology aspects for the construction of infrastructures by utilising local components the most. “Utilisation of local components will be the pillar to become an advanced country,” he said.

Chairman of Indonesian Transportation Society, Prof, Dr. Ir. Danang Parikesit, M.Sc., assessed that the railway construction would require high costs but this would reduce logistical costs. He advised the adoption of appropriate technology for the long run. “The decision to choose the technology is very important as it will last tens to a hundred of years,” he said.

Park Dae Geuni, Ph.D., from Korea Rail Network Authority, said Korea was trying to accelerate the train speed from before from 120 km per hour to 230 km per hour. Meanwhile, presently most of the tracks there have applied double tracks. “As high as 60 percent are double-tracks while the rest is single track,” he said,

Speaker Dr Bernhard Lechner from Technical University of Munich, Germany, said the increase of trains capacity were adjusted with the railway and the technology. Better train route infrastructures with better technology will support the speed of the train.

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