

Daily Insight

Indonesia earmarks US\$40 billion for Jakarta rail expansion plans

Indonesia will spend US\$40 billion to expand the rail network in Jakarta, according to PT MRT Jakarta President Director William Sabandar. The spending plan is part of Indonesia President Joko Widodo's road map to create a US\$7 trillion Indonesia economy by 2045. Jokowi's administration had previously outlined plans to spend \$US455 billion on infrastructure development, though details of the plan have not been revealed. MRT Jakarta will be looking to add six lines to the one partially opened earlier this year, and the scope and scale (US\$40 billion) of the project has surprised some observers, who were expecting only the completion of a single line. Having a six line rail network could place Jakarta in the same league as Singapore and Hong Kong in terms of rail connectivity and network length. Sabandar said: "We have a target of building 230km by 2030 – that's the masterplan. We have only 16km now, so the key is how we can do this in an accelerated way. We can no longer just build them one by one." PT MRT Jakarta is currently looking for financiers for the project.

A well developed rail network would go a long way in solving traffic problems plaguing the Indonesia capital.



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France shuts down as worker unions fight Macron's planned pension reforms

A massive union organized nationwide strike in France has disrupted schools and shut down public transport. According to police, 65,000 protestors took to the streets in Paris, while nearly 806,000 took part in protests in more than 100 cities nationwide. Some protest locations saw violence with police having to use tear gas on protestors. Workers are unhappy about planned pension reforms that would see them either retiring later or facing reduced payouts. Transport has been severely disrupted, with 90% of high speed TGV and inter-city trains cancelled. In Paris, only five of sixteen metro lines were operating. Hundreds of flights were cancelled, with Air France cancelling 30% of internal flights and 10% of short haul international flights after air traffic controllers staged a walkout. Tourists were left stranded without access to transport and other essential services, while many white collar employees worked from home. French President Macron, who says that the current pension system is unfair and costly, wants a single, simplified points-based system under which for each euro contributed, every pensioner has equal rights.



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