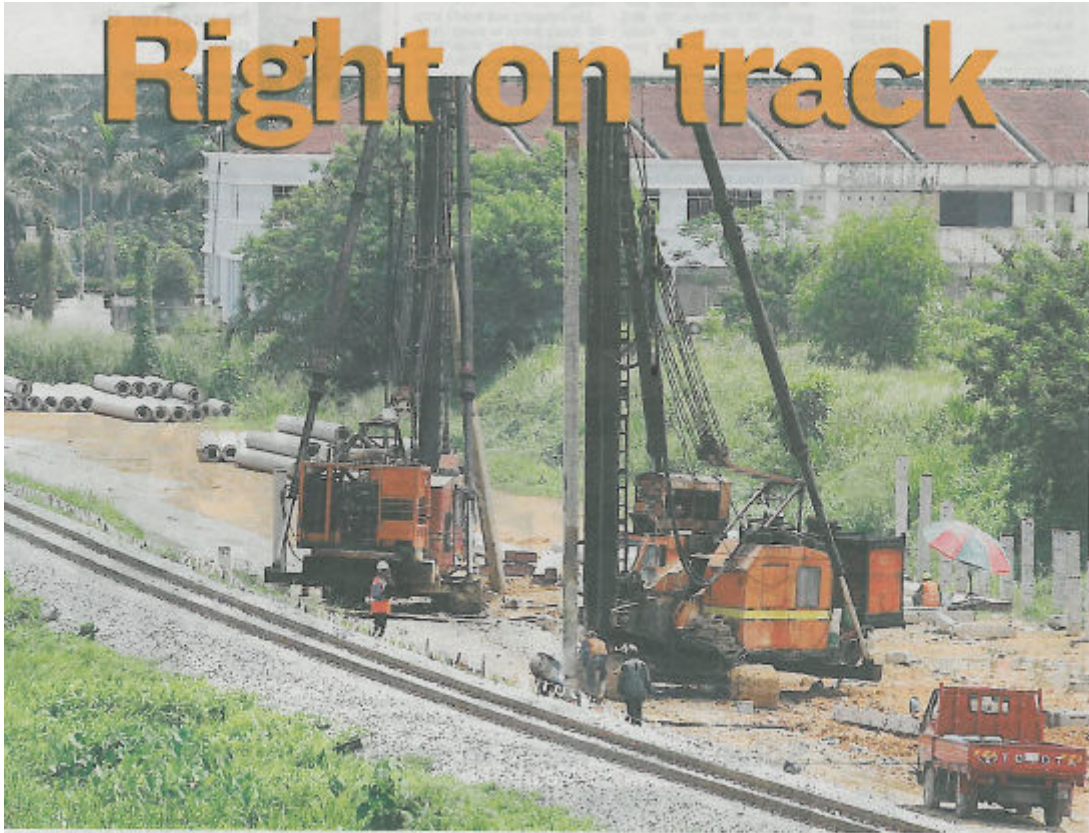


Thursday, 3 April 2008/ The Star/ Metro (North)/ Pg M1, M3/ Double Tracking



The RM12.5bil Ipoh-Padang Besar electrified double track project, which began three months ago, will take five years to complete. It will also create over 100,000 jobs for people in the region. >M3

JV commences RM12.5bil rail job



Site visit: MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture Project director (head of construction) Yeoh Hin Kok (left) and project manager Maslan Othman checking on the progress of the Ipoh-Padang Besar electrified double track project in Simpang Ampat, Nibong Tebal, yesterday.

Electrified double track project to be ready in 2013

By **ZULKIFLY MOHAMAD**
Photos by **MUSTAFA AHMAD**

TOUTED as the single largest and one of the most expensive construction projects in the country, the RM12.485bil electrified double track project from Ipoh to Padang Besar will create more than 100,000 jobs for the people in Perak, Penang, Kedah and Perlis.

The five-year project that began three months ago involves the construction of 329km double track railway lines. It is jointly developed by MMC-Gamuda.

MMC-Gamuda JV Project director Datuk Azmi Mat Nor said that over 3,000 people were currently working on the project.

"We will be employing some 5,000 professionals, especially engineers, 12,000 semi-professionals such as supervisors and technicians, 17,000 plant operators, 16,000 lorry drivers and 60,000 unskilled workers for the project.

"All 12 quarries in the four northern states will be contracted by us to deliver the material required for the project.

"We need some two million pieces of pre-cast concrete sleepers for the entire railway line. The project also requires 1.5 million tones of cement

and 400,000 tones of steel over the next five years," he added.

Azmi said 4,000 trucks and tippers as well as 1,000 excavators, motor graders, compactors and other machinery would also be required when the project goes into full swing.

"We have been given 60 months to deliver the project on Jan 7, 2013. We received the Letter of Award from the government on Dec 13, last year and immediately took possession of the site on Jan 8," he added.

He said double-barrel tunnels would also be built in the project - one in Bukit Berapit with a distance of 3.3km and 330m for the other in Larut.

He said the double tracking main line would cover a distance of 171km from Ipoh to Butterworth while the Kedah line, from Bukit Mertajam to Padang Besar, would stretch 158km.

Under the project, 66 road over bridges, eight road under bridges, 75 river bridges and 45 motorcycle/pedestrian bridges would be built, he added.

"We will also build a 282m-long swing bridge in Prai to accommodate the new electrified double tracking system and a 3.5km marine viaduct in Bukit Merah," he told reporters at the company's office in Bukit

Mertajam yesterday.

"Of particular importance is that the Kedah line accounts for 60% of KTMB's cargo traffic, including its landbridge service plying the Bangkok-Port Klang route."

Azmi said that presently, KTMB hauled substantial cargoes such as rubber from southern Thailand to Penang Port for export to the Far East.

In fact, southern Thailand is geographically more suited for export on rail via Penang Port, he said.

He said transporting cargo by rail was more efficient as it would reduce fuel consumption, less environmentally polluting, shorten travel time as well as safer.

"Transporting cargo by rail is six times more efficient compared to road and for passenger, rail is 20 times more efficient," he added.

He said the electrified double track project would tap energy from the national grid that currently had a reserve margin of 38%.

"Over 70% of the grid is now powered by natural gas, which is much cleaner than diesel or petrol used in cars and trucks," he added.

Azmi said MMC-Gamuda was confident of completing the project on time as works were already at full scale.



Laying the groundwork: Piling works being carried out at the project site in Simpang Ampat, Nibong Tebal.

»We have been given 60 months to deliver the project on Jan 7, 2013«



DATUK AZMI MAT NOR, MMC-GAMUDA JV PROJECT DIRECTOR

Overview

Electrified Double Track (Completed)

- ✓ Rawang – Seremban: 105 km
- ✓ Sentul – P. Klang: 45 km
- ✓ Rasa – Rawang: 25 km
- ✓ Rawang – Ipoh : 180 km

Electrified Double Track (Development)

- ▣ Sentul – Batu Caves : 7.5 km (2009)
- ▣ Seremban – Gemas : 102 km (2012)
- ▣ Gemas – Johor Bahru : (2013)
- ▣ Ipoh – Padang Besar : (2013)



Electrified Double Track Project – Ipoh to Padang



Mammoth project: The electrified double track project from Ipoh to Padang Besar is expected to create more than 100,000 jobs in the region.