

HaRakevet

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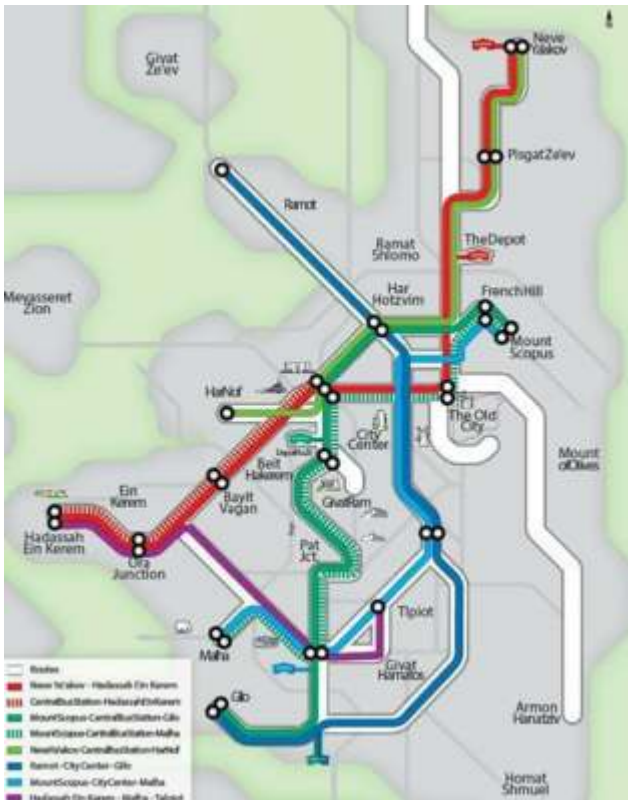
Series 36#1 Issue 136 March 2022

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of Israel
and the Middle East
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ISSN - 0964-8763



Aerial view of TA Universita station looking north. (Cloudviews aerial photography, courtesy IR)



Escalator being installed in a Tel Aviv underground station. (Steve Sattler)

**Jerusalem Planned Tramway Map
see page 7**

136:02.

In an attempt to catch up with our regular schedule the March issue comes out on time but covers only two months not three – but nevertheless there is a great deal of news as well as some items held over from last time. They have certainly not been easy months for the world, the Covid pandemic continues and attention has suddenly changed its focus from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea and the conflict there. Nevertheless railway infrastructure work and planning continues throughout the Near East. This month sees also the long-delayed and much-postponed PTG Railway Enthusiasts Tour of Israel Railways – alas the 'add-on' tour to Jordan did not get sufficient support and has had to be postponed further. Your Editor is planning to join this tour and will no doubt return with many new impressions and news items for future issues. In addition he hopes to continue research and make progress on two books, on 'Palestine Railways 1920-1948' and 'Lebanese Railways' – also much delayed. A few more paid subscriptions would certainly help to balance the books a little but in the meantime we aim to continue providing regular updates on events and also provide some historical background and context. Despite everything – Enjoy!

The Editor.



136:03
60CM GAUGE LINE FOR MEKOROT BUILDING A 33KM WATER TUNNEL TO JERUSALEM FOR THE HAGIHON COMPANY



(i). TRACKWORKS.

Israel Railways Ltd. announced 19.01.2022 that due to the service reductions caused by the Omicron infections, and in order to better use the free tracks, on Friday, 28.01.2022 only the section between Ashkelon and Be'er-Sheva Central would be closed for traffic as part of annual track maintenance works on the Western Negev line and, as a result, the stations of Be'er-Sheva Central, Ofakim, Netivot and Sderot would be closed.

The station of Be'er-Sheva North/University would, on the other hand, provide services to/from Dimona. There would be strengthened bus services between these cities and traffic was to resume on Saturday night 29.01.2022 at about 18:00.

(ii). TIMETABLE CHANGES.

From a press release of 21.01.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Starting from Saturday night 22.01.2022 and on each following Saturday night for the time being, there will be some small changes to departures of trains: Trains will start operating at about 20:00 and will end at about 23:00. There will be some small changes to the departures of some of the trains on the Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan - Tel-Aviv - Herzliyya line. There will also be some small changes to platform numbers regarding Departures."

From a press release of 23.01.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Trains will operate on Monday 24.01.2022 as on Sunday 23.01.2022, namely: The Valley line Haifa - Beit She'an, the Be'er-Sheva North/University lines and the line to Beit-Shemesh will be closed, as will be the stations on these lines. On the Lower Galilee line to Carmiel trains will operate at rush hours only: between 06:00 and 09:00 and 15:00 and 18:00. Alternative bus services will be provided when stations are closed. Trains on the Herzliyya – Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem Navon A1 line will operate at a frequency of 1 train/hour in each direction instead of 2 trains/hour. On the Western Negev line Ashkelon – Sderot – Netivot – Ofakim – Be'er-Sheva: Services will terminate at about 21:00; alternative bus services will be provided between 21:00 and midnight. Service frequency on the Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan - Tel-Aviv - Herzliyya line will be reduced at rush hours from 4 trains/hour to 2 trains/hour each direction. There will be changes to service frequencies at some of the stations."

On 26.01.2022 it was announced "When the number of sick train crews decreases the service on the Sharon line will return to four trains/hour in each direction to/from Herzliya. Train services on the Valley Line resumed on 26.01.2022."

(iii). RAIL FREIGHT TERMINAL AT NETIVOT AND FURTHER PLANS.

From a press release of 23.01.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.: "The Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd. continue to promote a strategic plan to increase freight haulage by rail in order to reduce road congestion, air pollution, car accidents and to increase safety for all road users. (Each freight train is equivalent to 60-70 lorries regarding loading capacity).

The Southern District and Building Commission has recently approved the Israel Railways Ltd. detailed plan to build a Rail Cargo Terminal in the Western Negev near the city of Netivot. The new terminal will enable haulage of industrial and agricultural products between Netivot, the population in the surrounding of the Gaza Strip and the ports of Ashdod and Haifa, in excess of 50,000 containers/year.

The terminal will have an area of 50 acres and will be linked by a rail siding with the station of Netivot; it will contribute to strengthening the economic development of the Western Negev; the completion of the terminal is anticipated at the end of 2025 as an integral part of the railways' present Five Year Plan.

Alongside the Netivot terminal the railways continue promoting plans to build a national rail cargo terminal network according to a strategic plan approved by the Commission for Principal Design Subjects of the Planning Directorate on May 2020 and according to the National Plan Outline No. 1; thus building of additional Rail Cargo terminals at: Kedma (North of Tel-Aviv), Tirat-Yehuda (north of Lod), Beit-Shemesh, North Greater Tel-Aviv Metropolitan Area, Hadera, the Yezre'el Valley, etc.

Building terminals in a nationwide deployment has a top importance, as it makes rail accessible for customers who would not otherwise have the ability to use rail; the terminals enable haulage for a maximum distance from the ports to the rail terminal and transshipping only for the short distance by a lorry for the 'last mile'.



Alongside with the Netivot terminal, the railways continue to turn the Western Negev area into a focus of nationwide rail action; in recent months a new and modern electric train depot was opened in Ashkelon and last year an advanced training simulation centre was opened in Ofakim."

- *Computer-generated simulations of the Netivot Cargo Terminal provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich from the IR spokesman's office; Credit: Ran Sarfati Simulations Ltd.*



- *Snow in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem Post 26.1.2022*

(iv). LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW.....

On Wed. 26.01.22 Steve reported from the TV's 21.00 bulletin :-

"Jerusalem: As the snow begins to fall harder and catch on the ground from 17.00, an interview with the deputy Traffic Commander for the region [on the Harel bridge in Mevasseret Tzion - in the falling snow]: He said " that now, (i.e. 20.00) the main road No. 1 has been closed in both directions by the police and only the A1 train is running and will run till midnight. He expects the IR to add extra trains on this "King David" route till midnight tonight, and tomorrow morning till at least mid-day. In Jerusalem the roads are slippery, some are covered with snow and ice may form overnight. The Jerusalem trams will run till midnight on the full Red Route, but city buses will stop - now.

Gilo has at this time [21.00] some 4 inches of snow. Tomorrow the City will open most main roads with the 300 tractors they have on standby.



Tomorrow schools are closed in Jerusalem. The weather lady says that overnight snow will continue to fall and by 07.00 it should cover all of Jerusalem till Friday. The railways were - until noon today - the only transportation link between Jerusalem and other Israeli parts due to snow storm, particularly Tel-Aviv; the AI was working during the whole night of 26.01.2022."

(v). STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

IR announced on 26.01.2022 that during performance of planned infrastructure works at Kfar-Sava Nordau and Hod-HaSharon Sokolov stations it was found necessary to strengthen some engineering points in the ceilings; These works would cause changes to rail traffic on the Sharon line since single-line operation would be required until works are completed. (To start soon). In the meantime the stations of Hod-HaSharon Sokolov and Ra'anana South will be closed temporarily and alternative bus services will be provided. For most of the day trains passing through the station of Petach-Tikva Sgula will not call there except between 11:00 and 14:30."

A press release of 02.03.2022 stated: "As part of the urgent need to reinforce the roofs of the Kfar-Sava Nordau and Hod-HaSharon/Sokolov railway stations (located on the Sharon railway loop line), due to constructional and planning failures found in an annual routine maintenance works, these two stations and that of Ra'anana South will be closed from 17.03.2022 for about six weeks; tracks in these mentioned stations must be dismantled to enable works to be carried; the two stations are 20 years old. Alternative bus services will operate between the closed stations and other stations on the Sharon railway circle line."

(vi). ELECTRIFICATION TO BEIT SHEMESH

Work on this line continues and Sybil informed that the line to here was closed till 02. February. Special shuttle buses to Lod were announced for a while but in any case there are also frequent direct buses to Tel Aviv Savidor. On 01.02 the reopening from 02.02 with an hourly service was announced. (Later information was that this reduction might actually have been due to staff shortages, not electrification work after all!)

(vii). SERVICES RESTORED

From a press release of 06.02.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

From Monday 07.02.2022 and until further notice, traffic on the Herzliya - Jerusalem Navon (A1) line will return to the regular frequency of 2 trains/hour each direction until end of service.

(viii). STATION WORKS

From a press release of 06.02.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Due to the continued reduction in passenger traffic due to the pandemic (5th wave) and as part of an annual programme of infrastructure and service/safety improvements including the reduction of the gap between rolling stock and platforms, mainly following the introduction of the Siemens Desiro DDEMU train whose floor has been found to be 20cm below the platforms of some stations, these works will be performed earlier than planned at Tel-Aviv Savidor station and consequently will cause the following temporary changes to traffic at Tel-Aviv stations between Wednesday 09.02.2022 at 22:00 and until end of activity on Thursday 10.02.2022 at 24:00:

*On Wednesday 09.02.2022 from 22:00 and until end of operations the stations of Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central, Tel-Aviv HaShalom and Tel-Aviv University stations will be closed and there will be neither boarding nor alighting; alternative bus services will operate between the closed stations.

*On Thursday 10.02.2022 between 05:00 and 22:00 the Tel-Aviv stations will be open but on some of the lines passengers will need to change trains; alternative bus services will operate between the Tel-Aviv and Herzliya stations.

*Trains on the A1 line will run between Jerusalem Navon and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations only and will not reach other Tel-Aviv and Herzliya stations; passengers to/from destinations north of Tel-Aviv will change trains at Herzliya.

*Trains between Be'er Sheva and Nahariya will provide a bypass Tel-Aviv service; passengers to/from destinations north of Tel-Aviv will change trains at Herzliya and Lod.

*Train services between Modi'in and Nahariya will operate split: between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations, and between Nahariya and Herzliya stations; trains will not call at other Tel-Aviv stations; passengers to/from destinations north of Tel-Aviv will change trains at Herzliya.

*Train services between Rehovot and Binyamina will operate split: between Rehovot and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations, and between Binyamina and Herzliya stations; trains will not call at other Tel-Aviv stations; passengers from Rehovot to/from Tel-Aviv stations will change trains at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station; passengers from Binyamina to/from Tel-Aviv stations, will change trains at Herzliya.

*Train services between Be'er Sheva and Carmiel will operate split: between Be'er Sheva and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations, and between Carmiel and Herzliya stations; trains will not call at other Tel-Aviv stations; passengers from Be'er Sheva to/from destinations of Tel-Aviv stations will change trains at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station; passengers from Carmiel to/from destinations of Tel-Aviv stations will change trains at Herzliya.

*Train services between Ashkelon, Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan and Herzliya will operate split: between Ashkelon, Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations, and between Herzliya and B'nei-Brak stations; trains will not call at other Tel-Aviv stations.

*Trains between Be'er Sheva and Netanya and between Beit-Shemesh and Netanya will operate regularly, and will call at all intermediate stations including those of Tel-Aviv.

*On Thursday 10.02.2022 from 22:00 on the Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central, Tel-Aviv HaShalom and Tel-Aviv University stations will be closed. Traffic will resume on Friday 11.02.2022 at about 05:00.

(ix). MORE ON THE SIEMENS UNITS

In 'Eisenbahn Kurier' 01/2022 p.19 is a comment on a news item in the previous issue, on Israeli emus being noted in the carriage yard at Braunschweig: "Unit 617 (6171/6172) is the 23rd Desiro HC set built for Israel. Unit 618 (6181/6182) is the 24th constructed and therefore the last one of Lot 1. It is



• Siemens units stored awaiting entry to service. (Steve Sattler)

also a six-car set. For logistic reasons the individual carriages are brought in pairs to Braunschweig and are here assembled into sets by Rail Adventure to be brought to the port for shipping. The first units reached Israel in December 2020 and by mid-November 2021 thirteen units had been delivered and two more were on their way by ship.

The Desiro HC units for Israel are numbered 401-406 (six trains) and the six-car sets 601-618 (eighteen trains) The four-digit number at the unit ends result from the National Vehicle Registry (NVR) number: i.e. Unit 401 has the number 4011 (94 95 0004 011-6 IL-IR) and 4012 (94 95 0004 012-4 IL-IR.)"

(x). CARMIEL LINE SERVICES RESTORED.

From a press release of 16.02.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

From Wednesday 17.02.2022 onwards train services on the Galilee line between Carmiel and Ahi'hud will resume, through all active service hours.

(xi). TEL AVIV MARATHON EXTRA SERVICES.

The railways prepared strengthened services due to the Tel-Aviv Marathon Race on Friday 25.02.2022: It was announced:

"As an integral part of the preparations the railways will cancel the coast line electrification works being performed each Friday, in order to enable the race participants to arrive safely and in comfort at the starting line near the Tel-Aviv University railway station and get back at the end of the event.

The stations will be open longer and will open at 04:30 approximately; the Friday timetable will be increased by more trains to more destinations calling at most intermediate stations between Tel-Aviv and Haifa; there will be additional stewardesses, cashiers, security persons and managers present.

Details of additional services:

*The Haifa Central the 8 - Tel-Aviv HaHagana service will operate between 04:30 and 13:30 approximately at a frequency of 1 train/hour each direction; trains will call at: Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel, Binyamina, Hadera West, Netanya, Beit-Yehoshua, Herzliya and all Tel-Aviv stations.

*A special additional train will depart from Herzliya at about 04:50 and will call at: Ra'anana West, Kfar-Sava Nordau, Rosh-HaAyin North, Petach-Tikva Sgula, Petach Tikva Kiryat-Arie, B'nei-Brak, all Tel-Aviv stations, Holon Junction, Holon Wolfson, Bat-Yam Yoseftal, Bat-Yam Komemiyut, Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan, Yavne West, Ashdod Ad-Halom, terminating at Ashkelon.

*A special additional train will depart from Herzliya at 13:12 and call at: Ra'anana West, Kfar-Sava Nordau, Rosh-HaAyin North, Petach-Tikva Sgula, Petach-Tikva Kiryat-Arie, B'nei-Brak, all Tel-Aviv stations, Holon Junction, Holon Wolfson, Bat-Yam Yoseftal, Bat-Yam Komemiyut, Rishon Le-Zion Moshe Dayan, Yavne West, Ashdod Ad-Halom, terminating at Ashkelon.

(xii). LOD STATION WORKS CONTINUE.

From a press release of 17.02.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

As an integral part of the annual development programme, and due to further reduction in the number of passengers carried during the Omicron fifth wave, the railways' management has decided to perform works at Lod station earlier than planned with the intention of increasing capacity, which in the short term will enable closing the old platform and providing services from a new upgraded platform with canopies; Later, trains from/to the Eastern Line to Hadera East currently under construction will also use the platform.

As a result, some tracks at Lod area will be closed and the following temporary changes on train traffic to Beer-Sheva, Beit-Shemesh and the south will take place on Wednesday 23.02.2022 and Thursday 24.02.2022:

*Beit-Shemesh station will be closed.

*Trains on the Nahariya - Beer-Sheva line will operate between Nahariya and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations only.

*The stations of Kiryat-Malachi/Yoav, Mazkeret-Batya and Ramla will operate at off-peak traffic hours only and neither in morning nor evening.

*The service frequency will be reduced at the stations of: Beer-Sheva, Kiryat-Gat and Lehavim/Rahat and departures of some trains will be changed.

Traffic will resume on Friday 25.02.2022 at about 04:30.



• Aerial views of new Ashkelon depot.

(xiii). FURTHER SERVICE RESTORATIONS.

From a press release of 22.02.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"From tomorrow, Wednesday 23.02.2022, service frequency will be improved and activity hours extended at the stations of Be'er-Sheva, Ofakim, Netivot and Sderot, thanks to the reduced Covid19 epidemic:

*The first between Ashkelon and Be'er-Sheva (through Ofakim, Netivot and Sderot) will depart from Be'er-Sheva at 04:35.

*The first between Be'er-Sheva and Ashkelon (through Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim) will depart from Ashkelon at 05:20.

*The last between Ashkelon and Be'er-Sheva (through Ofakim, Netivot and Sderot) will depart from Be'er-Sheva at 21:35.

*The last between Be'er-Sheva and Ashkelon (through Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim) will depart from Ashkelon at 22:52."

(xiv). FUTURE VISIONS.

From Steve Sattler: From 'Globes' [the economic newspaper] on 3. March - a full-page review of the future of trains and railways in Israel.

The Ministry of Transport has finally seen the light - that their 'small-efforts' to increase the building of tracks and the trains frequency/service over the next ten years will fall short of the demand.

The official plans in place will increase the tracks [by building new tracks and stations] by 47% over the next ten years. This is primarily the new North - South line just West of Kvish 6, the new tracks in the Galilee [heading towards Nazareth, Tiveria and then Kiryat Shmona] and the new, but short sections in the Northern Negev (to the IDF bases there).

(Continued on page 6)

TENDERS

A.

(i). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 12054: Providing services of Traffic Safety Officer for the railways' Road Vehicles and Responsibility for the Vehicles' Shuttle Services: (The railways own 500 cars + 55 forklifts and trailers used by 1,800 users.) The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 17.02.2022.

(ii). IR Tender No. 42020 for Five (Battery) Electric Shunting Locomotives. "ISR intends to issue a Purchase Order for up to five Shunters within one month from the Effective Date of the Agreement and up to the end of the initial period, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement. Additionally, during the Agreement Period and/or the Additional Period, ISR, at its sole discretion, shall have the option to purchase from the Supplier anywhere between one and any other possible amount of additional Shunters". These are for use at depots. The Technical Specification reads: "Base frame: welded self-supporting steel construction. The R.R.E.S shall be able to travel on road and rail. It will only be used within the depot confines and therefore will not be registered as a road vehicle.

The primary function of the road-rail vehicle will be shunting push-pull vehicles at depot indoor operation. It is not envisaged that the vehicle will be used on the mainline railway and it will not be used for any other purpose or require any special equipment. The R.R.E.S shall be suitable for one-man operation and shunter can be equipped with radio remote control. The R.R.E.S shall be designed with rechargeable high performance batteries to ensure emission-free and silent operation. The R.R.E.S should be provided with four electric motors including stepless control for the individually-driven wheel-rail guidance equipment sets.

The R.R.E.S shall be used for shunting :

- double deck push-pull coaches
- single deck push-pull coaches
- single deck (first generation) push-pull coaches
- Electric locomotives, EMU, DEMU
- Bo-Bo or EURO locomotive; JT (Bo-Bo, Co-Co) locomotive
- Bogies of all kinds of the rolling stock".

(iii). R.F.I.: Suggestions for supply, installation and maintenance of Charging Poles for Electric Vehicles at railway stations: Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.02.2022.

(iv). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No.22156: Kishon works of Haifa, Site 2, Package 5: Works include: depot for electric trains, locomotives, etc., roads, tracks, development, external systems, and an underground pedestrian passage. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.03.2022.

(v). SALE OF IC3 SETS.

Israel Railways Ltd. ("ISR") is requesting information regarding a sale of IC3 sets ("the sets"). Guiding Lines

1. This RFI shall not be considered as a tender.

(Continued from page 5)

But it is envisaged that the demands for rail-service and the actual use of the trains by residents will increase by over 500% over the same ten years. More and more residents see the advantage of using a train to get to work rather than by car; This is particularly true to and from Jerusalem, and into Tel Aviv) - with the constant road-congestion and the expenses of using a car.

So now the Ministry of Transport [but not yet the Finance Ministry] is building a super-plan to spend 65 Billion shekels [over about 20 years] - to double the tracks, build new stations, create new suburban lines and new connections between cities, and maybe even a line to Eilat (finally) - to keep the demand for rail-service from exploding.

There is no argument that the number of cars in Israel [almost 4 million, with about 200,000 new cars every year] cannot continue. Every day the nightmare of sitting in traffic for over two hours - (and it is getting worse) repeats itself for thousands of workers. So, proper and working solutions need to be found. Logic demands that Rail must be central to this whole complex

2. ISR is free to take whatever action it may consider upon receiving addresses from prospects following this RFI and will not be obliged to negotiate and/or sell and/or publish a tender regarding the sets.

3. ISR may use any information received following this RFI in any way it might find useful.

4. ISR may address one or more prospects that will submit information regarding the sets following this RFI.

5. This RFI shall not be considered as a declaration of any kind as to the technical situation of the sets.

Details about the sets

1. Nine sets are available for sale. An additional 26 sets are expected to become available for sale by the end of 2022 or in 2023.

2. The sets are operative and may be considered for further examination in its current situation – AS IS.

3. The sets are available for observation.

Prospects who are interested in the sets may address the undersigned via e-mail – aviads@rail.co.il until 15 March 2022

(vi). Tender No. 22153: Providing services of Maintenance for the Gilon Tunnel (on the line to Carmiel) and for the Ra'anana South Tunnel:

The maintenance services include: Electrical systems, low and high voltage, Lighting, Ventilation and air conditioning, ultra-low voltage, Service Sanitation and cleaning, Generators, Structures control, Fire Extinguishing, Firefighting, Communication, Optic fibres and Electromechanical systems. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 72 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 24.02.2022.

(vii). Tender No. 5213: Providing services of Supply, Assimilation, Training, Operation and Maintenance of Employee Evaluation, and internal organization of Review and Measurement: The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.03.2022.

(viii). Tender No. 42019: UTEX Transaction for Refurbished Armature of Traction motor D43. General Terms and Conditions. Israel Railways Ltd. in accordance with its obligations under the Israeli Mandatory Tender laws, its implementing regulations and the International Agreement on Government Procurement, wishes to obtain bids for: The supply of Refurbished Armatures of Traction motor D43 to be supplied in accordance with UTEX-Unit Transaction, all in accordance with and subject to the terms specified in these General Terms and Conditions and the accompanying Tender Documents.

1. Introduction: ISR's JT42BW & Euro4000 locomotive fleets are equipped with EMD's Traction motor type D43. The specification below specifies ISR technical requirements for purchasing overhauled armature of Traction motor D43 in accordance with UTEX Exchange.

2. General information: The technical specification defines the requirement pertaining to the supply of refurbished armatures assemblies for locomotive traction motors on the basis of Unit Exchange... The armatures will be for the use in traction motors model D43 and will be supplied ready for installation. The work and testing base on that spec will be performed according to the following standards : EN 1-60349 BS, IEC 61377-2, IEC 60034, EN50121, ANSI/SCTE 108 2012.

3. Specific requirements: The overhauling, rebuilding and testing of the armatures....."

(ix). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 22132: Building and assimilation of a Data System of Management, Documentation and Design of Engineering Projects in favour of upgrading work processes: The intention is to select one winning bidder. The contract is for 60 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.04.2022.

B. Winning Bidders:

(i). Galnor Construction and Development Ltd. won Tender No. 22023 - Building the Eastern entrance to Jerusalem Navon railway station at \$8.49M.

(ii). P.K. Electra Ltd. won Tender No. 1207 for maintenance of Generators; Synchro Schmerling remained as a waiting bidder.

LIGHT RAIL.



A. TEL AVIV

(i). From Steve Sattler on 31.01.22, a personal Overview (see below for more formal announcements which partially duplicate or confirm these views) : "The mega-project to build a modern, useful and extensive fast light-rail service for the Tel Aviv complex is moving along.

The Red line may run - as a trial service - by November of this year. This is the North-East to - South line.

The Green line - that is a true North to South line [but further inland to the more Westerly Red line : This tender has now been won by Alstom [French] and the Dan Bus & Electra companies ... and they will start their building within 12 months. The Green line will be 39 kms with 63 stations - with only 4 stations underground. Tel Aviv University & Herzliyya will be served by this line. It should begin to run by 2026. The main residential complex of Rishon-LeZion [in the South] will be the source of most of the passengers in the morning rush-hours.

Originally it was a given that Chinese companies would win the tenders - [like the Red Line] but American pressure to avoid the Chinese, and the bad vibes from Chinese workers complaining about ill-treatments and even physical abuse have convinced the Israeli ministries to avoid the Chinese this time.

The Purple line :- (that was originally called the blue line [not to be confused with the blue Yarkon river] was changed by the Tel Aviv mayor to purple) is a critical East to West service. This separate tender was won by Shafir [Israel] and CAF [Spanish] and they will also start within some 12 months. The Purple line [brings residents from Yahud and Kiryat Ono to the Tel Aviv centre, and serving Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan will be 27 kms long with 45 stations - most over-ground.

The Israeli NSC has frequently warned ministers that the Chinese 'business' invasion into Israel [over the last generation] has serious security issues and thus Israel - which has a strong desire to be friendly with China, Russia and the USA (all at the same time) - is this time sending a message to China that there is a practical limit as to how much China can 'look' into Israel.

A recent document from the US - NSC has spotlighted the massive Israeli military and cyber-warfare equipment(s), units and software that Israel is selling to India, Taiwan and Singapore. China knows that her immediate neighbours have advanced Israeli [and well-tested] military equipment. Another issue was that the main Chinese company that would have won the Green line tender was CRCC [a railway construction company] and this company is on a Biden black-list; in addition the World Bank [2019] sanctioned this company for fraud recently.

The Chinese CECC company which is building the RED LINE is a sub-company of the CRCC. Although the original Chinese tender for this line was low, the constant upgrades of the costs by the Chinese has 'destroyed' the original budget and raised 'anger', both in the municipality and in the Ministry.

Many experts have criticized the original planning of this Gush Dan metro complex as built from the wrong focus. They suggest that the Purple line should have been built first, then the Green line and last the Red line. Most of Tel Aviv's 'motor' problems are from the EAST and not from the South."

(ii). NTA Tender No. 066/2022: Providing Placement Services of professional and senior employees including by Headhunting: NTA intends to select up to 3 winning bidders. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 21.03.2022.

(iii). NTA Tender No.064/2022: Providing control services on the Red Line operation and maintenance; NTA intends to select up to 1 winning bidder. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 14.03.2022.

(iv). NTA Tender No.124/2022: Providing services of Management, Operation, Maintenance, Cleaning, Call Service Centre, Receptionists and Office Systems at NTA head office at Holon: NTA intends to select one winning bidder only. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.04.2022.

(v). PURPLE LINE CONTRACT.

On 01.01.22 it was announced: "NTA has awarded a €1.015Bn contract to a consortium of CAF and construction firm Shapir to construct and equip the 27km Purple light rail line in Tel Aviv, which is expected to be fully operational by 2027. The contract consists of the design, construction, financing and maintenance of the line for 25 years. The new line will have 45 stations as well as a depot for fleet maintenance. The contract also includes the construction of 98 low-floor five-section 35m-long Urbos LRVs, with an option for a further 32 LRVs in the future.

The new line will run from Complex 2000, in the centre of Tel Aviv adjacent to the Arolozorov railway station, to the eastern part of the city centre where it will split into two branches, with one running north to the Bar-Ilan University area, and the other east to the neighbouring city of Yehud-Monoson.

The CAF portion of the contract is worth €525M and consists of the design and manufacture of the LRVs, the supply of signalling, energy and communication systems and project integration. CAF will also have a 50% stake in the special purpose vehicle (SPV) company that will manage the line's maintenance."

(vi). GREEN LINE CONTRACT.

From 'I.R.J.' 07.02.2022: "Metropolitan Mass Transit Systems (NTA) has selected a consortium of Alstom, bus operator Dan Transportation and Israeli infrastructure company Electra to design, construct, maintain and finance the Green Line light rail line in Tel Aviv.

The 39km line will have 63 stations, of which four will be underground. The line is due to open in 2027, and will run from north to south, connecting Holon and Rishon Lezion with the centre of Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University, the industrial and business area in western Herzliya and the business area in Kiryat Atidim.



• Purple line tram. (Photo from I.R.J.)

The public-private partnership (PPP) contract follows a similar award for CAF and construction firm Shapir for the €1.015Bn, 27km Purple Line contract. The line will be fully operational in 2027.

The two lines are planned to connect with the 24km Red Line, which is due to begin commercial operation at the end of 2022."

(vii). KNESSET LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS FOR METRO LINES.

On 15.02.2022 : "Another stage in the great transportation revolution in Israel is underway. The Metro Law promoted by the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance was approved today (Tuesday) by the Knesset's National Infrastructure Projects Committee in preparation for its transfer to the Knesset for a second and third reading. The project, together with the light rail network currently being located in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, is expected to fundamentally change the transportation reality in Gush Dan.

The Metro Law approved today by the Committee is expected to expedite the implementation of the national project and remove various barriers that could delay the project, or cost it more. The law gives the enterprise priority over regulatory bodies such as electricity, water, etc. It also regulates the interfaces and labour relations with local authorities, infrastructure companies and various government ministries.

This is the largest infrastructure project to be carried out in Israel since its establishment. The project includes a network of three Metro lines with a total length of 150 kilometres of subways, 109 stations in 24 local authorities throughout Gush Dan. These lines are expected to serve about two million passengers a day.

According to the plan the first Metro line, which will be about 73 kilometres long, will run on the North-South axis, and will serve the cities of Raanana, Herzliya, Ramat Hasharon, Kfar Saba, Hod Hasharon, Tel Aviv, Bat Yam, Holon, Rishon-LeZion, Ness Ziona, Rehovot, Beer Yaakov, Ramla and Lod, as well as future development areas including IMI Hasharon, Galil Junction, Holon and Tzrifin.

The second Metro line will be 25 kilometres long and will travel on an East-West axis. The line will serve the cities of Rosh HaAyin, Petah Tikva, Ramat Gan, Givatayim and Tel Aviv, as well as future development areas, including the Sirkin area.

The third Metro line, which will be 32 kilometres long, will be a semi-annular line that will connect all the lines. The line will serve the cities of Bat Yam, Holon, Azor, Or Yehuda, Givat Shmuel, Petah Tikva, Tel Aviv, Ramat Hasharon and Herzliya, as well as future development areas including Galil Yam and western Ramat Hasharon, Tel Hashomer and Or Yehuda.

Minister of Transportation and Road Safety, MK Merav Michaeli said: "The Metro Law passed today by the committee is the legal infrastructure that will enable the establishment of the national Metro project which is the future of transportation in Gush Dan, and as such is a law of paramount importance. The law is exceptional and together with the professionals in the Ministry, headed by the Deputy CEO, the law has been improved and is now moving to the final legislative stage in the plenum."

This is how 'Metro Report Intl.' reported the item on 22.02.22: "Draft legislation paving the way for construction of the three proposed metro lines in Tel Aviv was approved by the Knesset's National Infrastructure Projects Committee on February 15, clearing the way for the bill to go forward for its second and third readings in parliament.

According to Minister of Transport & Road Safety Merav Michaeli, the bill 'sets out the legal framework that will enable the development of the metro project, which is the future of transport in Gush Dan'.

The bill aims to expedite construction by removing a number of impediments that might otherwise cause delays or increase costs. Among other things, it would give the metro precedence over utilities and various other regulatory bodies, and regulate interfaces and relationships with local authorities, infrastructure companies and government ministries.

The Metro project is currently being overseen by NTA Metropolitan Mass Transportation System, the state-owned entity charged with delivering the Tel Aviv light rail network. NTA has reportedly been criticised by the ministry for failing to meet construction deadlines for the Light Rail project, which was due in part to delays in negotiations with the utility companies and local municipalities. In December, the promoter appointed the Metav consortium of Egis and Gadish Group to act as chief consultant for development of the Metro, assisted by HDR. The consortium is expected to take charge of project management and implementation until the start of commercial operations."

(viii). Steve Sattler writes: "The two million residents [and tourists] of this corner of Israel (and all the Arab-Palestinian workers) will now have to learn to cross the rails, look for trams, be careful and get used to living in a European city. We know that in Jerusalem within one year a young lady was killed by a tram when she thought that crossing between two carriages was the right thing to do. It will [obviously] happen in Gush Dan - over the next few years. The Israeli public will need to learn the new reality of how to deal with a tram."

The biggest project that Israel is running is the mega-metro in Gush Dan. The Knesset that had to pass the Gush-Dan plans and finance [Transport] law over 2021 – but has still not done so. Other items were on the agenda and they got a higher priority. The Knesset is now [10.03] on their Spring break - so the Summer session may be the earliest that this law can be passed. Meanwhile 12 potential companies are waiting in line to bid on the tender to run the system of light-rail and the suburban metro lines.

The final project will be some 40 Kms North - South and 15 Kms from the coast to the East. This will be 600 sq kms of new, efficient and 'cheap' rail transport - that is people-friendly. The Tel Aviv component [24.5 sq kms] is only 7 Kms by 3.5 Kms, or only 4 % of the whole project. The Red line light-rail may - in fact - be able to function by November of 2022.

The current Minister of Transport is a 'light-weight' and she doesn't have the charisma or 'push' to shove this essential project through the Knesset; and meanwhile the daily nightmare of car-congestion into all the big cities is horrible and painful. It can take some 2 hours each day to enter Tel Aviv [by car] in the Morning and about 90 min to leave in the evening. Hundreds of workers leave their suburbs at 5am every day - to beat the rush."

(ix). NTA Tender No. 101/2022: Providing services of Smart Card Ticketing system both for LRV and METRO projects: The intention is to select 1 winning bidder. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 02.05.2022.

B. JERUSALEM.

(i). TRACKWORKS.

Kfir, the operators of the Jerusalem Red Line are performing trackworks between the Central Bus Station and Damascus Gate from 20th. January for about a month. A replacement bus service line 79 connects the two during this time.

(ii). PURPLE LINE PLANS.

"The Regional Planning Committee has approved a new tram line for Jerusalem. This PURPLE LINE - {HaKav HaSegol} will run from the terminus of the Green & Blue lines through 4 suburbs [8 stations] ...Kiryat HaYovel, Pat, Malcha and some of the Katamonim to the Hadassah Hospital complex. [A major regional hospital]. The new line will be 4.6 kms long. This Purple line will also cross the Red line. The terrain is very hilly and so both bridges and possibly a long tunnel will be involved. This new line will be an East to West line for the Southern part of Jerusalem. The national budget will provide 13 Billion Shekels for the Blue & Green lines in Jerusalem and this will now also include this Purple line. At present the Hadassah hospital only has two [narrow] roads leading to it - one from Jerusalem, and one from the North-West. They are inadequate. Over 35,000 people visit this hospital every day."

In 'Metro Report Intl.' 23.02.2022: "The Regional Planning Committee has approved the proposed route for the Purple Line tramway in Jerusalem. The 14 km line with 19 stops is intended to form an east-west corridor across the southern part of the city. The first stage would start from an interchange with the Blue Line at Talpiot and run west for 4.6 km to Malcha, where the depot is to be located, serving eight stops. The route would then continue via Kiryat

HaYovel to the Hadassah-Ein Kerem hospital in the west, where it would share a terminus with an extension of the Red Line currently under construction. Given the hilly topography of the area, the line is expected to require two major tunnels, as well as a number of bridges. The Purple Line is due to be funded from the budget of 13Bn shekels which the national government has already allocated for construction of the Green and Blue lines. Five consortia were shortlisted in August 2021 to tender for a 25-year PPP concession to build, operate and maintain the Purple and Blue lines totalling 31 route-km with 53 stops and a combined fleet of 61 trams."

Steve Sattler's comment: "A major issue is the new central light-rail depot and maintenance facility currently being built near the High-Court - Cinema City [The Government centre of Jerusalem] - underground - and at 34 metres under the street level. This enormous rectangular hole is 60 metres by 240 metres. It will have 6 mechanical elevators to bring the 'trams' up to street level to join the Green line rail system. It will have three levels of storage for trams and maintenance.

Above this 'hole' will be a 2 metre-thick concrete platform for a big office-building and shops. Thus, the space [that in central Jerusalem is at a premium] will not be wasted.

The new re-designed main entrance into Jerusalem from the West will have 34 main and high office and residential buildings to create a complex of modern structures that will change the face of Jerusalem."

C. THE HAIFA – NAZARETH TRAM/TRAIN PROJECT

From a press release of 07.02.2022 by Israel Roads Ltd.:

"The company has unveiled today the names of the groups approved by the Tenders' Commission to participate in the concessionaire tendering of financing, design, building, and operating the Haifa-Nazareth tram/train line (called "Nofit" – "scenic" in Hebrew) at an estimated cost of \$0.94 to \$1.25 Billion (NIS 3 to 4 Billion):

Group No.1: Dan Bus of Israel, CREC-China, Pesa-Poland, Shenyang-China, and ATM-Italy.

Group No.2: Shapir-Israel, CAF-Spain, Keren Noy-Israel.

Group No.3: Minrav-Israel, Electra-Israel, Alstom-France, Allied-Israel.

Group No.4: Comsa-Spain, Globalvia-Spain, JSC Transmashholding-Russia, Lesico-Israel.

Group No.5: Meir-Israel, Afkon-Israel, CRRC & CRCC-China.

Group No.6: Shikun uBinui-Israel, Egged Bus-Israel, Stadler-Switzerland, Hitachi-Japan, Texmaco-India, Downer-Australia.

Both the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and Israel Roads Ltd. will publish the winning concessionaire within few weeks. The winning bidder will operate the line for 25 years.

In parallel, Israel Roads Ltd. are promoting works along the alignment at several points: the depot at the Kiryat-Ata industrial zone, the station at the Government Offices complex at Har Yona (Yona mountain) in Upper Nazareth (now called the Galilee panorama, not to be mixed with the city of Nazareth), and the station at Merkazit HaMifratz as an integral part of this transportation centre at Haifa.

Recently Israel Roads Ltd. published two Design & Build tenders for building of bridges and tunnels along the alignment and an additional tender is to be published soon; the three tenders are worth \$256 Million (NIS 1 Bn).

Both Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mrs. Merav Michaeli and Israel Roads Ltd. CEO Mr. Dan Schoenbach mentioned the importance of the project for northern Israel and the satisfaction from the participation of leading international and local companies in the tender."



• HaMifratz Station Interchange – a computer-generated image showing the line to Nahariyya and the Nazareth Light Rail in foreground, the Valley line in right background.



The Hotze Yisrael Company is starting their work on the new light-rail from Haifa to Nazareth. This line, called NOFIT [a View] is the new rail link to the Haifa complex from the East of the Gallil. The mother company has chosen ten sub-contractors to clear the alignment, build support walls, prepare the sub-soil for the rails and renew any structures in the way. They will start their work on the West end at Kiryat Ata and work to the East.

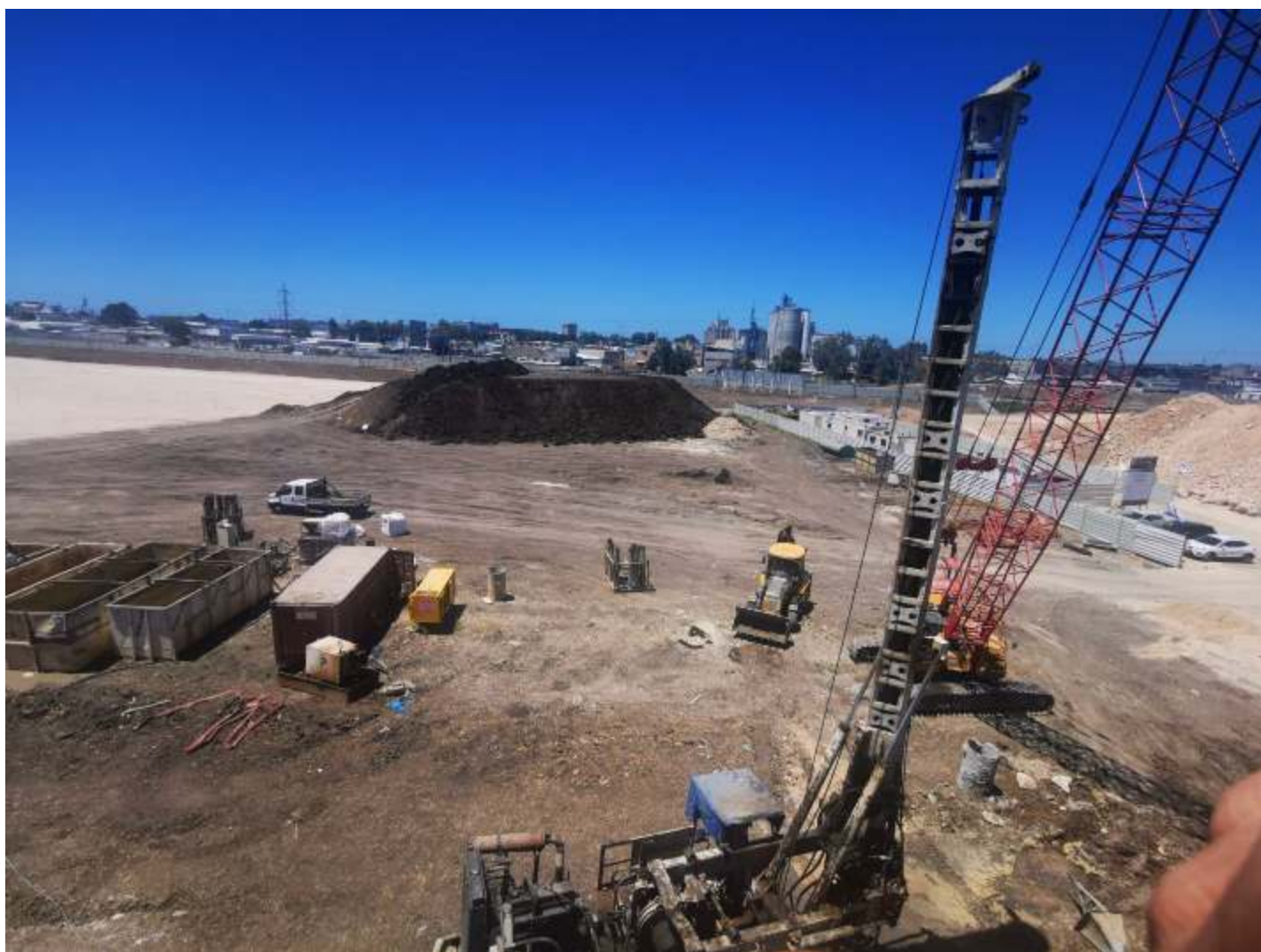
• Purple Line route.



- *Computer-generated image of the new line.*



- *Works at the depot at Kiryat-Ata industrial zone (684 KB), and at Yona mountain (295 KB)*



• Haifa-Nazareth. Work underway at the site of the proposed depot at Kiryat Ata.

136.07.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

(i). AUTOMATED METRO FOR IZMIR UNIVERSITY

From 'R.G.I.' 18.01.22. "Gulermak Heavy Industries has been awarded a contract to build a 13.5 km driverless underground metro line in Izmir, with construction scheduled to begin on February 14. To be known as the Buca Line, it will serve 11 stations, linking the existing Ucyol metro station in the city centre on the Bornova – Fahrettin Altay light metro line with Tinaztepe Kampusu, a station that will be built to serve the Tinaztepe campus of Dokuz Eylul university. There will also be an interchange with the Izban suburban rail network at Sirinyer.

In addition to the passenger running tunnels a further 6 km of access tracks and stabling sidings will be built, primarily to serve the line's 80,000 sq.m. maintenance depot. The Buca Line will be fully automated and is expected to cut journey times between the campus in Buca and the city centre from 90 min currently by road to just 30 min.

The €652M project is being funded with €490M of external financing from four international development banks, including a loan of €125M from EBRD under its Green City Framework 2 scheme, €125M from French development agency AFD, another €125M from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and €115M from the Black Sea Trade & Development Bank."

(ii). KONYA – KARAMAN HIGH-SPEED LINE OPENS.

From 'I.R.J.' 18.01.2022. (by David Burroughs). "Turkish President Mr Recep Erdogan opened the 102km Konya – Karaman high-speed line at a ceremony in Konya on January 8, where he was accompanied by minister of transport and infrastructure, Mr Adil Karaismailoglu, and other ministers, deputies and officials.

The freight and passenger line cost Lira 1.39Bn (\$US 102.4M) and is expected to save the Turkish economy Lira 63M a year through saved time and energy and reduced emissions. The line reduces Konya – Karaman journey times from 1h 20min to 40 minutes, and Ankara – Konya – Karaman journey times from 3h 10min to 2h 40min. The planned extension to Adana is expected to reduce Konya – Karaman – Adana journey times to 2h 20min.

"Today, we are starting a new era by opening the Konya – Karaman high-speed train line," Erdogan said. "This step will be followed by Karaman – Ulukisla, then Mersin, Adana, Osmaniye and Gaziantep. When we add the Ankara – Sivas line, on which trial services have started, all four parts of our country will be accessible by fast or high-speed train from Konya."

Using the speech to highlight the role Turkey is looking to play in connecting Asia and Europe by rail, Erdogan said the length of the Turkish network has increased from 10,959km to 13,222km in recent years, including 1,213km of high-speed lines. He also pointed to the construction of the Marmaray line under the Strait of Istanbul as another notable achievement.

"The problems experienced in sea and air freight transport during the pandemic highlighted the railways as a serious alternative," he said. "With these investments, we have completed the most critical stages in making our country ready for passenger and rail freight. We are determined to make Turkey a central country in rail, like many other fields, by rapidly completing our current investments. The Konya – Karaman high-speed line will be an important part of the southern axis of this great project."

Construction of the 135km Karaman – Uluk?sla section is currently 89% complete. This includes two tunnels, twelve bridges, forty-four under and overpasses and 141 culverts. The signalling system is currently in the design phase, while a tender for the electrification of the line is being prepared. The section will reduce Karaman – Ulukisla journey times from 3h 40min to 1h 35min."

'R.G.I.' 20.01.22 adds: "The double-tracked route mostly follows the alignment of the existing railway, but several cut-offs and diversions have been built to reduce the distance between the two cities; journey times have been cut from 1h 20min to 40min. It is the first stage of the planned upgrading of the corridor from Konya to Adana for high-speed passenger and freight services."

Faster to Kayseri

Meanwhile, a consortium of Dogus, Cekler and Ozkar has been selected to rebuild the Yerkey – Kayseri line for high speed services within a budget of €1.1Bn. Construction is expected to start later this year and will involve realigning the existing conventional line to allow services to run at 250 km/h, while reducing the route length from 170 km to 142 km by boring nine new tunnels, the longest of which will be 3.28 km. As part of the work, 18 bridges, 20 overpasses, 116 underpasses and 21 viaducts will be built.

High-speed services from the capital to Kayseri will share the Ankara – Sivas high speed corridor as far as Yerkey. Once the route from there to Kayseri has been rebuilt, journey times to and from Ankara will fall from 7h to 2h."

(iii). EUROPEAN FREIGHT.

From 'R.G.I.' 14.02.22: "Logistics company Cobantur Boltas introduced a weekly intermodal train between München and Halkali near Istanbul on January 21, with DB Cargo providing traction on behalf of Kombiverkehr. 'We have been running a train across the Alps connecting with the ferry at Trieste for years, and we will continue to do so', said Iskender Cobanoglu, Managing Director of Cobantur Boltas. 'Customers now can choose which of the two routes is better for them.' "



• . The new freight terminal at Kars.

(iv). FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, INFLATION, EXCHANGE RATES HIT TURKISH PROJECTS.

From 'R.G.I.' February 2022, also 'Metro Report Intl.' 21.02: "The past decade has seen a veritable revolution in the Turkish transport sector, both through the electrification, upgrading and expansion of the country's main line railway and the rapid growth of urban and suburban networks.

Existing metro, tram and light rail systems in the principal cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir have been expanded significantly. Meanwhile, a dozen other cities have either developed or are planning to develop their own urban rail corridors, in order to reduce traffic congestion, cut commuting times and improve air quality.

However, the speed with which new projects can be taken forward is currently in doubt following a rapid devaluation in the value of the Turkish lira. This poses a serious problem for infrastructure projects, which often rely on euro-denominated commercial credit or use imported equipment and expertise priced in Euros. Even locally-produced equipment and systems can often contain imported components priced in Euros.

As of January 10, the Lira had fallen by 37% since September, and by 42% since the start of 2021. This creates a huge hurdle for promoters and project managers wrestling with ongoing procurements.

Industry insiders attending the ninth Eurasiarail trade show in Istanbul in November last year told 'Railway Gazette International' that many project promoters and contractors would face major challenges, both with the progressing of existing projects and with finalising future supply contracts. Several reported that it would be hard to meet existing contracted obligations without incurring significant losses. None was optimistic about the immediate future, pointing out that with both government and municipal costs spiralling, there was a likelihood that upcoming urban and suburban rail projects could be put on hold, at least until the Lira stabilises.

By contrast, a smaller set of companies is understood to be working on Euro-denominated contracts, with the materials priced in that currency, meaning that they stand to gain from the Lira devaluation. With their income fixed in hard currency, not only are these suppliers not impacted by the challenge of paying for imported components and raw materials, but they also stand to gain from a comparative reduction in labour and overhead costs.

Faced with the need to shore up its sinking popularity, the government was slow to implement energy price increases, so retail gas and power costs remain well below those in Europe. And with trade unions facing legal obstacles to organised industrial action and likely police intervention against wildcat strikes, the pressure to hike wages to reflect the Lira collapse remains low.

Unforeseen consequences

One crumb of comfort for project promoters is that volatility in the money markets is far from unprecedented. As recently as 2018, a 72% fall in the Lira over the first eight months of that year coupled with a ballooning current-account deficit prompted the national government to shelve a long list of rail projects in cities where the ruling party was in control of the local municipality. The hiatus affected schemes that were planned but had not started, as well as those out to tender for which the final funding had not been disbursed. It even impacted on some projects for which contracts had already been let and work was underway on site, such as the Cibali – Alibeykoy tram line along the Golden Horn in Istanbul.

But these delays to long-awaited metro and light rail projects did not play well in Turkey's local elections in 2019, when voters were keen to see transport investment delivered amid growing concern about crippling road congestion and severe air pollution. As a result, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling AK party lost control of 11 cities to the main opposition, including three of the five biggest conurbations — Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya.

The incoming administrations were subsequently able to take advantage of improved economic conditions to restart the stalled projects, further boosting their popularity. This alarmed the national government, as there is a general election looming

in 2023, which is also the centenary of the foundation of the modern Turkish republic.

In response, the government has sought to block municipal efforts to take control of their own transport investment, despite AKP's successful record of working with city governments and national infrastructure manager TCDD to take forward several flagship rail links. These have included Ankaray metro in the capital, the Izban suburban corridors in Izmir, the cross-Bosphorus Marmaray link in Istanbul and the Gaziray suburban network in Gaziantep. Over the past two years, the focus has shifted from co-operation to opposition, especially when the cities in question are not led by AKP politicians.

Ankara's rationale was simple: by funding key projects linking important locations such as airports, city centres and main hospitals, the government, rather than the opposition, would gain popularity. And the eventual opening of a new line by President Erdogan would provide a useful platform for him to campaign ahead of the 2023 elections.

As a result of this change of approach, Transport Minister Adil Karaismailoglu reported on January 4 that his ministry was currently funding the development of 159.2km of new urban rail routes in seven cities.

In Istanbul this includes both the Gayrettepe and Halkali sections of the express Metro Line M11 serving Istanbul's new main airport; Line M10 and the extension of Line M4, both of which will serve the city's second airport, Sabiha Gökçen, located near Pendik on the Asian side of the city; the two M3 Metro extensions linking the Bakirkoy ferry terminal with Kirazli and Basaksehir to Kayasehir; as well as the Atakoy – Bahariye extension to Line M9. In addition, the ministry also plans to develop the still-to-be-numbered Altunizade – Camlica metro line and the Kazlıcesme – Sirkeci tramway.

In Ankara, the ministry has taken over the planning of a metro line to serve the city's Esenboga airport, and the extension of the existing Line M4 to the central Kizilay interchange via the capital's new high speed station at Ankara Central, as well as three other schemes which have yet to be formally launched.

Central government is also funding the four station Emek – City Hospital suburban line in Bursa, the 14-stop Anafartalar – City Hospital tram line in Kayseri, an 11-station coastal metro in Gebze, and a tram line in Kocaeli which will also serve that city's main medical hub. In Konya, the government is managing plans for the Necmetin Erbakan orbital metro line and, alongside TCDD, the Konyaray suburban corridor. The ministry has also pledged to complete the Gaziray suburban rail corridor in the southeastern city of Gaziantep, which would have 16 stations.

In addition to the ministry seizing control of key projects, opposition-held city authorities also found they had problems sourcing funding for the projects they still managed. Refused loans by state banks to restart work on extensions to its Metro lines M4, M5 and M7, Istanbul municipal authority IBB issued its own US\$580M Eurobond. Izmir is pursuing a similar model to fund its Buca Line automated metro.

While external financing of this kind and in the form of loan support from regional development banks has helped some city administrations to overcome limitations on the type of funding available to them, it is not a risk-free approach. Municipal revenues come priced almost entirely in Liras, while external financing and the interest payments incurred are typically denominated in foreign currencies.

While there is no suggestion that cities might default on any of these loans, the devaluation of the Lira has put extra pressure on municipal finances and over the longer term, there is a risk that less money will be available for rail projects.

The same problem also faces the ministry. Ankara's plan for a devalued Lira to boost economic growth on the back of increased exports, leading eventually to a currency stabilisation and increased tax revenue, may backfire. Any repeat of the current account deficit crisis of 2018 would be likely to lead to a similar cycle of project cancellations and postponements. There are already signs that a hiatus is looming: a Transport Ministry budget statement for 2022 issued on January 18 outlined various transport investment allocations for the coming year; Mayor of Adana Zeydan Karalar stated that city officials were disappointed that an extension of its 13.5 km light metro line, opened in 2009, was not included. 'Adana traffic cannot be solved without the metro. We

expected our presidency to approve this. We do not know why it was not approved', he said. Adana is among the opposition-controlled city authorities.

For the time being at least, both Ankara and the various opposition municipalities appear to be focused on getting as many rail schemes as possible completed by the end of 2023, in the hope that combining major infrastructure openings with the national centenary will play well in the presidential elections scheduled for June.

However, the outlook for the post-2023 period appears to be much less certain, despite the plethora of urban and suburban rail investment plans that are already on the drawing board for cities across the country. It certainly seems that a period of greater macroeconomic stability will be essential if these ambitions are to come to fruition."

B. SAUDI ARABIA

(i). HITACHI TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE METRO AT RIYADH UNIVERSITY.

(From 'I.R.J.' 20.01.2022, by Richard Clinnick)

"The Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman University [For Women Only] has awarded Hitachi a €72.5M contract to operate and maintain the autonomous metro system within its campus in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for the next three years.

The rail network consists of four elevated lines spanning 11.5km, connecting 14 stations. The 22 two-car 60km/h autonomous metro trains each have a capacity for 110 passengers. Hitachi will operate the whole system as well as maintain the trains and infrastructure, including the stations, mechanical and electrical systems, the depot and viaduct. An Ansaldo STS-led consortium built the metro, which opened in August 2012 and it is based on similar technology used in Copenhagen, Brescia, Milan Line 5 and Honolulu. Hitachi acquired Ansaldo STS and AnsaldoBreda, which supplied the trains, in 2015. The company oversaw construction of the railway in 2011 and has operated and maintained it since March 2018."

'Metro Report Intl.' 20.02.22 adds the following: "The light metro was designed and built by consortium of Ansaldo STS and AnsaldoBreda under a €218M contract awarded in 2009. The technology is similar to that which is used on the København metro, but the cars have enhanced air-conditioning and protection against dust. Both suppliers were subsequently acquired by Hitachi Rail, which has operated and maintained the network since March 2018. The award of a new operating contract 'is an important further milestone that consolidates our presence in the Middle East, one of the Operation, Service & Maintenance Division target markets', said Edoardo La Ficara, the division's Executive Officer, on January 19."

(ii). SAUDI ARABIA TOUR REPORT.

In 'Eisenbahn Kurier' 2/022 pp.74-79 appeared an article by Oliver Heckmann entitled "Cargo, Containers and Camels: Railway Adventure in Saudi-Arabia."

From this: "In 2019 the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia opened up for tourists but thanks to the Corona pandemic soon closed its borders again. In September



• A picture no Man may see at present, the Metro in the Women's University at Riyadh. There is strict segregation of the se-oops, genders....

2021 we received information that tourist visas were being issued again. The chance had to be used! Would photography be permitted?

Some 34M people live in Saudi Arabia but the country covers an area six times as great as Germany. Especially interesting for railway enthusiasts is that there is now a rail network of three separate and quite new lines, with a total length of 5,500km. Since we were particularly interested in freight traffic we decided to make Dammam on the Persian Gulf our starting point. Lufthansa flies there almost daily from Frankfurt and various car hire firms are also present..... Once one has fulfilled all the Corona entry conditions one can move freely around as a tourist, of course following the local standards of behaviour. There seemed to be a relatively thin presence of security personnel and police in public places; Here and there on the main roads there are checkpoints at which papers are checked. In every half-way substantial town hotels can be found, many also through internet portals....

The existing and planned railway network divides into three separate networks whose infrastructure and operations are from 2021 entirely under the control of the state Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR). The most famous and historic line of the country was of course the former Hedjaz Railway to Medina, but this is not in operation and so we did not investigate it further.

East Train Network.

The 'new' railway age in Saudi Arabia began in October 1951 with the opening of the ca. 550km line between Dammam on the Persian Gulf and the capital Riyadh. It was built by the world's largest oil company Saudi Aramco. In the 1980's operation was transferred to the State-owned railway company Saudi Railway Organisation (SRO); on 1st. April 2021 this was turned into the Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR). The line links the King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam and the city of Dammam via Abqaiq, Hofuf, Haradh and Al-Kharj with Riyadh. In 1985 SRO opened a shorter cut-off link between Hofuf and Riyadh, which is used solely for passenger traffic, while the longer southern route is now used only for freights. Between the junction station of Hofuf and Dammam there are two tracks but they are operated as two single tracks. Together with some connecting lines to the industrial area this so-called 'East Train Network' (ETN) comprises some 1,775km. Passenger services on the ETN are worked by ten six-car diesel multiple units trains built by CAF in Spain in 2022/12. These can reach 180km/h and carry the numbers 5001 to 5010. They work six train pairs daily between Dammam and Riyadh and a further one between Hofuf and Riyadh. Loco-hauled passenger trains now stand in only as reserves. In terms of freight traffic double-stack container wagons dominate between the harbour at Dammam and the Riyadh Dry Port (container terminal). Saudi Arabia counts therefore as one of the few countries in the world where double-stack containers are conveyed by rail. According to SAR around 350,000 containers are moved annually, In addition there are grain and cement transports. The trains are hauled by EMD Diesel locos of classes SDL38 (Numbers 2030-2035); SDL50 (Nos. 3500-3530); and GT46ACS (Nos. 4300-4316). Noteworthy are the large sand filters fitted to the locomotive roofs. Further EMD locos of other classes perform shunting duties in the yards and service connecting spurs.

According to our observations five freight trains run daily in each direction between Dammam and Riyadh to a fixed timetable. Train crossings with these rakes of some 70 wagons, forming trains a kilometre long, take place at passing loops with hand-worked points and can take up to 30 minutes. Travel time for freights between Dammam and Riyadh is about 12 hours.

The North Train Network.

The first section of this Network (NTN), currently some 2,750km long, was opened in 2011. Essentially this network serves to access the raw materials found in the North and centre of the country and links these regions with the industrial complex and port of Ras Al-Khair on the Persian Gulf. The SAR trains convey large quantities of phosphates and bauxite and in addition there are block trains with phosphoric acid and molten sulphur. The Network, signalled by ETCS Level 2, has not yet reached its full extent; recently the industrial centre of Jubail has been linked to the lines. Train lengths here can reach up

to 3km. For the trains, which can weigh up to 16,000tons, there are currently 61 EMD SD70ACS locos (Nos. 4000-4060), which were acquired between 2000 and 2016. Four locos are normally required per train – one hauling, one or two within the train and one at the end. There is a large depot for the locos and the approx. 2,0000 goods wagons at Nairyah at the eastern part of the network.

However the train are even less frequent than on the East-West line; we counted per day only one or two trains on the eastern section of the network. The trains were mostly broken at the station/depot at Nairyah before they are conveyed further to Ras Al-Khair for unloading or return northwards empty again.

This network also has a link to Riyadh. From here there are daily passenger trains to the cities of Quassim and Hail in the centre of the country. Currently SAR offers once a week an overnight link to Jauf in the North. 200km/h Diesel multiple units are used, also from the Spanish builder CAF. SAR does not operate passenger traffic on the line to Ras Al-Khair.

Haramain High-Speed Rail – the Western Network.

In the West of Saudi Arabia there has been since 2018 a 450km-long electrified high-speed passenger line between the cities of Medina and Mekkah, which are holy to Moslems, and linking also to Jeddah. It is worked by 35 Talgo350 electric multiple units that can reach 300km/h, mainly for the large number of pilgrims between the Holy Cities. Apparently a very dense service is offered during the Haj period. SAR claims this line has a capacity for 60M passengers per annum.

Vision 2030.

Saudi Arabia finds itself in a period of rapid economic and social change. With the 'Vision 2030' decree from the Royal House emphasis is put on diversifying the economy, away from dependence on oil and gas. The official term would be to get away from oil and gas dominance. Opening up the country to tourism is a part of this strategy."

To this one can add:



• CAF multiple unit for Saudi Arabian Railways. (From 'RailTech.Com' 07.02.2022.)

(iii). From 'RailTech.Com' 07.02.2022: (Thanks to Iain Scotchman): "Saudi Arabia plans to add 4,000 kilometres of rail to its existing network, investment minister Khalid al-Falih announced last month. The proposal would more than double the kingdom's existing network.

"New rail will criss-cross the Kingdom and add to the network we already have," Al-Falih was quoted as saying in January. Saudi Arabia has three major railway lines, including the 2,750-kilometre North-South line and the high-speed railway line between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Its existing network has a total length of more than 5,500 kilometres, according to the Saudi Railway Company.

The new network would add the kingdom's first east-west connections, including a line between the capitol of Riyadh and Mecca. The plans also call



• *Not a meccano train, but the Train to Mecca. (Photo 'Railway Gazette' 21.01.22).*

for a railway connections with the country's southeast, such as the port city of Jazan. Finally, a host of new feeder lines are slated for construction.

The timeline for the various projects remains unclear, although it is expected that a number of lines will be realised under the Vision 2030 programme announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016."

(iv). A WOMAN'S TOUCH.

This from Klaus Matzka on 17.02.2022:

"Saudi Arabia: 28,000 women apply for 30 train driver jobs. Online since today, 14:28. Just a few years ago, they weren't even allowed to drive their own cars - now more than 28,000 women in Saudi Arabia have applied to become train drivers for the Spanish rail company RENFE. It was the first time in the country's history that Saudi women had access to the profession, the company wrote in a statement on its website.

In total, RENFE advertised 30 positions for female train drivers. Women have only been allowed to drive alone since 2018. In recent years, the Saudi government under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has indeed expanded women's rights.

Nevertheless, they continue to be more severely restricted than in almost any other country. In addition, numerous activists for human and women's rights are in prison. Spain's Transport Minister Raquel Sanchez congratulated RENFE on the transfer of knowledge and the important "step toward more equal rights" for women.

The future female train drivers will drive high-speed trains between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The line was built by Spanish companies and RENFE is also involved in organizing the service, which started in 2018." (Source ORF.at/agencies.)"

A little later on 22.02.22 'I.R.J.' reported: More than 28,000 women have registered to complete the required training to fill 30 train driver spaces in Saudi Arabia, the first time the role has been opened to women in the country.



• *March 2020 Freight train passing oasis in desert near Ha'il.*

Successful applicants will drive high-speed trains between Mecca and Medina along the first high-speed line in the Middle East.

Spanish operator RENFE, which is conducting the training, says more than half of the applicants, who are aged between 22 and 30 years old, have passed an online aptitude test to determine their academic record and English ability. Those initially selected will undergo further tests and a personal interview, after which they will begin a paid training period of just under a year at the Spanish High-Speed Mecca Medina Consortium's facilities located within the line's operation centre. The training will begin in mid-March, and will consist of theoretical and practical classes given by RENFE staff.

The first drivers for the line were trained between 2013 and 2014 at Renfe's Professional Technical School of Driving and Operations in Madrid, Spain. This work was expanded following the signing of an agreement with the Saudi Railway Polytechnic (SRP) to provide theoretical training at its facilities in Qassim, Saudi Arabia. More than 80 local train drivers have now been trained by Renfe, and another 50 are currently undergoing training."

[Ed. Wonders whether this might be a useful source of more drivers for European railways which are suffering a recruitment shortage! Plus, an Etihad Railways video showed headscarved women controllers at the signalling centre.]



• *The UAE rail network will eventually form a key part of the Gulf Railway (Photo from 'I.R.J.' 6.12.2021)*

A later report in 'R.G.I.' 09.03.2022 stated: "After receiving 28,000 applications from women for 30 high-speed train driving vacancies, RENFE is about to begin training the successful candidates. According to the Spanish operator, the first trains to be driven by Saudi women should be running between Makkah and Madinah on the Haramain high-speed line by the end of this year.

The 30 successful candidates, who are aged between 22 and 30 years old, underwent a 'rigorous selection process' that enabled RENFE to whittle down the original number of applicants.

Subject to passing the mandatory occupational health examination, they will embark on the training programme, which will involve 1,200 hours of theoretical and practical teaching delivered by RENFE staff at the Haramain Operations Centre in Jeddah from March 13. The training programme is expected to last approximately a year."

C. AFGHANISTAN.

NEW LINE PROPOSED UZBEKISTAN – KABUL – PAKISTAN.

From 'I.R.J.' 02.02.2022. (By David Burroughs).

"Afghanistan's Taliban-led government has approved a rail link with Pakistan, which would run from Peshawar to Jalalabad and Kabul, along with a rail link with Uzbekistan. The lines were approved during a cabinet meeting on January 18, presided over by Acting Prime Minister, Mr Mohammad Hasan Akhund.

The cross-border lines were previously discussed during a meeting between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in December, a senior official working on the project told the media.

During the first phase of the project, Russia will conduct surveys and prepare feasibility studies. Each country is responsible for constructing the proposed line in its territory. The feasibility studies are due to be completed over the next three to four months.

"Pakistan, during the previous Afghan government, had decided to extend the railway track to Jalalabad but due to security reasons it was scrapped, but now as the situation has improved we would extend the track till Mazar-e-Sharif with the financial backing of donors," a senior official told 'The Express Tribune'.

Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan signed a roadmap for a \$US 4.8Bn, 573km line from Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent through Kabul to Peshawar in February 2021."

[Note: This will be an interesting concept for the gauge will need to be decided – Uzbekistan has 1524mm, other lines in Afghanistan are also standard gauge, Pakistan has 5' 3". Russia's involvement may give a clue. Editor.]

However in 'I.R.J.' 08.02.2022 comes: "Pakistan eyes standard gauge line to the Middle East and Europe. (Written by Richard Clinnick) : Pakistan Railways (PR) is working on plans to construct a 635km standard-gauge line from Quetta to Taftan on the Pakistan-Iranian border.

The 'Dawn' newspaper reports that the proposed railway would support the transport of high-value goods to Europe and Central Asia. Trains on the Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul route currently take around five days to complete the journey, with the newspaper quoting sources suggesting that this is because of the condition of the track. It is claimed that a standard-gauge line would reduce journey times to 20 hours. The project is reported to cost \$US 500M but requires approval by the Ministry of Railways.

'Dawn' also reports that the Pakistan Ministry of Railways may request that Iran constructs a 95km standard-gauge line from Taftan to Zahedan, Iran, to connect with the Taftan – Quetta railway.

During the 11th Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) transport ministerial meeting, hosted virtually by Turkey from January 31 until February 2, Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, Mr Rostam Ghasemi, used his speech to propose that the ECO Secretariat and Pakistan work to attract investment from banks and international organisations to build the Quetta – Taftan line and its train fleet."

D. IRAQ

(i). The GWR Archive has a sequence of photos of Iraq, mostly taken by Basil Roberts in 1967, including British and German and American locos: See:

<https://www.gwrarchive.org/scripts/imgdisplay.php>

(ii). PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN BAGHDAD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

The following comes from Marc Stegeman – quite fascinating:

"You may be familiar with the books written by German writer Karl May (KM) who in his young years may have tended to drift "off the right path". https://pfl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_May

Winnetou and Old Shatterhand characters were popular on film / television too.

www.dw.com/en/the-characters-in-karl-mays-famous-winnetou-series/a-36859348

Less known probably are the series of adventure books of Kara Ben Nemsî (KBN)

https://web.archive.org/web/20120412205434/http://karl-may-leipzig.de/wiki/index.php/Karl_May

According to this web archive, Karl made a tourist visit to the Middle East in 1899-1900, but that was long after he wrote his tales about KBN (and probably disappointing.) So, although May must be regarded as a fantasist, he must have read a lot of publications on which he could base his tales.

Recently I read a KM book "From Bagdad to Istanbul" / "Von Bagdad nach Stambul",

[https://web.archive.org/web/20120419110446/http://karl-may-leipzig.de/wiki/index.php/Von_Bagdad_nach_Stambul_\(GR3\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20120419110446/http://karl-may-leipzig.de/wiki/index.php/Von_Bagdad_nach_Stambul_(GR3))

This seems to be a compilation of KM titles, including:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20120414175944/http://karl-may-leipzig.de/wiki/index.php/Orientzyklus>>Die Todes-Karavane (1882) which seems to have been filmed too.

In this book, Kara Ben Nemsî mentions his approach to Bagdad, via Ghadhim (Al-Kazimiyya).

He says: "It is remarkable that Ghadhim is connected with the Bagdad Arsenal by a horse tramway which was installed there by the progressively-minded Midhat Pascha." As Kara and his companion Lindsay were wearing clothes worn out by travelling and fights, they were intending to go to Bagdad to buy new clothes (and get a shave). KBN comments on the horse tramway that it was very run-down: "broken window panes, bare seats (slats) with cushions gone."

As in this tale fine horses were a priority to Kara, he looks at the horses drawing the tramway car and regards them as "no more than rattling skeletons".

In spite of this, they reach Bagdad without accidents.

More about this 1870 Pferde-Eisenbahn can be found in:

<https://karl-maywiki.de/index.php/Ghadhim-> which shows the horse tramway line on a map: estimated length about 3 km, although Al-Kazimiyya to Bagdad downtown seems to be 5 km.

According to May's source 'Der Orient' by Amand Schweiger-Lerchenfeld (A.Hartleben, Wien / Pest / Leipzig 1882, S. 357, 363-364) the line was single track with 'sign posts', i.e. signals, which had gone.

Also: "Wäre dieser Mann (Midhat Pascha) von seinem Posten als Generalstatthalter von Irak nicht abberufen worden, so besäße Mesopotamien eine Eisenbahn, deren Zweck wäre, die Euphrat- und Tigrisländer über die Hauptorte Syriens hinweg mit Konstantinopel zu verbinden. Leider ist dieses hochwichtige Unternehmen bis auf den heutigen Tag Projekt geblieben. Mußte Midhat Pascha doch sogar die Interessenten seiner Pferdebahn mit Peitschenhieben zusammentreiben lassen: eine sehr deutliche Illustration der Stabilität des Muhammedanismus." Which translates as: "Had Midhat Pasha not been recalled from his post as Plenipotentiary for Iraq, Mesopotamia would by now have a railway whose purpose it would be to link the Euphrates and Tigris lands with the main cities of Syria and all the way to Constantinople. Unfortunately this very important institution has remained until today just a project. Midhat Pasha had to virtually whip his idea for a horse tramway through – a very clear illustration of the conservative stability of Mohamemdanism."

For photos of this horse tramway and Midhat Pascha, see: <http://elsada.net/39757>

Marc then tried an online translation from Arabic which the Editor has slightly modified to get:

"In 1868 Medhat Pasha was appointed to Iraq. An Iraqi newspaper, Al-Zawraa, also proposed a railway linking Kadhimiyah to Baghdad through two stations, the Martyrs' Bridge and Kadhimiyah near the current Bratha Mosque, and this line was constructed by the Ottoman Tramway Company, a company specialized in establishing tramways for passenger transport, by tramway or curry, as Iraqis call it, with chairs and installed on a horse-drawn railway, the first of which was the Tramway or Curry line between the centre of Baghdad (near the Martyrs Bridge) and the Martyrs' Bridge. The Holy Kadhimiyah, the Station Of Pratha (Al-Mantaka) in the middle of the road was a station to switch cars and horses, and the Ottoman Tramway Company was founded in May of the year 1870, a joint stock company, whose mission is to establish a railway for Iraq. A group of wealthy Iraqi traders contributed to the company and the company's shares were put on the market worth (two and a half lira per share) and the number of shares was limited to 6,000 to make the total capital of the company 1.5 million liras, and the company carried out its second project in Najaf (a tramway between Kufa and Najaf). Before the tramway, animals were the only means of transport in Iraq, but the entry of this type of

transport system was the latest qualitative transfer in the development of the city and society, reflected in the economy and movement in general. Tickets with two classes, first and second, were printed in London, the first with two loans, equivalent to four sharks and the other three pennies, at the time of the British. However, students were travelling free of charge to encourage young people to learn. The French historian, Ms. Diolavoya Al-Gari, was beautifully described as travelling between Baghdad and Kadhimiyah in 1881.

In 1941, the government took over land and sea transport, taking the tramway management to itself and ending the project as a joint stock company. The line remained administered by the Government until it was permanently abolished on 15 December 1946 and replaced by buses operated by the The Capital Secretariat to facilitate the transportation of passengers in the streets of the capital and its environs, and then the introduction of the Passenger Transport Authority in the capital to manage the world's largest passenger transport network with the latest buses, which has finally been transformed into the general facility for passenger transport. After 2003, public transport was cancelled not only in Baghdad but throughout Iraq, and the citizen was burdened and suffered loss of mobility and extensive traffic jams; after Baghdad had been the first capital to receive modern transportation, it became at the tail end of underdeveloped countries in this aspect."

"Then I went on-line searching for the Najaf-Kufa tramway, which gave no immediate results.

Searching for Kufa tramway revealed: "Bagdad, spanning both sides of the Tigris River, is the capital of Iraq and a commercial and transportation center. An ancient city, it rose to importance as the center of Islam and was second only

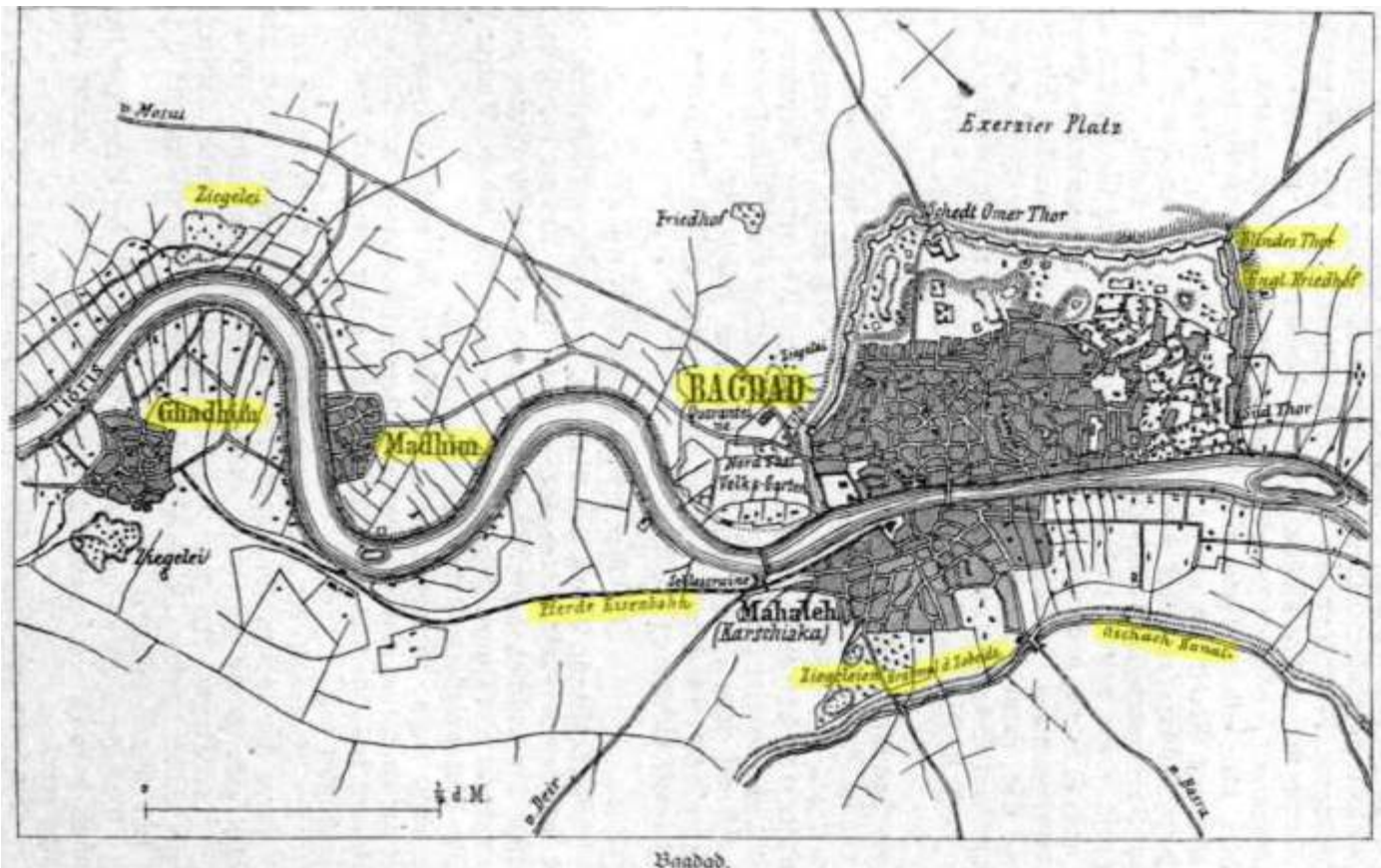


to Constantinople as a trade and cultural center. Baghdad became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1638, was captured by the British in 1917, and became the capital of Iraq in 1921. A horse tramway connecting Baghdad with a mosque at Kamazene was opened in 1871. It was 2.5 miles long and still running in World War II. These two postcard views show the double-deck horsecars. The only other tramway in Iraq was a horse-drawn line from Kufa to Nejif." on:

www.tramz.com/tva/tvx.html

or more to the point, with two photos:

www.tramz.com/tva/iq.html?sa=X&ved=0OCBkQ9QEwAjoahUKEwjG-PDBuvzGAhXHXBQKHVi9DNU



• Map of Baghdad showing the Horse Tramway.

Local persons who seem to have founded this Najaf - Kufa tramway line were Hajj Abdel Mohsen Aboud Saeed Hajim Shalash and Jawad Kalidar. Abdel Mohsen Shalash (1882-1948) was a politician from Najaf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdel_Mohsen_Shalash

From www.cairn.info/revue-outrre-terre1-2006-1-page-151.htm I distilled that the Najaf tramway was founded in 1908 and was worked until 1948 when it gave way to road traffic. Another source revealed that this line was 6 km long. I suppose it is not a coincidence that at the death of founder and protector Abdel Mohsen Shalash this tramway was stopped.

<https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/331788697525474823/> pretends to show a picture (postcard) of the Najaf-Kufa tramway.

In 2017 a report was presented to the Civil Engineering University of Kufa about a public transportation system to relieve the local traffic congestion. But this study did not mention the long-gone horse tramway.....

More searching for Najaf tramway resulted in another photo of a "Tramway, running between Baghdad and Khadimain laid by the Germans", Photograph Album: Iraq 1919, UCLA Library Special Collections:

www.library.ucla.edu/blog/special/2014/07/15/iraq-in-pictures-1919

(iii). For a change, here is more about ruined Iraqi railways: <https://dailygeekshow.com/gare-mossoul-detruite/> This is unfortunately undated but the translation of the French text reads:

"It is a sad fact that is taking place in Iraq. The total absence of trains is a real upheaval for Mosul, which used to host more than 72 daily services a decade ago. Locals miss Mosul station

Many years ago, Iraqis travelled to and from Mosul station. With 72 daily connections on 2,000 km of track, the station is now 80% destroyed, says Qahtan Loqman, the second-in-command of northern Iraq's railways. Its burnt-out locomotives no longer bring any inhabitants out of the country and they feel cut off from the world.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the "Taurus Express" linked Basra to Turkey and joined the famous "Orient Express". Nowadays, Mosul's rail traffic is almost non-existent, due to its station being destroyed by the conflicts, but also because of the American invasion in 2003. Since that year, trains left every week for a one-way trip to Gaziantep in Turkey, until the last one in 2010. Amer Adballah, a train driver, remembers that "every day there were passenger and freight trains." Nostalgic, he continues: "It was a comfortable means of transport for the sick or disabled. And we were sure that the goods would arrive without delay or damage."

On 1 June 1940 the first train reached Istanbul from Baghdad. The city was booming and was at the cutting edge of progress with a tramway installed in 1869! The man says that the trains provided a living for the families of "railway and construction workers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners, cafe owners, taxi drivers...".

On 31 March 2009 a truck bomb blew up a large part of the station. Between 2014 and 2017 Iraq's third city was ravaged by fighting against the jihadist group Islamic State. The facade is unrecognisable, the beauty of the station completely hidden or destroyed. Despite the liberation three years ago, no renovation or reconstruction is planned at the moment. Now, a few trains run to Falluja in the west, Kerbala and Basra in the south."

E. IRAN.

The following website has many interesting images of railways in Iran: <https://rail.pictures/browse/58>

F. JORDAN.

This news item has been taken from a Facebook entry and translated digitally.... "01.02.2022: "The Minister of Transport and Tourism seeks the experience of the Al-Hajazi Railway in Jordan. The Traffic and Engineering



• Hedjaz Jordan railway loco in Amman shed. (Taken from Facebook)



Minister and Jeh Azaza confirmed the need to remove all obstructions and challenges, which could stand in the way of the scheme for passenger transport between the Governorate of Zarqaa and the capital of Oman in both directions.

Following an inspection visit and a journey by railway trolley from the station at Zarqaa to the station of Amman, this Tuesday, in the presence of the General Director of the Foundation, Engineer Zahi Khalim stated it is important that transport between the two destinations should be secure and modern, in order to keep pace with the global developments in this matter. ...

Engineer Azaza was received after the tour at the Amman Main Station by Minister for Tourism and Architecture Naif Al-Vaiz, in which previous experience of the Al-Hajazi Railway Foundation in Jordan was discussed. The Prime Minister stressed the need to concentrate resources to add train journeys in the programme season for the current year 2020."

G. EGYPT.

(i). PRIVATISATION OF FREIGHT:

From 'R.G.I.' 14.02.2022: "Egyptian National Railways is developing plans to award a concession for the operation of rail freight services on the national network.

ENR's freight traffic currently totals around 4.5 Million tonnes/year, but the government believes there is significant potential for growth, which could and increase rail's market share to take traffic to 30 Million tonnes/year by 2030. It will be holding a market-sounding event in Cairo on February 22 to explain the potential business opportunities and invite feedback on its initial proposals.



• Egyptian diesel loco.

The plans envisage the award of a 10-year concession to a domestic or international operator, which would take over ENR's existing freight contracts with the ability to renegotiate the terms. The winning bidder would be required to pay an annual fee for the use of ENR's staff and assets. It would also be expected to pay 'on a commercial basis' for track access, the use of ENR rolling stock and train drivers.

The initial 10-year concession contract would include provision for a further 10 year extension if volume targets are met. Alternatively, the government may decide at that point to fully open the rail freight market to third parties, after which the incumbent would be able to continue operating without a specific contract from ENR.

The current legislative regime does not make provision for a private operator to deploy its own fleet on the national network. The concessionaire would therefore be expected to lease ENR locomotives and rolling stock, at least for the initial period. There would be provision for the contract terms to be modified if future regulatory changes were to permit the use of privately-owned vehicles.

ENR currently has about 100 operational main line and shunting locos dedicated to freight services, and around 4,500 wagons. In August 2021 the railway ordered 1,000 wagons of various types.

Dornier Consulting International is support the development of the freight reform proposals. A separate planning process is currently underway for the privatisation of ENR's Gabal El Zaitoun and El Tebeen workshops."

(ii). PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR LINE TO SUDAN

In 'I.R.J.' 25.02.2022, by Richard Clinnick: "Preliminary studies of the first railway line between Egypt and Sudan have been completed, Mr Kamel El-Wazir, the Egyptian minister of transport, confirmed on February 22 during a meeting with Mr Hisham Abu-Zaid, Sudan's acting transport minister.

The 363.5km line, which would connect the two countries' rail networks, would be built in two stages. The first is a planned 283.5km line from Aswan to Toshka and Abu Simbel, in southern Egypt, with the second stage extending the line a further 80km to Halfa in northern Sudan. [Wadi Halfa is the Sudan Rlys. Railhead.]

The two countries agreed to construct the line in April 2021, following similar proposals made in 2010 and 2018. Freight and passenger trains would use the line, with Egypt keen to use it to export goods to Sudan, central Africa and the rest of the continent.

The governments of both countries signed a joint cooperation agreement in November 2020 to carry out economic, social and environmental feasibility studies for the creation of a new cross-border railway. That agreement specified that construction would be in accordance with Egyptian rail specifications."

[Ed. Adds: Sudan Railways use the 3' 6" (1067mm) gauge, Egypt uses standard gauge. There must surely be a lot more to add to this story, which in essence goes back to British military attempts to build railways southwards from Wadi Halfa in the mid-1880's.]

'R.G.I.' of 01.03.22 added: "would replace the Lake Nasser ferry service between Aswan and Wadi Halfa. It is envisaged that the line could be used to export Egyptian products to Sudan and central Africa. Egyptian Minister of Transport Kamel El-Wazir and Sudan's acting Transport Minister Hisham Abu-Zaid discussed the project at a meeting on February 22, and a committee has been established to further develop the proposal. A deal was also agreed for four Sudanese locomotives to be repaired in Egypt."

(iii). ALEXANDRIA METRO FINANCING AGREEMENT.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 08.03.33: "The European Bank for Reconstruction & Development is to provide a €250m loan to co-finance the conversion of an Egyptian National Railways line in Alexandria into a high-capacity metro.

The EBRD funding announced on March 7 is part of a €1.76Bn package co-financed by the European Investment Bank, Agence Française de Développement and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The underused suburban railway runs from Alexandria northeast to Abu Qir. EBRD said the conversion to metro standards would provide a significant increase in capacity and service levels to cater for future demand on the corridor, with electrification reducing noise and pollution by encouraging modal shift from road transport.

The project is being managed by the National Authority for Tunnels, and will include new signalling, telecoms, control systems and rolling stock. The 22 km route from Misr to Abu Qir will have 20 stations, with 13 stations and 13.5 km being elevated.

Metro operations are to be managed by a private operator, which EBRD said would 'ensure a high standard of service'.

Technical support for project implementation and monitoring will be financed by the Netherlands, through the High Impact Partnership on Climate Action which is also supported by Austria, Finland, Switzerland, Taiwan and the UK. The EBRD SEMED Multi Donor Account backed by Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and the UK supported the technical due diligence review."

(iv). SOUTH KOREAN INDUSTRY SEEKS EGYPTIAN LINKS

From 'R.G.I.' 08.03.33: "South Korea's Minister of Land, Infrastructure & Transport Noh Hyeong Ouk visited Egypt from February 23 to 25 to discuss bilateral co-operation on rail, metro and smart city projects.

Noh met Minister of Transport Kamel El-Wazir to discuss financing for the localisation of the production of Hyundai Rotem trains for Cairo metro lines 2 and 3, and potential future opportunities including hydrogen trams.

Noh said South Korea had selected Egypt as a priority official development assistance partner for 2021-25, and Korean companies are actively seeking projects to participate in."

H. U.A.E.

(i). From 'R.G.I.' 24.2.22. "A 1.99Bn Dirham agreement for the financing of future passenger rail services has been signed by Etihad Rail and First Abu Dhabi Bank, which will be the certified lead arranger for the loan.

Freight services have been operating on the 264 km first phase of the planned 1,200 km national rail network since 2016, and construction of the second phase is underway to connect Ghuweifat on the border with Saudi Arabia to Fujairah with links to the ports at Mussafah, Khalifa and Jebel Ali.

The introduction of passenger services on the network is one of three 'strategic projects' included in the 50bn Dirham UAE Railways Programme launched in December 2021. The others are the development of freight services on the current and future lines, and the integrated development of 'smart

transport technology and systems' including light rail lines and planning, booking and integrated logistics systems.

The passenger services are intended to strengthen connectivity within the UAE by linking 11 locations from Al Sila to Fujairah. Trains would operate at up to 200 km/h, and offer a capacity of around 400 passengers. Ridership is predicted to reach more than 36.5M passengers/year by 2030.

'Through this agreement, we will move full steam ahead with our mission to provide passenger railway services, which will bolster public transport system in the UAE and the wider region', said Etihad Rail CEO Shadi Malak when the agreement was signed on February 24. 'Etihad Rail is an essential component of the Gulf Co-operation Council rail network, and this agreement brings us one step closer towards realising our strategic goals of strengthening the UAE's reputation as a regional and global transport hub.'

Planned passenger train journey times, min

Abu Dhabi – Dubai	50
Abu Dhabi – Fujairah	100
Dubai – Fujairah	50
Abu Dhabi – Al Ruwais	70

(ii). PROBLEMS WITH ETIHAD RAILWAYS?

This link: [Why the \\$250 Billion Gulf Railway Ended in Failure - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcyxmLi_nYQ)
or: [youtube.com/watch?v=qcyxmLi_nYQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcyxmLi_nYQ)

brings one to a rather critical video on the scheme which is apparently taking much longer both to commence and to complete than originally planned.

(iii). CONTRACTOR LOCOS USED ON CONSTRUCTION.

An article in 'Eisenbahn Geschichte' No. 110 (Feb./März 2022) pp.50-57 by Werner Reckert focusses on the later careers of diesel locomotives formerly owned by the Westfälische Landesbahn and associated private railways. Many were sold to contractors specialising in construction or track-relaying, especially in Italy. This includes two Deutz-built Bo-Bo's (WLE 632 & 633, KHD 56595/1957 & 56596/1959). The former (also no. VL 0632) was sold in 1988 to the firm Cosfer in Tagliacozzo, was then sold on to Salcef in Rome, then appeared in 2014 in Abu Dhabi as No. DD FMT RM 2050P but "apparently the machine was still so valuable to its owner that after works here ended it was brought back to Italy" and it was spotted in Fano in 2017. VL 0633 followed its sister and was also seen on construction trains on Etihad Rail, numbered BB FMT RM 2594T but back in Italy by 2017.

(iv). TRACK LAID FROM DUBAI TO ABU DHABI:

From 'R.G.I.' 01.03.2022: "The final section of track for the rail link between Abu Dhabi and Dubai has been ceremonially installed by Deputy Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court and Etihad Rail Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The completion of the Abu Dhabi - Dubai section of the future national rail network 'represents an important pivotal phase that shows the great benefits of this national project in linking all the emirates of the country and enhancing the transport process between industrial and economic centres', said Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed on March 1.

'The economic effects of linking Abu Dhabi and Dubai via the UAE national rail network will extend for many years', he added. 'The project will increase the competitiveness of the UAE and strengthen the spirit of union between the emirates.'

Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan stressed the importance of completing the main line through to Sharjah for the 'promotion of sustainable development in the UAE, and the consolidation of its position to remain in the first ranks at the regional and global levels'.

He said the line was 'based on the best specifications and standards', and would be 'a main pillar in the integrated economic and development journey of the UAE'.

'I.R.J.' of 08.03 adds: "The final section of track on the 256km line linking Abu Dhabi and Dubai was installed during a ceremony on March 1.

The ceremony was attended by Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, deputy ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, chairman of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court and chairman of Etihad Rail.

The Abu Dhabi - Dubai line comprises packages 2B and 2C of Phase 2 of the Etihad Rail project, which will expand the network to Ghuweifat on the border with Saudi Arabia and east to the city of Fujairah on the Gulf of Oman to create



a 1200km network. Work on Phase 2A the 139km section from Ghuweifat to Ruwais, the terminus for Phase 1, was completed in September 2021. Phase 1 is a 264km line from Shah to Ruwais, used to transport sulphur granules, which was completed in January 2016. Work continues on Phase 2D, the 145km line from Dubai and Sharjah to Khorfakkan and Fujairah.

China Railway Construction Corporation and Ghantoot Transport & General Contracting are responsible for tracklaying on the Abu Dhabi - Dubai line, which took place in both directions from a construction hub at Saih Shuaib. The contractors won a Dirhams 4.4Bn (\$US 1.2Bn) contract in June 2019 for package 2B, comprising the 216km route from Liwa, near Tarif, to Saih Shuaib, which includes links to Khalifa Industrial Zone, Abu Dhabi, Khalifa Port and Industrial City of Abu Dhabi, and the 94km Sharjah - Jebel Ali package 2C, comprising 74km of line in Dubai and a 20km branch to Jebel Ali port.

While a date for the start of operation has not yet been announced, this section of the line is set to play a pivotal role in developing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) national railway network. There are 29 bridges, 60 crossings and 137 drainage channels on the Phase 2B and 2C route. 13,300 workers were employed on the project recording more than 47 million working hours.

Maktoum bin Mohammed said that the project will increase the competitiveness of the UAE and strengthen the spirit of union between the Emirates. Theyab bin Mohamed said the railway will contribute to the promotion of sustainable development in the UAE.

The completion of the line between Abu Dhabi and Dubai is within the framework of the UAE Dirhams 50Bn (\$US 13.6Bn) Railway Programme, announced in November, and part of the government's "Projects of the 50" development programme. The Railway Programme includes a national network of projects that would link the seven emirates, which are expected to create up to Dirhams 200Bn in economic opportunities.

I. LEBANON.

(i). ARTICLE

This is taken from a lengthy article by Alicia Medina that appeared online in "Syria Untold" 29.10.2021. It conveys the sense of nostalgia rather than historical fact, but the journalist had at least interviewed some genuine people with genuine memories..... It is also an insight into the mental state of those who have to live in this 'failed state' with an impossible present and a difficult future...

"Lebanon: tales of a missed connection. What the Levant lost when it lost its trains." "For nearly a century, a bustling railway network connected people in Syria and Lebanon to the world—and to one another. Amid violence and economic collapse on both sides of the border, can a few quixotic initiatives revive the lost trains?"

"RAYAK, Lebanon - Acacias grow between railroad tracks headed nowhere. A lonely train car sits in the surrounding field, abandoned in a hurry half a century ago. Only patches remain of the locomotives' green paint. The bullet holes and graffiti reading "Syrian Army" inside one of the cars hint of dark days past.

In the Lebanese Beqaa Valley, five kilometers from the Syria border, the Rayak train station feels like a majestic skeleton. In Ottoman times, it became the biggest railway repair workshop in the Middle East, fixing the locomotives that T.E. Lawrence and the Arab revolutionaries sabotaged while fighting the Ottoman empire. In its golden era, Rayak's train platform bade farewell to travelers heading to Beirut, Istanbul, Damascus and Baghdad. Later, it became an intelligence base for the Syrian army. And, for 47 years, the station was home to Asaad Namrud.

On a warm autumn morning, 94-year-old Asaad is busy chopping onions for a stew in his modest home in Rayak, a few steps away from the train station's remains. The only decorations in his living room are a painting of a rail track, an old photo of his locomotive and his train driver license. In 1976, a year into the civil war that would drag Lebanon through the next decade and a half, Asaad drove the train from Beirut towards the Syrian border. "I brought 800 goats from Beirut to Rayak. It was my last trip," he remembers. Once he stepped out of his locomotive, no steam engine roared again along the Beirut-Damascus line. It was the end of the railway.

That decline had been a long time coming. The first train in the Damascus-Beirut line set out on August 3, 1895, inaugurating rail travel in the Levant. In 1911, Tripoli in northern Lebanon got its train station, connecting the city to Syria's Homs and Aleppo. In the first half of the 20th century, passengers hopped on in Beirut and commuted to Damascus, Istanbul, Baghdad, or even further afield to Mecca after connecting to the Hejaz Railway line. As civil war erupted in the 1970s, however, the Lebanese railway was left to rot. Syria's aging train line followed a similar fate after 2011. Now abandoned and left to rust, the railways that once criss-crossed Syria and Lebanon tell a story of what could have been. It is a tale of nostalgia and missed connections; but also, of quixotic battles in a quest to connect a disconnected region.

The last train driver.

When a teenaged Asaad announced that he was dropping out of school to work for the railway, his father slapped him in the face. Soon after, Asaad found himself shadowing a French engineer in the Rayak station. "It was the time of General de Gaulle, and the French were in charge of the railway," he says. At the time, in the early 1940s, Lebanon and Syria were under French mandate. After four years learning the trade, Asaad officially became a train driver. Jordan, at the time a British protectorate known as Trans-Jordan, was his first destination. "It was a two-day trip. I left Lebanon and slept in Damascus. The next day I headed to Jordan and then back to Damascus and then the Beirut port, where they unloaded the merchandise like porcelain," he recalls.

"You saw a train carrying cargo or passengers every 10 minutes," remembers Asaad. In winter, trains couldn't get through Dahr al-Baida mountain, part of the range separating coastal Lebanon from the Beqaa Valley further inland. Instead, they'd take the train that rode through the tunnel. "We were underground for 20 minutes, and we had the mountain on top of us. It was pitch black!" He'd burn his hands stoking the fire in the steam engine.

The rail became his life. "I drove to Daraa, Homs, Damascus, Turkey, Tripoli, Beirut and to the border with Israel," Asaad says. He recites the distances between stations like a memorized lesson: "from Rayak to Homs, 85 km; from Rayak to Damascus, 80 km; from Damascus to Jordan, 70 km; from Aleppo to Turkey, 75 km."

His trips would sometimes last a month, keeping him away from his wife and six children. "Whenever I arrived at the Rayak station I would whistle—you could hear it from the mountains to the sea—and my wife knew I was back." In the early 20th century, the Beirut-Damascus line connected to the Ottoman-run Hejaz Railway that passed through present-day Jordan, and continued southward through the desert to Medina. The Taurus line connected Beirut to Istanbul via Tripoli and Aleppo. From Istanbul, the Orient Express took passengers onward to Europe. French, Polish, German, American and Swiss trains crisscrossed the region. At its peak, the Rayak station employed 2,500 workers, explains Elias Maalouf, author of the book *Lebanon on Rail*. Beirut and Damascus were connected to the world.

Given the economic and military power the railway entailed, colonial powers France and Britain fought to be the ones to design it. However, according to Maalouf, it was Youssef Motran, a businessman from near Baalbek in present-day Lebanon, who first obtained the privilege from the Ottomans to build the Beirut-Damascus line in 1891. He later sold construction privileges to the French.

"Rayak was better than London, there were so many people here," Asaad says. Carefully, he opens a box of old photos. In a picture dated 1973, Asaad poses with a blonde woman. "She was the daughter of the boss of the railway in London and asked to ride with me in the locomotive. I told the assistant to clean the seat and I gave her my jacket." He then browses the photos in *Lebanon on Rail*. In the last pages, a young driver stares stoically into the camera. His name was Fares Garabet.

The sunrise rides. Fares Garabet's grandson, also named Fares, lives in Germany after fleeing his home in Damascus six years ago. The elder Fares was of Armenian origin and lived in Damascus. Like Asaad, he joined the railway when he was a teenager, faking his ID and upping his age by two years to be able to work. The plan succeeded. He drove trains from Rayak during the 1930s and 1940s. Later, his son also became a train driver. With the end of the French mandate and the independence of Lebanon and Syria, the railway company Damas Hama and Prolongement (DHP) was split along the border between the two nations; the Syrian government expropriated its share, the Lebanese bought theirs. Trains and workers were also divided.

"My grandfather faced the choice of staying in either Lebanon or Syria," says the younger Fares, speaking over Skype from Germany. "He preferred to go to Damascus and work on the Syrian railway in the 1970s and 1980s, and later he was employed as warehouse head." Some of his grandfather's relatives, however, stayed in Lebanon. Part of the family became Lebanese and the other Syrian. The elder Fares died in 2017, in Syria.

I saw the farmers working the land, the birds singing, the smell of the steam going out, the sounds of the whistle... it was such a beautiful scenario, I won't forget it in my life. Today only an aunt remains in Lebanon, while most of the family in Syria has left for Canada, France, Germany or Australia. Fares fights to keep memories of the once-united family alive.

"In summer, we used to go to my aunt's house in Beirut. These were the best days of my life. Syria was a closed country, while Lebanon was open." His quest to preserve railway heritage in Syria materialized in 2000. Fares proposed to the then-Minister of Transport—who happened to be a friend—to create a museum in Damascus for the old steam trains. The museum later became a reality, reigniting old memories. "My father used to show me the traces of bullets in the trains my grandfather used to drive, which were attacked by Syrian revolutionaries."

His most adored memories are the trips between Damascus and Serghaya, a quiet mountain resort town and the last stop before the Lebanese border. His father let him sit next to the driver's seat in the locomotive. They would ride the three hours from Damascus to Serghaya, sleep there, and head back early in the morning. "My father used to wake me up at 4 am, when the train was cold as snow." Once heated, the train would depart at 5 am to bring the workers and traders to Damascus around 8 am. "I saw the farmers working the land, the birds singing, the smell of the steam going out, the sounds of the whistle... it was such a beautiful scenario, I won't forget it in my life."

'Soundtrack' of the Tripoli-Aleppo line

Nassif el Murr's most vivid memory of his days as a train driver is the soundtrack of the engine. "The sound of the steam going out in the mountains was more beautiful than the best music," says the 93-year-old former train driver from his home in Tripoli. Nassif's journey on the railway started in 1947. A year later, in the war that followed the creation of the state of Israel, Israeli forces bombed the railway line between Naqoura, in southern Lebanon and Haifa, in Palestine, that had been built only six years before. The bombing foreshadowed the violent borders that would come to shatter railway aspirations. Still, Nassif dreamed of becoming a train driver. That dream had to wait 12 years, which he spent as a depot assistant. Then, in the early 1960s, he became the driver of the Beirut-Homs line. He still has the details of the route memorized. "The train to Homs was at night, and the train to Beirut was during the day. It could take four hours and the speed limit was between 30 or 35km per hour."

Nassif used to drive the German G8 locomotives that were part of a "looted gift" to Lebanon from the Allies after Germany lost WWII, according to Nabil Doumani, a Tripoli train enthusiast and vice president of an NGO aimed at reviving Lebanon's railways. [sic. - this is in fact incorrect. Ed.] Three of these gigantic locomotives now sleep at the abandoned Tripoli station, relegated to "vintage" backdrops for wedding photoshoots. Nassif can't bring himself to visit the station; the disrepair is too painful. He drove his last train in 1971, then he became a supervisor in the railway's Tripoli office. From his days driving to Syria, he remembers turbulent times. "Every two weeks there was a coup. During the Amin al-Hafiz era, I got stuck in Syria with the train during one of the coups," he recalls. Al-Hafiz was a former Syrian president overthrown in 1966. Since Syria's independence until Hafez al-Assad's ascent to power in 1971, military coups were frequent. "I can go with my car to Byblos, but it is not the same as sitting with someone of the 'other kind,' talking, working, making fun, falling in love." The split along the border between Syria and Lebanon complicated Nassif's drive. "When the railway company was one, it was easier; there were Syrian employees in Lebanon and Lebanese in Syria." After independence, Nassif would have to stop at a station five kilometers into Syria and exchange the locomotive with his Syrian counterpart. "You had General Security on the Lebanese and the Syrian side, it took time, they inspected the train, the passengers and the cargo."

Arda giggles, though, when she remembers "the blanket" incident. The family used to spend their summers in Hadath al-Jebbeh, a town in the Lebanese mountains. One summer, disaster struck: they forgot Arda's favorite blanket in Aleppo. "I didn't sleep for two or three nights, I was crying." Her father had little choice but to ask the traindriver, Manuel, to bring the blanket with him from Aleppo to Tripoli. "My mother then went down to Tripoli, took the blanket and brought it so I could sleep and stop crying." This is a dream, and some dreams never come true. Arda's family history is also linked to the main train station in Aleppo, called Baghdad Station for the journeys its locomotives would take eastward to the distant Iraqi capital. When her father was six years old, his own father would send him to the train station to attract incoming travellers to the family's small hotel. Years later, Arda's father became the director of the storied Baron Hotel, she says. It was high-end, built to attract glamorous foreign travellers at a time when Aleppo was a bustling commercial hub. Agatha Christie stayed at the hotel and wrote part of *Murder on the Orient Express* there. The opening scene of the mystery classic is set in the Aleppo train station.

Goodbye Trains, Hello Cars

Riding the steam train through the snow. That's a fond memory for Walid Kamari. For 42 years, his father drove trains from Beirut to the border with Syria. From there, Walid's uncles drove the trains through Syria on to Turkey. The Kamari family, like many others, were scattered across borders. Walid's grandparents were born in Turkey, his parents in Aleppo, and he in Lebanon.

Walid remembers riding in the locomotive with his father "more than 10 times" as a child. "He told me how the machine worked. They were lovely days, especially during the winter seeing the snow," he recalls. They would travel often to Aleppo to visit relatives, and Walid remembers the antics and the foods sent from Aleppo to Beirut. "There were a lot of passengers. Syrians used to visit the snow in the Lebanese mountains."

His last trip on the train was in 1969, he says; he was 15 years old. After that, cars took over.

The first time Georges Said rode a train was due to a coup d'état in Syria. He was a young teenager in Aleppo, and, alongside other youth in the city, was "invited" to attend a festival organized in Damascus by then-President Adib Shishakli. "He wanted to show that he was popular," Georges says. "It took us 30 hours. We did 350 km, we slept in the school, we stayed there three days, saw the thing and we came back to Aleppo by train."

Sometime after that, Georges's family left Syria, ending up in Beirut. "Lebanon was the best at that time, it was the Switzerland of the East." The family would take the automotrice, a diesel engine train, between Aleppo and Beirut often, up until 1963 when they got their first car, an Opel. That year was the last time he visited Syria. Now 84 years old, Georges owns a hardware store in Beirut's Mar Mikhael neighbourhood.

"I have not been back to Syria. I am not with any political party, but I don't like the Syrian regime, I like free governments," he says. His Syrian relatives visit him in Beirut, not the other way around.

Rayak and the universe.

Elias Maalouf was born in Ecuador with a "virtual door to Lebanon." His parents had fled Rayak early in the Lebanese Civil War, and were prone to overdosing their children with nostalgia. "We were brainwashed by our parents to love Lebanon. All we dreamt of was coming back to Lebanon, to Rayak, the city with the biggest train station and air base in the universe," explains Elias from his home in Rayak. As a child, he often imagined the town's old cinemas, souks and, of course, the train station. The Maalouf family returned to Rayak in 1991, after the war's end. It had already been 15 years since the trains there had gone silent. "We only saw dust, goats and old sad people dreaming of the past." Elias, 11 years old at the time, asked his father about the old cinemas; they were now potato storehouses. Only traces remained of the old souks and an ice cream factory. When he asked about the train station, his father was adamant: "You are not allowed to even look at the train station."

The Syrian army, after entering Lebanon in 1976 invited by president Suleiman Franjeh, had "overstayed" after the end of the war. The Rayak train station—and adjacent air base—became their intelligence base, where "they used to mess with people," says Elias. Naked detainees would be crammed in the rusty train cars "during the summer and winter," says Elias, who has gathered dozens of testimonies from former railway workers and residents of Rayak. "In both cases it was bad," he adds.

In 2005, following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, the Syrian army withdrew, and political divides in Lebanon deepened. That year, Elias was finishing his studies in documentary filmmaking, so he decided to document the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon. "Rayak was the last place in Lebanon they left," he says. So he sneaked into the railway repair workshop. "It was like Disneyland: big old rusty trains, beautiful colonial French buildings, hundreds of wagons!" Suddenly, his parent's wistful tales of home seemed real. "I realized my parents were telling the truth when they told us about the city of Rayak. For the first time, I really believed them." Elias says he saw three Syrian soldiers guarding a train car. Smoke was coming out. As they left, Elias sprinted towards it. "I saw beautiful old archives being burnt, and I tried to save some." But as he did so, he burnt his hands; by instinct, he shouted. The soldiers, noticing his presence, shot in the air. He says he hid and watched as the soldiers returned to the railcar to keep watch until the documents had all been burnt. He could only save a handful of the papers.

For Elias, this day marked the beginning of 15 years of activism to preserve the railway heritage and bring trains back to Lebanon, including founding the NGO Train/Train. They tried to build a museum in Rayak like the one in Damascus, but Lebanese authorities were not interested.

Elias connected with other train enthusiasts in Lebanon and Syria. "For a certain funny period of time there was this debate of who had the best station: Rayak or Tripoli?" Then they united their efforts. "I fell in love with all the train stations in Lebanon. Our voice was loud, our mission was written in newspapers around the world, everybody read about it except the politicians in Lebanon," Elias says.

Elias has been forbidden to enter any train station in Lebanon since 2012, amid a public spat with Ziad Nasr, president of the Lebanese government's State Railway Authority. "I didn't allow them to sell the old parts of the train as metal scrap," he explains. When asked if his ban could also be related to the time he sneaked into a train station and managed to drive a locomotive for a few metres, he shrugs the idea off with a smile.

"First they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win," says Elias, reciting a quote often attributed, albeit mistakenly, to Gandhi. When he first talked about a railway comeback in Lebanon, "people used to laugh at me, I was Sancho Panza, then they fought me, and I became Don Quixote." After 15 years in activism, Elias has taken a step back. He now spends most of his time with his family and on his vineyard in Rayak. "I didn't get to the part where I win."

The Chapter of Decay

Nabil Doumani rolls his eyes as he walks into the Tripoli station and sees a pair of newlyweds posing for a photo next to a corroded G8 locomotive. Six locomotives, three French and three German, sit in the station, which remains unfenced. "These are not the original locomotives that were here in 1911 when the station opened," Nabil, vice-president of Train/Train explains. "Those locomotives are probably in Syria." Nabil's grandfather was one of the Tripoli businessmen who originally gave funds to build the station. Nabil's only trip on a train in Lebanon was in the mid-1960s, when his mother asked the driver of a cargo train from Tripoli to nearby Chekka to let her kids enjoy the ride in the last train car. They did enjoy it. "Trains are not a hobby, but a passion," he says.

From the window in the abandoned depot, a bunch of rail tracks are left to decay. "These rails were bought by the Lebanese government in 2002, brand new rails," he exclaims. Back in 2002, there was an attempt to reconnect Syria and Lebanon by railway and funds were allocated to build the 35 km of railway track between Tripoli and the Syrian border. But then in 2005 Rafic Hariri was assassinated "and the whole project stopped."

Politics, once again, blocked the railway. But decay on the Lebanese side can be also attributed to inner policies. "From 1961 until the start of the civil



• In the last days of Lebanese rail service, Polish-built loco 1213 hauls a single ex-DB Schienenbus trailer near Jounieh. (Source: Facebook, courtesy of Lorenz Degen)

war, the Lebanese government did not add one metre of railways to the network. They just managed it and then let it die," explains Nabil.

First, the 1960s witnessed the "car revolution." Trains felt outdated. And in Lebanon in particular, authorities had an appetite for the real estate value of railway properties. "Lebanon's main economic policy is investment in land and service. When you view land as a commodity, you will do anything to prioritize real estate profit over anything else. This came at the expense of public space and public transport," explains urban planner Abir Saksouk.

By the early 1970s, when the government announced its decision to close the railway, its workers—one of the strongest syndicates—paralyzed Beirut, blocking the main roads with trains. "The government realized they couldn't stop it, so decided to let it die. Every time a worker retired, no one replaced him," says Elias.

Can the trains come back?

Excited, Carlos Naffah narrates to a camera about how he is driving a historical locomotive (from 1948) from Sissach to Geneva, in Switzerland. Next to the video, posted to his Facebook page, is the caption: "Together we will bring back #Lebanon_on_track."

Carlos defines himself as a "train maniac." He says he hasn't forgiven the neighbourhood kid who broke his green train toy with six batteries. In 1995, while in school in Beirut's Daura neighbourhood, Carlos remembers watching a green and yellow train chug by a couple of times. "It was a Polish SU45, introduced in Lebanon in 1971," he says. Although trains stopped at the onset of the civil war, around 1984 there were sporadic freight routes between Beirut and Jounieh, Jieh and Zahrani. And after the war, between 1994 and 1996, a few trains hauled cement from Chekka, just outside Tripoli, down to Beirut.

In 2018, Carlos became the president of the NGO Train/Train. "I fell in love with our heritage. I could see the potential to reconnect the country." With Syria ravaged by a decade of war and Lebanon plunged in an economic downward spiral, talk of trains may seem a bit out of place. And yet, Carlos' dream of reviving the railway goes beyond transportation. "Lebanon is destroyed not only economically but socially," Carlos says. He sees Lebanon as patches of socially disconnected communities. "People in the south have never been in the north, and people of the coastal side have never been in Beqaa."

"What would connect the Lebanese people together, and Lebanon to everybody else would be the train," adds Carlos. On the other hand, reconnecting Beirut to Damascus is tricky. Carlos argues that countries with complicated histories have been able to maintain their trains. "Between the former Soviet Union and Norway, borders were closed, but the train was still connecting them with special security measures. It should be possible to reconnect Damascus to Beirut, or Homs to Tripoli, even if we need to apply complicated security measures."

"Trains can build peace between cities because people will have the chance to move, to get in connection," Carlos adds.

Where would you go if the trains returned?

If he could, Walid says he would take the train to Aleppo. Fares, retracing his grandfather's and father's steps, would ride from Damascus to Rayak. Nassif, the former train driver, would visit Beirut.

While Georges, the hardware store owner in Mar Mikhael, ponders his imaginary trip, his neighbour Norma Irani wanders in from the street. Her father Fuad used to sell tickets for the Beirut-Damascus line in the early 1940's, so she jumps in. "It is very important to have a railway—imagine going from here to Syria or Iraq. In half an hour you could be in Damascus," Norma says.

"What is up to you with Damascus? I am only interested in trains inside Lebanon," says Georges.

"It's just an example. I would like to do tourist things in Damascus, Homs or Aleppo. I used to bring shanklish from Syria, it was so good," says Norma, referring to a type of aged cheese popular in the Levant.

"You go to Syria, I stay in Zahle," says Georges, ending the conversation. Zahle is a city in the Beqaa Valley.

Arda, the psychologist who rode the Aleppo-Tripoli line as a child, would take the route again and "see what comes back" to her memory. But, she adds, "this is a dream, and some dreams never come true."

"The obstacles are too great, but it is very important to be able to imagine the possibility of a different life," says Abir, the urban planner.

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23) That possibility seemed, momentarily, to materialize in August 2019, when Train/Train presented their proposed railway national master plan for Lebanon. The system would connect to Syria via Damascus and Homs. "People in Damascus will be able to be in Beirut in 40 minutes for their weekend, people in Amman can go to Beirut in an hour and a half to have a meeting and then go back to Amman," explains Carlos. Only two months later, anger over a government plan to charge for WhatsApp usage morphed into massive countrywide protests over the state of Lebanon's political and economic system altogether. As protestors called for a new government, the country began sinking into its worst financial crisis in more than a century. Two years on, the local currency has lost most of its value and even the most basic needs such as electricity and medicine are difficult for most people to come by. Carlos says Train/Train has met with possible investors from Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese and Swiss companies. But prospects are bleak. "We cannot invest anything if the chaos continues, we need reform and accountability," he says.

And yet, somehow, the quixotic dream seems to persevere. Carlos remains optimistic. "Our train will go from Naqoura in the south to Aboudieh in the north, passing all cities along the Mediterranean Sea. It will be one of the most beautiful trains in the world," says Carlos.

Asaad, the last driver of the Beirut-Damascus line, still retains his passion for trains after all these years. When asked where that love comes from, he is quick to answer: "Trains are the path to freedom, they only go forward."

(ii). FILM ON RAYAK

This link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5J0k5zdvSfs&feature=youtu.be>

leads to a fascinating documentary collection of various images including construction of the Australian section of the BT line and the station, works and aerodrome at Rayak past and present.

J. TANZANIA.

No, Tanzania is not in the Middle East but an intriguing story in 'R.G.I.' 07.03.22 is relevant due to the Turkish connection: "The first of four former Austrian Federal Railways Class 1014 electric locomotives purchased by Turkish construction company Yapi Merkezi has been shipped to Tanzania for use in testing the Dar es Salaam – Morogoro standard gauge line now nearing completion. Locomotive 1014 014 was delivered with European screw couplers, but the rest will be retrofitted with AAR pattern knuckle couplers before delivery.

The 18 dual-system 15 kV 16.7 Hz and 25 kV 50 Hz locomotives with a maximum speed of 175 km/h were manufactured for ÖBB by SGP Graz and ELIN in 1993-94. The 3 MW locos were withdrawn in 2009, and eventually sold to Romania in 2016. They were bought in 2018 by Zeller Transport Technik, which transported some of them back to Austria. Following the bankruptcy of ZTT, four were sold to Yapi Merkezi.

Revenue services on the standard gauge line are due to be worked by a fleet of 17 electric locomotives which Tanzania Railway Corp ordered from Hyundai Rotem in July 2021. These are to be assembled at Changwon in South Korea, with Škoda supplying the electrical equipment."

136:08.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

(i). THE EUPHRATES VALLEY RAILWAY

The Editor attended a lecture on this topic at a railway history conference in Lisbon in October: here a few notes.

"This was in the 1830's one of the first transnational alternatives to the proposed Suez Canal, one aim being to decrease the distance to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf or the Cape of Good Hope. This would be a way to reach India via Alexandria by sea and thence by rail to Basra then sea to Karachi. In the 1830's it took 14 to 20 weeks to travel from London to India, a letter could take five to eight months. Steam navigation was at this period not yet able to guarantee efficiency. (In 1859 steamships managed the route in 59 days.) The East India Co. Superintendent Thomas Love Peacock was an instigator of the scheme, with Francis Chesney; they envisaged an intermodal route employing railway and river transport. In 1829 Chesney had undertaken a journey to the East to consider which might be the best route to India. He went 1835 to the Euphrates Valley, returning in August 1836. The House of Commons then established a Commission to investigate....."

(ii). A LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE.

In 'Heritage Railway' issue 288 Dec. 24 2021 p.68 is a report on recent auctions of Railwayana. Included is the sale by 'GW Railwayana' on November 13th of a left-hand nameplate from the former LMS, later BR Midland Region 'Jubilee' class 4-6-0 locomotive 45623 'Palestine' – for 12,100 Pounds! The loco was built Crewe 1934, withdrawn Newton Heath July 1964, scrapped at Central Wagon Co, Ince, Wigan.



(iii). DEAD SEA WORKS MUSEUM.

In 'Times of Israel' 18.02.2022 is a very critical review by Sue Surkes of a visit to the Israel Chemicals Museum – essentially condemning it as a political gesture to improve the firm's public image in the wake of various scandals and its desire to continue pumping operations at the Dead Sea despite revised and sensitized awareness of the ecological consequences. But here is a part of the article:

"It's a long drive from almost anywhere to Sodom near the southernmost tip of the Dead Sea to see the new Visitors Centre opened in December by ICL (formerly Israel Chemicals Ltd).

Located beneath the towering rocks of Mount Sodom, it tells the remarkable story of Israel's potash extraction industry, started by Moshe Novomieski, Moshe Langotsky, kibbutz leader Yehuda Kopelevich (Almog), and others in the first half of the last century under almost-inhuman conditions in one of the harshest places on earth.

The NIS 50M (\$16M) Moshe Novomieski Visitors and Heritage Center is located where the first workers camp was. Some of the original buildings can still be seen. It is the realization of a dream for Yossi Langotsky, Moshe Langotsky's son, now 87, who has pushed for years for the establishment of an institution that will immortalize the contribution of those early pioneers.

The junior Langotsky, a retired IDF Colonel and two-time recipient of the Defence Ministry's Israel Defence Prize, is the geologist who discovered the Tamar natural gas field in 2009, paving the way for others to find additional massive fields in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The first potash factory was built at the northern end of the Dead Sea in 1930. The industry expanded southward to Sodom in 1934, going on to become the biggest industrial enterprise in pre-state Israel and producing, at its height, more than 50 percent of Mandatory Palestine's exports.

The new centre comprises several wooden buildings, in the style of those that would have housed the early labourers, among them many kibbutz members.

It offers guided tours, bookable online (in Hebrew), which last just over an hour and a half, focusing on the geological processes that created the Dead Sea (the formation of the Syrian



centimetres (ten inches) of the 1.10 metres (3.6 feet) lost each year....."

(iv). HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL WAGON AT MULHOUSE RAILWAY MUSEUM, FRANCE.

At the 'Cit  du Train' stands the van is "KKwf 100 179, Tare 11,290. Surface floor area 18.96 sq.m." as a Holocaust Memorial wagon and a video display on deportations.

African rift valley), the founding of the Eretz-Israeli Potash Company in pre-state Israel, and ICL's current activities.

This reporter recently joined a group of people on a tour of the centre. On display are almost no boards of text, and just a few of the original items, including an engine that the younger members of the group were happy to climb on. Instead, films and actors — some of them well-known in Israel — are the main vehicles for telling the story, along with a virtual reality tour of the camp in its early days and a quiz, the answers to which are conveyed by pressing numbers on a remote control.

- *Narrow gauge loco at Dead Sea museum).*

The movies featuring the two early Moshes — with Moshe Novomieski invariably attired in a pith helmet, suit, and tie — positively drip with the sweat, sacrifice and pioneering spirit of those who lived and worked in the searing temperatures without shade, air conditioning or modern luxuries of any kind. The tents in which some had to sleep were so suffocatingly hot that their occupants would escape to the caves of Mount Sodom for relief, visitors are told.

The Zionist narrative of building the nation then seamlessly carries over into movies that follow the operations of ICL, the Ofer family company that took over the concession to mine the Dead Sea for potash, bromine, and magnesium when the plant was privatized at the turn of this millennium.

Not that Idan Ofer, the main shareholder of both ICL and its parent, the Israel Group, has much in common with those sweaty characters of the early years. The son of a shipping magnate, he was parachuted into the chairmanship of the massive Israel Group at a fairly young age. Some years ago, he left Israel for London, reportedly to reduce his tax bill.

Most visitors will probably be unaware that ICL's franchise for the Dead Sea ends in 2030 and that the company is eager to continue mining under a new one.

That is the context for much of the messaging that comes out so strongly in the final film.

The Dead Sea has lost half of its size since 1976, mainly because water from the Sea of Galilee is diverted for human use by Syria, Jordan, and Israel and no longer replenishes the Jordan River, which ultimately ends at the Dead Sea. When it did still flow, it restocked the hundreds of millions of cubic metres of water that the saline sea loses to evaporation each year.

ICL's Dead Sea Works also contributes significantly to the dwindling of the sea. By pumping water from the deeper, northern part of the Dead Sea into vast evaporation pools at the southern end, it is responsible for around 25



(v). HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL WAGON AT HESSENTAL STATION:



- *"Schw bisch Hall-Hesselental, memorial to former KZ"*

'DIE WARTE'.

Part 3. Continuation from issue 135

We spoke also of the mission in this land amongst the talented if deeply-sunk Arab race. Already in the short time of our efforts in Haifa so much has been already demonstrated that the way we have chosen to act, through colonisation, is by far the most successful and indeed perhaps the only method to create some substantial and extensive benefit here. The poor Arab people have so deeply sunk that they have quite forgotten that a man can affect his own destiny by the work of his hands. They are not idle but they simply do not know any more that those who labour can become happier and wealthier; having been oppressed for so long into slavery they have lost all hope of a better life and have become apathetic.....The building activities in our Colony have provided occupation daily for some 60 – 100 of them and provided them with support, whereas without this opportunity they would almost have starved to death due to the increase in prices in the past year. Some came from quite a distance, from Nazareth, from Jerusalem, even from Gaza, to find work and they did so, Now they work well from sunrise to sunset, are happy and friendly. What the people lack here is activity; they have themselves sunk too low and are too poor to initiate anything themselves. Now they have to be brought to something, which in terms of extent and long-term consistency is best done by a Colonisation Society; a major aspect of the colonisation is therefore providing a means of occupation to the poor and the abandoned and to show them once again the advantages brought about by an active and orderly life style. When they then learn that their labour is worth more, depending on the skills they have learned, then they become eager to learn....

30.03.1871. Travel Report from Ch. Paulus. "...In the section that we traversed the Jezreel Valley seemed well cultivated, but this was only a smaller section; larger areas are apparently still uncultivated. There are only a few and scattered hamlets to be found, not in the plain itself but at the foot of the mountains around, which we could partially see from Tabor. When one thinks how well-populated fertile valleys in Germany are and what riches they bring forth, then one must say that in comparison the Jezreel Valley is nothing but a wilderness. I think of the Rems Valley [in Württemberg], filled with wealthy villages, and compare this to the empty Jezreel Valley, which has certainly less than a quarter of the population and is at the same time ten times as large and has potentially much more fertility....

"Those of our people who took the land route from Jaffa to Haifa along the coast recount that several rivers filled with water had to be crossed. The Nahr Zerka above Caesarea held enough water to offer crocodiles a place to live. These creatures require water the whole year through."

8.6.1871. "Noteworthy is the news that our architect Herr Schumacher has been asked by the pasha (governor) of Akka to prepare a plan for a provisional harbour at Haifa so that he can show these to the wali (governor-general) in Damascus. This would not be by any means a luxury!"

15.6.1871. Travel Report of Chr. Paulus.) "The current inhabitants of Palestine are, according to their language, all of them Arabs, however much they may have very different backgrounds, for even just by their skin colour one can see a mixture of Caucasians, Egyptians and Moors. In that they all speak Arabic one can say that there is little to distinguish them from each other apart from their outer appearance, whether they be in other respects Christians, Jews or Mohammedans. The Europeans who can be encountered in the cities, sometimes in quite large numbers, wander amongst these peoples as though they are of a different, higher species. Some of these are travellers, mostly English and American, some are employees of the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions, some are traders, and since the Templer Society began here also craftsmen and farmers. In the eyes of the Arabs these Europeans are the caste most equipped through might and wealth that there is.... and it is therefore appropriate to take some napoleons from them by honourable or by any other means...

"The Arabs are in fact very different in their status and wealth. The Greeks and Armenians are often wealthy tradesmen, the richer Mohammedans participate as effendis in the civic administration. These are well-dressed, do not work and live from the produce of their fields and gardens which are worked by the poorer Arabs, but mainly from exploitation and extortion on loans. The lower class of Arabs are fellahin and labourers, Bedouin and beggars, a subordinated people in very miserable state and because of their situation full of treachery and thievery. The fellahin usually have no property but work the government land for a fifth of the crop. There is no orderly

administration but the taxes are collected on a leased basis and this is arranged by rich Moslems who, protected by the authorities, are able to perform any injustice they wish without being punished. In recent times a change has been made from a tax in the form of natural goods to a tax in the form of money. This form of 'progress' will not however improve the sad state of the poor but could even lead to further oppression of the fellahin, because the gathering of the taxes has been placed once again in the hands of the rich who is concerned only with his own interests.

"The fellahin will never find a sympathetic ear, they are the beasts of burden upon which everything is loaded. A major reform will only come if the Government takes radical steps and introduces a new system of administration whereby the ruling families who have the privilege of oppressing the others are fully removed. But there are no people here who could then take over the administration. If it is truly desired to help, then new people must be brought here with a better developed sense of morality. Since they are also heavily taxed, the Beduin have withdrawn to east of the Jordan, so that only a few of their tribes may be encountered west of the river, and these Beduin are no noble people but more a sort of gypsy people – so in the Sharon plain, from Audsche and further. The craftsmen, who lack any real tools, are skilled in using their feet as well as their hands, though of course they can only perform the most basic tasks.

"All these lower classes live in great need, badly nourished, poorly dressed, living in clay huts together with their beasts, without any facilities of either physical or spiritual type. When an animal dies it is just left on the road where it fell, until the jackals and the vultures have consumed it; in the same way people are abandoned to their fate in life and death, for this hardness and cold-heartedness, nourished by Turkish fatalism, is one of the main characteristic of the Moslem.

"To illustrate the state of the people I can give the following example of the Turkish form of government, which was told to me in Jerusalem by a trustworthy source and which occurred during the works on the road between Jerusalem and Jaffa a few years ago. The money, which incidentally came from State funds for this purpose, remained stuck in the pockets of the pasha; instead the fellahin had to perform forced labour, not voluntarily but pushed brutally into their tasks. It was not seldom that one saw the poor people from an area of three to four hours' distance called together and transported by soldiers, their hands tied behind their backs and driven forward with sticks. Once they arrived at the construction site, without being given food or drink, they had to work in the searing heat. Others who brought their donkeys or camels to the gate were suddenly told 'the pasha needs it' and their animals were taken from them....."

29.6.1871. From a letter from Herr Schumacher we take the following: "Having been tasked by the pasha (of Akko) to prepare plans for important works along the water, I have prepared and delivered already plans and estimates for a pier in Haifa. In addition I have been busy with surveying, examinations and measurements in the Bay of Akko which should eventually serve for the erection of a fine harbour here in this important trading place. During this work I have uncovered remains of an old harbour from the time of the Crusaders.

"The pasha speaks of construction of a bridge over the Kishon (between Haifa and Akko). From the rich Arab Sursuk family, who count here as millionaires, I was commissioned to inspect the terrain between here and Nazareth; their intention is to have a road built, because they possess large lands in the valley and in the hills...."

9.11.1871. "...At the end of the first week of October some of the colonists from Haifa came to Jaffa with four horses, in order to collect the steam machine acquired from Herr Breisch & Co. in Jerusalem, for which they were assisted by two additional horses from Lutz. After the business had been successfully concluded they set off on their return journey with their horses and a wagon along the coast. The bridge over the Audsche is so derelict that it was not accessible for the wagon but they managed to cross the mouth of the river Audsche [i.e. Auje, the Yarkon near Sarona] successfully on the sand of the beach. This is the first time that the Sharon Plain has been traversed by such a vehicle in many centuries."

1872.

7.3.1872. Jerusalem 10 February 1872. Correspondence.

"In recent times our colonists have travelled to Jerusalem with their own wagons and collected their wine. They complain about the poor roads, for which one has to pay for each horse 12 piastres. The many thousands of gulden which have been paid out in this way for the most necessary repairs of the road from Jaffa are almost totally lost, for one has let the road simply decay, whereby it becomes ever more unusable. I would be overjoyed if the newly-emerged project for the construction of a railway could soon come to reality."

"In the latter half of this month the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg with his wife and daughter as well as his party are expected here... The government has already paid him some attention and the clearance of the road in the vicinity of Jerusalem and the planting of trees left and right of the Jaffa Road are largely to do with his visit. Since with every visit by an aristocrat something good is done for Jerusalem, we truly wish that more such aristocrats should choose to come here..."

"P.S. - I have just learned from a reliable source that three days ago the pasha here received the news that the Sultan has at last granted an English company a firman for the construction of a railway here, and which has purchased the plans of Dr. Zimpel for 1,000 pounds. We are very happy now to have this news."

28.3.1872. "Recently several Englishmen who are occupied with the geographical survey of the land East of the Jordan and were accompanied by Herr Missionary Klein were taken prisoner by some Beduin near Kerak, although they had paid a Beduin Sheikh for their security. They were not freed before they had paid a significant sum of money. Once this had been done they continued with their work under the protection of this horde. The Turkish government wishes to send some Military from Salt in order to bring these Sheikhs to justice. However the Beduin will surely know very well where they can withdraw hidden into the wilderness."

"... Regarding the construction of a Railway it has gone quiet again, but the fact remains that the concession has been confirmed through a firman."

9.5.1872. From the Latest Letter from the Templer Colony: "...The news which had earlier been relayed to us by a reliable source, that the Turkish Government had given the concession for the construction of a railway between Jaffa and Jerusalem, has proven to be incorrect. Such incidences and inaccuracies are understandable and forgivable when one realises that even the pasha of Jerusalem is no better informed concerning that which passes in Constantinople than anybody else...."

4.7.1872. Haifa Pier. A letter from Herr Jakob Schumacher the architect of 7 June in Haifa:

"Since there remains a hope that trade links with other cities could be built up and since our noble city administration has not yet managed to bring itself to construct a pier into the sea to ease embarkation and debarkation of goods, the Templer Society has itself carried out this task by the erection of a provisional improvised pier at the foot of Carmel Street. There is now a pier of 90 foot length into the sea, which will not only be helpful for the loading and unloading of goods... The work has already aroused a great deal of interest."

28.11.1872. "Yesterday on 7. November Grand Duke Nikolaus of Russia visited here.. The preparations and the reception which were made by the Turkish government were substantial. Also the natives got their benefit from this visit, which demonstrates that the visit of a prominent person is more useful than many fine speeches. The road towards Nablus was built and repaired for a distance of an hour from here..."

[Note: I have mainly chosen for 'Harakevet' excerpts from this fascinating reportage which relate in some way to Travel and Transport Infrastructure or to the general economic state of the land. However in view of the current conflict in which, it appears the Russian Orthodox Church plays a substantial role as a conveyor of Russian political values and interests, and not only behind the scenes, these excerpts are included.]

p.153. 16.1.1873 News from Palestine. Report on the major Church Conflict in Jerusalem.

"As is known the Crimean War was sparked off by the sparks of the Holy Grave in Jerusalem, therefore it is not unimportant to hear that also the Bulgarian church conflict is beginning get heated up at the Holy Grave. We have received the following:

"Jerusalem 20th. December 1872. The appointment of an Exarch (spiritual governor) for the Bulgarians some months ago, which was opposed by the entire Greek Church, has in recent weeks led here in Jerusalem to not-insignificant developments. The Greek Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch etc. wrote a letter of protest to the Sublime Porte, which the Patriarch of Jerusalem was also to sign. He however refused obstinately to do so, without any doubt under the influence of the Russian government, which due to its pan-Slavic policies wishes to

separate the Bulgars from the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople. He could not sign, he maintained, because one could not deny the seven million Bulgars their own Patriarch and Rite in their own language if this is what they demanded.

15 years ago the local (Greek) Monastery received already an annual tax of 10 Million Piastres, which was formerly provided by the Danube states (Walachei and Moldau = Romania). With the establishment of the Exarch seat in Bulgaria there fall another 2 Million.

The local Arabs of Greek confession and the Russians stand by their Patriarch and with his political views, only the clergy and the actual Greeks who have immigrated stand with the Greek party and do their uttermost to move the Patriarch and make him give way. This division into parties has become ever rougher in recent months, the passions rose to such a degree that the life of the Patriarch appeared to be in danger. Following pressure from the Russian Consulate the Turkish government finally saw itself compelled to introduce measures to protect the Patriarch from dangers from his own people. Now one only saw the Patriarch moving with a military escort, whilst the majority of the clergy of the Greek confession were watched by the military in their rooms. The Church was occupied by Turkish military during the times for divine services and the majority of the local Greeks formed a protective circle around their Patriarch when he went to the Church. The Synod, which stands immediately below the Patriarch, demanded that he abdicate and when the 85-year old greybeard, encouraged by the Russian Consulate, refused to do this, they elected from their number a *Wakil*, a Deputy or substitute. Three of the most honourable members of this synod stormed the Patriarchate again, forced their way into his room and under threats demanded either his abdication or his signature, as well as proof concerning the funds he had administered during the 28 years he had been in this office, an enormous sum in total of some 400 Million Piastres.

The Patriarch appealed to the Pasha for protection, and he sent military to arrest the priests and had them placed in standard Turkish prisons at the behest of the Russian Consulate. Among these three was the Bishop of Gaza, a Professor of the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem and a Dragoman of the Greek Monastery. Now the enmity reached its peak and the Pasha came into a difficult position. After two days he freed the priests once more, but did not allow them to travel to Constantinople, as they wished, and even through military measures hindered their departure; Finally however he did give his permission for their journey, to the annoyance of the Russian Consulate and the Patriarch. I omit here fuller discussion of several more minor events, for example the demand of the imprisoned clergy to be removed with honour from their prison, the refusal by the Consulate of Greek demands for protection, the withholding of the telegramme which the Synod had wished to send, etc.

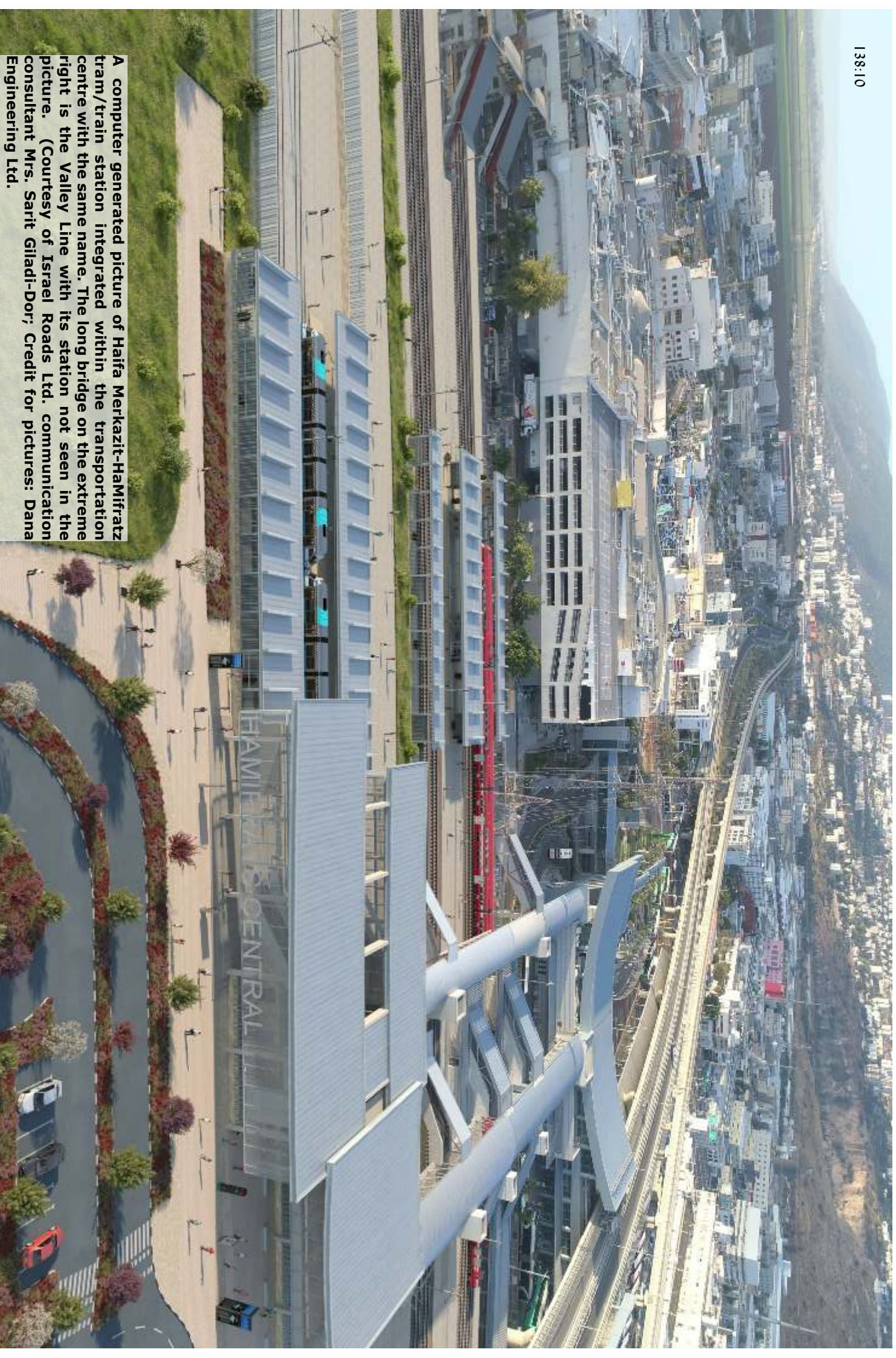
On 18th December a telegramme came from Constantinople which ordered the deposing of the Patriarch, which arrived as he was in the Church of the Sepulchre reading the Mass. His opponents demanded on the spot that he should immediately put down his book and his Patriarchal vestments, if he did not they would beat him to death. He avoided the violence, but as the Pasha entered the Church he took from him the patriarchal vestments and placed them upon the *Wakil*, in a very rude and demeaning manner. Now the people streamed together in masses and only the appearance of a large military presence could prevent even further disorder; for already fighting had broken out between Greeks and soldiers on their way to the *Serail* where the Patriarch had gone to receive the telegramme announcing his deposition.

The newly-elected *Wakil*, formally recognised by the Pasha, now riding on the *Pasha's* horse and accompanied by 150 soldiers, now entered the Church of the Sepulchre in order to be confirmed in his office by the ringing of the church bells and the dedication ceremony. Surrounded by Turkish officials and accompanied by the Turkish military he then took up his residence in the Patriarchate building.

Suddenly Jerusalem was in the state of a city that had been declared under siege; On the orders of the *Pasha* military patrols filled the streets and occupied the crossroads and drove the groups of people apart. The *Pasha* himself and other high officials were in the streets. To the question as to what was actually happening the City Guard Commander gave the laconic answer "That's Christianity for you." The military were on patrol the entire night.

In this very night the deposed Patriarch left Jerusalem and set off on his way to Constantinople, in order to defend himself. We must now wait and see whether in Stamboul the bribery will work and whether the Russian government will accept this defeat at the Holy Sepulchre.

Today it is calmer, thanks to the patrols which still criss-cross the city. Due to the charges which the Synod has made against the Patriarch regarding the misuse of funds, the local Patriarchate and other rooms have been sealed on orders of the Turkish government, and this state shall continue until a new Patriarch appointed by the *Sultan* shall come from Constantinople"



A computer generated picture of Haifa Merkazit-Hamifratz tram/train station integrated within the transportation centre with the same name. The long bridge on the extreme right is the Valley Line with its station not seen in the picture. (Courtesy of Israel Roads Ltd. communication consultant Mrs. Sarit Giladi-Dor; Credit for pictures: Dana Engineering Ltd.