

# HaRakevet

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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of Israel and the Middle East  
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150:01

## ***Hedjaz Jordan Railway Jung 2-8-2 at Amman Station***



150:02

Well, whoever thought we would ever reach issue number 150! I recall sitting at my desk in my office at the synagogue in Leeds which I served at the time and typing out the initial ideas and content, and later making a handful of photocopies to post to the few people whom I thought at the time might have some interest... Later our dining room table would be covered in bits of paper and glue as we cut and pasted (at a time when this was meant literally) items to make them fit together for further photocopying. Meeting Steve Waldenberg, who at that time worked at a firm of printers, transformed the possibilities and the technology has improved steadily since, thus enabling colour reproduction.

To be realistic, I am not sure we will make No. 200 (by 'we' I mean the team of contributors and helpers who send material and reports, photos, proof read, lay out, print and despatch the magazine, all for the love of it.) Enormous thanks to Aharon, Jeremy, Sybil, Chen, Steve and others... We (I) still lose money on each issue, but since it seems important to put out more and better news in these times of fake news and propaganda, it is worth it. And it is a labour of love. Let's keep going as long as we can.

The last Quarter has seen further brutal conflict but also signs of progress, new projects, new infrastructure despite more missile attacks on Israel. Across the region and as far as China some people at least are thinking strategically in terms of logistics and lines to link the Far East, Central Asia and the Gulf region with the Mediterranean. This creates some difficulties in allocating specific wide-ranging projects to a specific rubric in section 07, but that is the least of the problems.

In Israel, work progresses on Light Rail projects and construction despite the conflict and the pressures on the economy this brings; In mid-August an accident on IR led to catenary and masts being demolished by a fault on a train, causing more damage than the war....

At the beginning of September, as this issue is 'put to bed', things look grim in some parts of the Middle East and yet are flourishing in others. High-speed passenger lines, cross-border trunk freight routes, urban transport... all are being planned and built. One problem has been that there is so much material that once again some items have had to be held back to the next issue. But we present what we can and hope, as always, for better times in the future.....

The Editor

150:03



• IC3 set 7001 being repainted for the Israel Railway Museum. (Photo Chen Melling)

### (i). FIRST QUARTER RESULTS

From a press release of 21.05.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

The Railways have published their results for the 1st Quarter (Q1) of 2025:

18.1 million passengers were carried during the mentioned period, compared with 15.8M over the same period of 2024; up by 2.8M; up by 18.3%.

The daily average traffic grew from 232,000 in Q1 of 2024 to 272,000 over the same period of 2025; up by 17%.

The rise in traffic is thanks to an increased mileage of passenger cars by 19% on Q1.

The average punctuality during Q1 was 95.6% when ignoring the influence of Red Colour war alarms, compared with 96.64% over the same period of 2024; without ignoring the influence of Red Colour war alarms, punctuality was 95.1%.

The income during Q1 were \$260M (NIS 908.5M); up by 9.6% compared with the same period of 2024. Income from Passenger services was \$17.43M (NIS 61M); up by 13% compared with the same period of 2024.

The railways carried 1.7M tons of Freight over Q1 compared with 1.4 M tons over the same period of 2024; up by 16%. Income from freight haulage was \$12.3M (NIS 43M); 10% higher than on 2024 Q1.

Income from various rentals were up by 30% to \$7.43M (NIS 26M).

In the bottom line the railways reached a net profit of \$1.14M (NIS 4M) down from \$16.5M (NIS 57.8 million) during Q1 of 2024! This is explained by an increase of 48% (\$5.7M = NIS 20M) on guarding and security costs as well as maintenance and computerization costs.

During the Q1 the railways increased the investments on new projects by \$271.4M (NIS 950 million), among others the Eastern Line, line 431 between Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan - Rishonim - Anava Junction (to Mod'in and Jerusalem), 4th track on the Ayalon line, double-tracking of the coast line, etc.

During the last year, the two Israeli credit rating companies "Ma'a lot" and "Midrug" raised the railways credit rate from AA+ to AAA."

### (ii). VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AWARENESS DAY

From a press release of 06.06.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Today, 06.06.2025, is the Visual Impairment Awareness Day in Israel, and the railways have unveiled the number of blind passengers or with limited visibility who used rail services: In May 2025 7,188 used the services compared with 7,188 on July 2024; between June 2024 and May 2025, 19,000 used rail compared with 17,000 during the same period of 2023/2024; up by 11%.

### (iii). MODI'IN SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Israel Railways Ltd., have significantly improved the services between Modi'in Central and Jerusalem Navon from 25.05.2025 by adding 14 trains daily; at rush hours there are now 2 trains/hour each direction.

It takes 29 minutes from Modi'in Central to Jerusalem Navon, from Modi'in Outskirts to Jerusalem Navon it takes 22 minutes;

In the opposite direction, it takes 17 minutes between Jerusalem Navon and Modi'in Outskirts, and 25 minutes to Modi'in Central; the reason for the difference is that the gradients are descending!

The line was opened in 2018 and has since carried 35 million passengers.

### (iv). TRACKWORKS

(a) Hof HaCarmel - Binyamina. On Friday, 18.06.2025, the railways performed vital track maintenance works at the Atlit area, as an integral part of the annual infrastructure works programme. As a result, the section between the stations of Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Binyamina was closed and services were provided in split with a combination of train and alternative free bus shuttle services. Traffic resumed on Saturday night 24.05.2025 at about 21:30.

#### (b). Rishon to Ashkelon

From a press release of 01.06.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As an integral part of improving the services and safety for passengers, works of raising the height track in order to reduce the gap between train and platform, will be performed at the stations of Rishon LeZion Moshe Dayan, Holon, Bat-Yam, Yavne-West, Ashdod Ad-Halom and Ashkelon.

As a result, the above-mentioned stations will be closed between Thursday, 05.06.2025 at 21:00 and Sunday, 08.06.2025 at 05:00. The railways will provide alternative bus shuttle services free of charge between the closed stations. Traffic will resume on Sunday, 08.06.2025 at 05:00."

#### (c). Herzliya.

"The railways are upgrading Herzliya station and, due to erecting massive bridges beams, Haifa - Tel-Aviv Ayalon Highway No. 20 will be partially closed at the station nearby from Thursday 03.07.2025 at 23:00 and Friday 04.07.2025 at 17:00."

#### (d) Binyamina area.

"Additionally, and as part of the annual programme to perform vital track works at Binyamina area, the stations of Binyamina, Caesarea/Pardes-Hanna, Hadera West, Netanya and Beit-Yehoshua will be closed for traffic on Friday 04.07.2025. Traffic on both sites will resume on Saturday night at about 21:30."

#### (e) Kiryat Gat

"As an integral part of the railways' annual maintenance, vital works will be performed at the Kiryat-Gat station area; the stations of Kiryat-Malachi/Yoav and Mazkeret Batya will be closed on Friday, 11.07.2025. Traffic will resume on Saturday night 12.07.2025 at about 21:30."

#### (f). Ashdod.

From a press release of 09.07.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways will perform vital works at the Ashdod area, causing changes on rail traffic both on Friday 18.07.2025 and on Saturday night 19.07.2025. As a result, the station of Ashkelon will be closed and trains on Ashkelon - Herzliya and Ashkelon - Binyamina lines will start/terminate at Ashdod Ad-Halom station; alternative bus shuttle

services will be provided between the closed stations. Traffic will resume on Sunday, 20.07.2025 at 05:00."

#### (g). Lod.

From a press release of 20.07.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways will perform vital works at Lod area on Friday 25.07.2025 only. As a result, the following changes to rail traffic will take place:

Services on the Be'er-Sheva Central - Nahariya line will be split; between Be'er-Sheva Central and Lod and between Tel-Aviv HaHagana and Nahariya.

Services on the Ashkelon - Binyamina line will be split; between Ashkelon and Lod and between Tel-Aviv HaHagana and Binyamina.

Services on the Beit-Shemesh - Netanya line will be split; between Beit-Shemesh and Lod and between Tel-Aviv HaHagana and Nahariya.

Traffic will resume on Saturday night 26.07.2025 at about 22:00.

#### (h). Ashdod.

From a press release 24.07.2025: "...Works will be performed in the Ashdod area on Thursday 31.07.2025, Friday 01.08.2025 and Saturday night 02.08.2025. As a result, the following changes to traffic will take place:

On Friday 01.08.2025 and Saturday night 02.08.2025, the station of Ashdod will be closed. Trains on the Be'er-Sheva - Netanya line will operate in split mode; between Be'er-Sheva and Ashkelon and between Ashdod and Netanya.

Trains on the Ashkelon - Herzliya line and Ashkelon - Binyamina will start/terminate at Ashdod and will not call at Ashkelon on Thursday 31.07.2025.

On Friday 01.08.2025 and Saturday night 02.08.2025 these services will start/terminate at Rehovot and Yavne West. The railways will provide free bus shuttle services between the closed stations. Traffic will resume on Sunday 03.08.2025 at about 05:00."

#### (i). TEL AVIV SHUTDOWN

From 'Times of Israel' 19.08.2025: "Israel Railways announced on Tuesday that schedules would be further interrupted in the coming days, shuttering all train traffic through Tel Aviv for seven days.

The company said it decided to carry out routine maintenance work alongside ongoing repairs that have already shut down much of the route in central Israel, after a freight train damaged several hundred metres of electric cable infrastructure near the Ganot Junction, south of Tel Aviv, last Thursday. The repairs, which are expected to take a week and a half to complete, have already caused significant disruptions to train traffic

Passengers travelling between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have been required to switch at Ben Gurion Airport, as the electric-powered trains that operate along the route cannot continue into Tel Aviv. Diesel-powered trains have been operating as an alternative. In addition, trains running along the Ashkelon - Binyamina and Beit Shemesh - Netanya lines have been terminating at Lod until the infrastructure is repaired, and service has been cancelled altogether between Ganei Aviv and Kfar Chabad.

On Tuesday, Israel Railways said additional train stations in Tel Aviv would be shuttered, and there would be no service through the busy city from Wednesday, August 20, until August 26. It said that it decided to "take advantage of the opportunity" posed by the need to repair the damaged electrical cables and would be carrying out safety and maintenance work on the tracks. The maintenance work had originally been scheduled for September, but the rail network said in a statement

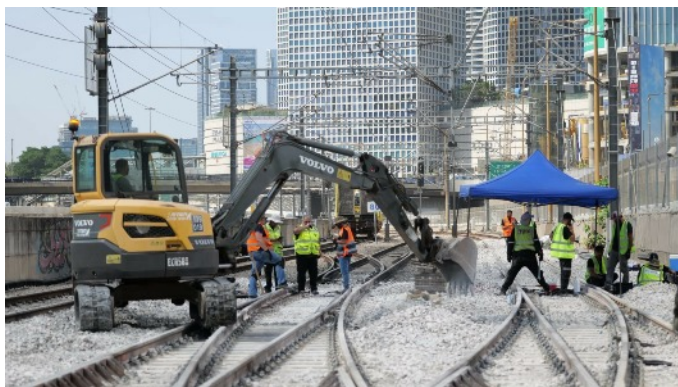
that it had decided to bring it forward so as not to cause "twice as much harm to the travelling public."

As a result, the Tel Aviv HaShalom railway station will be shuttered for the next seven days, and deep-cleaned, joining Tel Aviv HaHagana, which has been closed since Friday morning.

This means that trains from Jerusalem and Modi'in will only be able to travel as far as Ben Gurion Airport, while trains from northern Israel will not be able to continue past Tel Aviv Savidor Center, and trains from the south will terminate at the Lod railway station.

Acknowledging the impact of these changes on passengers, Israel Railways said that "to make things easier for the public," it would be operating a temporary rail replacement bus service between Tel Aviv HaHagana, Tel Aviv HaShalom, and Tel Aviv Savidor Center, free of charge, with buses running every five minutes.

Despite the heavy disruptions – which on Sunday were compounded by a nationwide strike that saw large protests shut down some of Israel's busiest roads – Transportation Minister Miri Regev insisted on Monday that there was "no transportation chaos," and that the situation was merely "unpleasant." Her comments contradicted the opinions of Israel Railways officials, who told media outlets last week that the damage caused by the freight train was "a mega-event like no other we have experienced." (See more on this story and photos below.)



### (v). WAR NEWS

On 15.06.25 Aharon wrote:

"Please accept my apologies for a late report: We are at war and I try to manage sending the report between war alarms.

"Trains are operating between Herzliya and Be'er-Shava as well as between Nahariyya and Tel-Aviv and between Herzliya and Jerusalem and Modi'in at a frequency of 1 train/hour in each direction.

Some passenger trains are on alert to carry soldiers as well as to evacuate wounded people.

Both the Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv LRV services are not in operation; the Tel-Aviv LRV Red Line underground stations are used as shelters."

### WAR AGAIN!

"Again, this report is sent between alarms, hence the delay.

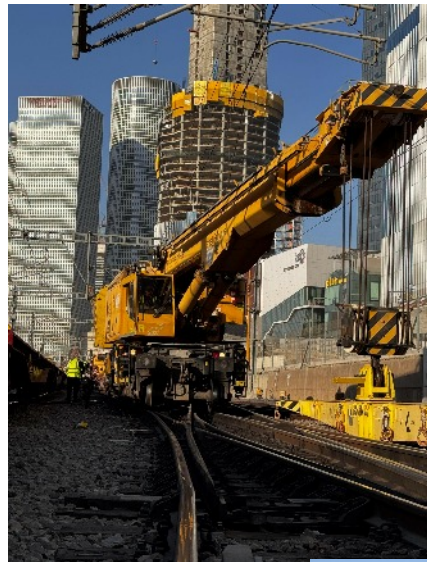
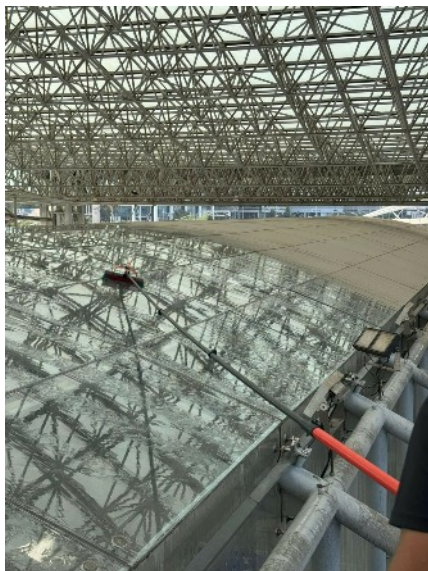
While there was slight optimism last week and some of the railway lines returned to about 60% services, from this morning's attack, every service is reduced to minimum and only vital services are provided.

Both the stations of Be'er-Sheva North/University and Rehovot which were hit by missiles and temporarily closed, but were put into service within a few hours, but Rehovot is now closed again.

The Tel-Aviv LRV Red Line is closed and the underground stations are used as shelters; Ben-Gurion Airport station is closed as is the airport itself, it managed to provide services for a short time for Israelis who were lucky to be able to be returned to Israel by a few evacuation flights; this can be seen in the pictures with many passengers.

Due to the special circumstances, I'm attaching various pictures; explanations to come later whenever possible; credit for all: Israel Railways Ltd.; the picture of the platforms are from Rehovot showing the damage and after repair."

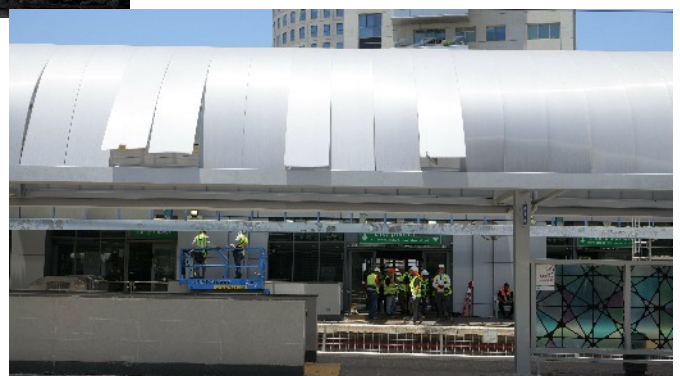
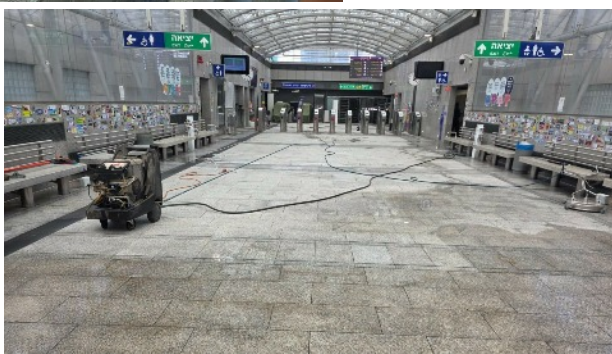
### • Damage at Rehovot station



Then on 29.06.25 came this:

"Since the cease fire agreement of last week, the following steps took place to resume services:

Already on 25.06.2025, 77% of the stations were fully operational, this included also the service resuming



on the Carmiel - Be'er-Sheva line as well as the Beit-Shemesh - Netanya line; the service end changed from 21:00 to 24:00 and service frequency from 1 to 2 trains/ hour each direction.

As of today - 29.06.2025 - all services have resumed; this is remarkable due to the fact that 700 employees, including 250 security persons, were recruited to the IDF Reserve forces.

The railways managed also to perform vital maintenance works at the stations of Lod and Nahariya on Friday 27.06.2025."

**(vi). NEW CARRIAGES FOR BICYCLES**

In the first week of June the railways received from Alstom the first 3 out of 81 push/pull carriages ordered specially built to carry bike riders; unloaded at the port of Ashdod.

- [- UNLOADING NEW CARRIAGES AT ASHDOD.](#) [PHOTO: TRANSPORT MINISTRY.](#)



**(vii). DOUBLE DECKER COILS**

From a press release of 06.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry & Israel Railways Ltd.:

"For the first time in the Israeli rail history, a freight train departing from the Israeli Shipyard at Haifa carried steel coils on special "double-deck" cars fitted especially for the purpose, and which terminated at a steel factory at Kiryat-Gat.

The railways are already operating 20 wagons of this sort and by the end of July 2025 there will be 50 such wagons; this will enable carrying up to 50 coils/wagon (compared with current 25), and further on to

carry up to 2,000 tons of coils on a train." [See below for a less-positive event connected to the new wagons!]



**(viii). POLITICS**

On 12.07.2025 Steve Sattler wrote:

"It's on again:- The IR system has a lot of cash and plans, and the Ministry of Transport wants railways to be the primary mode of transport across Israel. But they argue; and the MOT says that the IR is badly run.

This argument breaks out every few months or years or so. The main complaint from the MOT is that the IR is working too slowly to develop new rail-routes and stations. The IR says that these delays are unavoidable.

The MOT wants 300 million train-travellers every year on the trains and consider the IR executive is working too slowly to link all the main nodes the public needs for an efficient train service. So, the MOT is now threatening to fire the current Director - Moshe Zena; He has been in his job for almost two years.

The five main issues that the MOT is angry about are :-

- 1... the incomplete rail route from Jerusalem - through the Anava station and complex to Rishon- LeZion, that is 2 years behind in construction. The Anava complex is West of Modiin and is a series of bridges and tunnels that take rail traffic from Jerusalem direct to Rishon-LeZion at high speed. This same Anava complex will - in the future - serve the new North - South rail system parallel to Kvish 6 - the toll road.
- 2... The incomplete station and tracks at the Me'uyan Sorek station complex (2 kms SW of Rishon-LeZion). This area has a major industrial zone but the closest station is Be'er Yaakov, 5 kms away. The station and tracks are there but incomplete.
- 3... The complex of tracks and stations South of Beer Sheba - to serve the new IDF bases there. The planning is complete but only a few kms. of tracks have been built.
- 4... The plan to have most of the IR tracks fully wired for electric operation that was to be completed by 2024 is now pushed to 2027.
- 5... The incomplete and badly-supervised programme to raise or lower those station platforms that do not match the height of the new rolling stock. In many cases the height of the step - up or down - is 20 cms. (An example:- part of the HaHaganah station platform has been closed for repairs - for over 1 year)

It seems that pressure from the MOT may cause the current Director to 'leave' soon." [See (xv) below.]

**(ix). BETTER RECEPTION**

From a press release of 09.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry:

"The Ministries of Transport and Communication are promoting the improvement of cellular reception on passenger trains by fitting laser-engraved windows; the pilot has been successful and so far

**(x) NEW TERMINAL AT HAIFA**

From a press release of 09.07.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The Israeli logistic services provider Gold Bond will create a rail link from its Haifa terminal Con Term at an investment of \$5.56M (NIS 12M); the terminal will be built and maintained by Israel Railways Ltd.; works are planned to be complete at the end of 2027 and the concession is until 2038 with extensions.

The new terminal will be linked with the whole network including Beit-She'an at the border with Jordan where Bond has a terminal."

**(xi). UPGRADE TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION**

From a press release of 16.07.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

—Due to the rise in passenger traffic, the railways have significantly upgraded the railways' Application and Internet site, showing among the others the load factor, the sort of selected train (number of cars, location of bike carrying car, etc.), next train, etc.

**(xii). BETH SHEMESH STATION UPGRADE**

From a press release of 15.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry:

—The Transport Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd. have recently completed a massive upgrading of the Beit-Shemesh station. Beit-Shemesh is a rapidly growing city south/west of Jerusalem with a population of more than 180,000.

The upgrading has been performed at a cost of \$1.49M (NIS 5M) and included renovation of the entrance hall, improving the underground pedestrian subway, full canopies on island platforms 2 & 3, new firefighting equipment, re-covering walls, etc.

This station joins the stations of Be'er-Ya'akov and Rehovot which have been recently upgraded and Ashdod where massive upgrading works are to start soon.

- Israel Railways Ltd.



**(xiii). JERUSALEM TRANSFORMATION**

From a press release of 21.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd.:

Both bodies are starting to build the Jerusalem Khan station (the site of the historical station of the line from Jaffa; opened on 26.09.1892), as part of extending the A1 direct fast link with Tel-Aviv and with the rest of the network.

The 5.5 km extension will be built entirely underground at 60m below street level. The other station will be called Central Jerusalem and will be built under Jaffa Street at its central section. When completed, there will be 13 trains/hour in each direction, carrying 20,000 passengers/hour on both directions. The project is budgeted for \$133M (NIS 400M) of which \$15M (NIS 50M) have been recently allocated to promote works.

The LRV Green Line which will pass at the nearby will create full connectivity with other modes of public transport.

- Computer generated pictures of the Jerusalem Khan station; i Provided and credited by Israel Railways Ltd.)



*[The Editor finds his breath taken away by the sheer size and scope of the urban developments planned here, that will dwarf the former station and change the entire atmosphere of the area.]*

#### (xiv). COASTAL HIGH-SPEED LINE PROJECT STARTS

From 'Jerusalem Post' 27.07.2025, based on a press release of 24.07.25: "Railways to launch high-speed line by 2029.

*ACCORDING TO THE TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY, TRAINS ON THE NEW LINE WILL BE CAPABLE OF SPEEDS UP TO 250 KILOMETRES PER HOUR.* Israel Railways is preparing to break ground on what is considered the largest infrastructure project in the company's history – a high-speed rail line that would slash travel time between Tel Aviv and Haifa to just 30 minutes.

The Finance Ministry recently transferred \$90.6M - NIS 300M - to the Transportation Ministry to advance the initiative, known as the Coastal Railway project. The line is part of a planned national high-speed rail network that stretches from Kiryat Shmona in the north to Eilat in the south. Completion is expected in 2029.

According to the Transportation Ministry, trains on the new line will be capable of speeds up to 250 kilometres per hour. The first phase will involve preliminary work on approximately 70 km of track from Hof-HaCarmel station in Haifa to the vicinity of Shefayim, following the completion of land expropriations. The line will be fully electrified.

The Coastal Railway will connect with a broader infrastructure plan aimed at developing a dual-track system linking Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beersheba. The upgrade is intended to double the number of train lines between central Israel and outlying regions.

With a total budget of \$4.5Bn. - NIS 15.5 Bn. - the Coastal Railway is reportedly the most expensive transport project ever undertaken by Israel Railways.

#### AYALON PROGRESS

At the same time, construction continues on the Ayalon fourth track – another major project intended to increase the country's overall rail capacity. Transportation Minister Miri Regev said the project represents a significant advancement in the country's rail system.

'Another step in the transportation revolution'

"Advancing the Coastal Railway project is another step in the transportation revolution we are leading, connecting the country's metropolitan centres with its periphery," she said. "A 30-minute ride from Haifa to Tel Aviv is no longer a dream – it's a near-term goal." She said the ministry aims to reach approximately 300 million annual train journeys by 2040, five times the current volume.

Transportation Ministry Director-General Moshe Ben Zaken said the initiative will bring about "a true revolution in Israel's transportation landscape and travel habits," and will require coordination among all stakeholders along the route."



#### (xv). ANOTHER CHANGE OF GENERAL MANAGER:

On 24. July 2025 Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Moshe Shiko Jana announced his resignation after being in the job about two years.

He will remain in the office until 15.08.2025; his successor is Mr. Avner Fluer from the Transport Ministry.

#### (xvi). LINE 431 PROGRESS

From a press release of 27.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry: "The Finance Ministry has transmitted today, 27.07.2025, a budget of \$53M (NIS 175M) for completion of works on line No. 431 (carrying the number of the highway in the median of which it runs.) The 30 km of line link Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan station and those of Modi'in and Jerusalem without the need to change trains at Tel-Aviv; the new line will cut travel times by half. Initially, there will be 2 trains/hour each direction to be increased later to 4 trains/hour each direction. The line is to be operational in 2027."

#### (xvii). FULFILLING A DREAM

Amongst all the misery and stress, a bit of human-interest good news:

From a press release of 24.07.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Sometimes Dreams come true:

On 24.07.2025 IR fulfilled a dream for Yaheli Keren, a 10 year old rail enthusiast from Petach-Tikva exactly on his 10th birthday. His mother Mrs. Sharona Keren had said that he was interested in railways since his early childhood.

Yaheli himself surprised Mr. Marom Amrani, the Head of the railways' drivers, who took him on the train, explained driving principles and gave him a modest gift.

Yaheli himself said: "You provided me with an experience I'll remember all my life!"

#### (xviii). NEW SECURITY CHIEF

From a press release of 04.08.2025 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways' directorate headed by the Chairman Mr. Moshe Shimoni, has approved the appointment of Colonel (in Reserve) Mr. Yossi Ben Simchon, as VP for Safety, Security, and Environment; he comes after serving at the IDF (Israeli Defence Army) for 28 years in a variety of jobs regarding safety, command and training."

#### (xix). THE LINE TO EILAT....AGAIN.

I have a copy of a book "The Railway of the Three Seas" dated 1963. This project has been raised repeatedly. At one point Russia offered to build it for free in return for some trading concessions. This now from 'Times of Israel' 13.08.2025 - Interesting is that in normal cases one expects objections from people living along the route of a new line, whereas here the objections come from those who want to keep this space empty and untouched..

"Initial plans for a controversial rail link from Dimona in southern Israel to Eilat on the Red Sea will be presented at an online meeting open to the general public on Thursday.

The idea of a railway from Eilat has been touted in the past, approved in

multiple government decisions and planned before being cancelled due to its huge expense. The latest iteration follows a 2023 government decision to link the whole of Israel, from north to south, by fast trains traveling up to 250 kilometres (155 miles) per hour.

The plan is being developed not by Israel Railways, but by the state company for transportation infrastructure, Netivei Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has personally pushed for such a project for years.

Running 180 kilometres (112 miles), the proposed lines will cut through the Negev and Arava deserts, including the so-called Land of Craters, recognized by a government resolution in 1992 as an area that "contains unique natural values, on a national and international scale."

The Israel Lands Authority is also planning a solar field twice the size of Tel Aviv in the Land of Craters.

The rail project will include passenger and freight lines, passenger stations, a freight terminal, operating stations and additional structures.

In a presentation on the project, Netivei Israel says it will shorten travel times from the center of the country to Eilat, link Eilat's port to ports in southern Ashdod and northern Haifa and reduce heavy vehicular traffic on Route 90, Israel's main north-to-south highway.

The new rail line will also help increase cargo transport to and from Eilat, boost the southern city's Ramon Airport and create jobs, while increasing demand for housing in the relatively sparsely populated Arava.

Controversially, from an environmental point of view, both the passenger and freight lines envisioned in the plan would run through and along the boundaries of several nature reserves, with multiple bridges constructed over streams, such as the Zin stream. Passenger trains, for example, would cross some 11 kilometres (6.8 miles) through the Makhteshim and Ein Yahav Nature Reserve.

The presentation goes into a lengthy analysis of the environmental challenges, including the presence of numerous nature reserves, the need to preserve vegetation and restore habitats after construction and the importance of ecological corridors, which allow wildlife to move around and plants to spread. It notes the landscape values of many locations along the lines and the presence of numerous IDF firing ranges. The Netivei Israel presentation does not include any financial data.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) this week dubbed the project "one of the most destructive to nature and landscape in recent years," adding that it will likely cost tens of billions of shekels. In a position paper, it charges that the lines will cause severe environmental damage, while bringing limited benefits to the State of Israel, the south of the country, and Eilat.

Reacting to Netivei Israel's estimate that the Dimona to Eilat line will provide 8.2 million trips a year by 2040, the environmental group says that the only transportation project more expensive than this is the Tel Aviv metro. The latter will eventually comprise three lines totaling 150 kilometers (93 miles) and 100 passenger stations, and will allow for two million trips every day.

An SPNI spokesman told the Times of Israel, "Some of the sites the trains are expected to pass are located deep in the Negev and the Arava, in areas that people rarely reach and are therefore the cleanest, wildest, most natural and beautiful places, rich in wildlife."

The public is invited to register for Thursday's meeting by Zoom."

*[From a geopolitical perspective it seems clear that Israel will soon be turning gradually away from an increasingly-hostile Europe and more towards the East, the Indian Ocean and Pacific countries and better transport links will be vital. Whether one needs to travel at 250km/h rather than, say, 160km/h over such a relatively short distance (though it will make a big difference to the infrastructure costs) is another matter. Ed.]*

## (xx). IT AIN'T 'ARF HOT, MUM!

From 'Times of Israel' 14.08.2025: "Meanwhile, the soaring heat also affected infrastructure in some parts of the country. Israel Railways announced Wednesday that it had imposed an 80-kilometre-per-hour (50 miles per hour) speed limit on some of its train routes due to the extreme temperatures, which were causing some of the rails to expand. It said the move would cause some delays and urged the public to check for updates." (On 13.08 temperatures were ranging from ca. 40° in Jerusalem to 49° in the Jordan Valley).

## (xxi). OVERHEAD CATENARY CATASTROPHE!

**A BIT OF A SAGA: (A). THE INITIAL REPORT BY STEVE SATTLER ON 15.08:** "An unusual accident: As a result of a moving train causing damage to the wires and support masts, repairs will take at least a week and the damage is in the millions

A double-deck freight train - a relatively new train that was introduced into service in July 2025, see (vii) above - hit some loose overhead live cables (twice) and then grabbed the relevant support poles without stopping. It continued and caused more damage further on the tracks. The initial damage was near the Ganot interchange - some 4.3 kms East of Holon - south of Tel Aviv.

A massive train schedule disruption is now part of the coming week. Many normal train routes will only be able to run partially, or will need to be cancelled. A few stations will be closed and local buses will be very over-loaded from all the extra passenger demands."

(b). Then: "The accident happened on Thursday 14th August. An empty train from Ashdod, travelling North to the Haifa port, with four double-deck steel coil wagons, hit some loose overhead wires which had possibly expanded and sagged from the heat (it was 39°). It dragged the mass of wires and then the support masts with it.

The train initially hit and dragged the wires near the Ganot Interchange; it did not stop, but continued North and hit wires a second time between Netanya and Hadera. The overhead wires were so strong that they didn't break, but they dragged the metal support poles off their bolted foundations.

Israel Railway experts are suggesting that the 'empty' train had some metal hardware sticking-up above the accepted height limit. What is clear is that the locomotive continued and the driver was, initially at least, unaware of what was happening behind his cab. The damage is estimated in the millions.

Repair crews started work from Friday, worked over Shabbat and at night. The main repairs will take 3-4 days, but secondary repairs will take two weeks. In the meantime, IR is trying to use their stock of Diesel locomotives to replace electric locomotives. A logistic 'mess' is now in place.

IR has meanwhile asked for all relevant bus services to increase their capacity and frequency.

From Sunday 17th August. (1) The Beer Sheba - Nahariya line will also stop at Netanya. (2) The Modiin - Nahariya line will also stop at BGA airport, Caesaria, Hadera and Netanya.

Other lines will split: The Beit Shemesh and Netanya service will now split into Beit-Shemesh to Lod, and Tel Aviv/Savidor to Netanya. Also the Beer Sheba to Netanya service will split from the South to Lod, and from the Tel Aviv stations to Netanya.

The Southern Ashkelon line will run only to Lod.

The Jerusalem/ Navon service to the coast will only run to the BGA airport.

Kfar-Habad and Ganei Aviv stations are closed at this time.

IR is making the main effort to have passenger services running as best as possible, with the highest priority for passenger trains. IR is providing free bus services between the temporary station centres like Lod or Haifa to other open stations."

(c). On Sunday 17.08.25 came this:

"Following the double accident by the train first near the Ganot Interchange and then the second 'destruction' of overhead wires and supporting poles between Netanya and Hadera, the train managers are still trying to fix, adjust and schedule regular train travel. The Chief Manager announced that it will take at least one and half weeks to have relatively normal train schedules. An investigation committee has been established to investigate and prevent any future accidents of this kind.

Part of the rail network is closed down and crews are working to replace, re-build and then test those support poles and the overhead wires that were torn and dragged by the train.

The Deputy CEO of IR is assembling the internal investigation of the accident. The Ministry of Transport will also, in parallel open a second investigation.

Meanwhile, bus services have been increased and also free buses take train traveller from open stations past closed stations further up the tracks. This is particularly true for the greater Gush Dan region that centres on Tel Aviv.

The IR website - in Hebrew and English - collapsed this morning, but by 10.15 it was back in service.

(d) The CEO of IR, Avi Al-Maliach, at a press conference this morning gave a review of the accident but would not confirm or deny if an empty 'goods train' was the reason for the accident; the subject is still being investigated by the professional committee and so when the investigation is complete the public will be informed.

The professional investigation committee is led by the deputy CEO Yossi Ben Simchon and he has a team of professionals. A question that was asked at the press conference was ... "Why the central control room (at Lod) did not notice the first accident and then stop the train and close the rest of the tracks?"

"A part of the investigation will look at this aspect of the accident " he said."

(e). Next day, 18th August: "Transportation Minister Miri Regev addressed for the first time the railway malfunction that led to heavy congestion and said: "We have established an investigation team that is currently working in several directions; It's unpleasant, but the railway continued to operate." She noted that "Malfunctions happen, we need to examine how this occurred and see how these things don't happen again. Where people need to be held accountable - people will be held accountable; where fixes are needed - we will fix."

(f). Jeremy states that on one of the new double-stack coil wagons a lid or something became raised and this hit the wires; the train was indeed stopped, the lid was closed again and the train was allowed to continue, but the lid rose up again further north...

(g). On Tuesday 19.08: From an anonymous and exasperated contributor: (She knows who she is)...

"More chaos. No trains through Tel Aviv for six days. TA Hashalom will be closed.

On IR website today:

- Beersheva to Netanya line operating normally (via Ashkelon, Rehovot and Lod).

- Beersheva to Nahariyya line operating normally, including a stop at Netanya.

- Modi'in to Nahariyya line operating normally, including stops at Ben-Gurion Airport, Caesarea-Pardess Hanna, Hadera West and Netanya.

- Rishonim to Lod line operating normally.

- Beit Shemesh to Netanya line working from Beit Shemesh to Lod and from TA Savidor to Netanya.

- Jerusalem to Herzliya line operating only as far as BG Airport, including night trains.

- Beersheva to Karmiel line operating only from Karmiel to Haifa Hof-HaCarmel.

Kfar Chabad and Lod-Ganei Aviv stations are closed.

... Needless to say there is much wailing and gnashing of teeth. Fuming passengers on the TV news. And where is dear transport minister Miri Regev? Flying off to America tomorrow for two weeks. Yes, that Miri Regev, who famously said - when thousands of Israelis were stuck abroad when the airport was closed during the Israel-Iran war, many with no accommodation or money to pay for it if they could find anywhere to stay - "Lucky you: enjoy your extended holiday." One comment at the time was: "It's the modern equivalent of 'let them eat cake.'"

(h). Then on 23.08, better news on ynet : "Relief in transportation chaos: Ganei Aviv and Kfar Chabad stations reopen, some train lines partially restored.

Several train lines disrupted last week have resumed operation amid the transportation chaos caused by a severe malfunction and damage to electrification infrastructure in central Israel. As of this morning, trains arriving from the south will stop at Tel Aviv HaHaganah station, trains on the Beit Shemesh - Netanya line will reach Lod, and the Kfar Chabad and Lod-Ganei Aviv stations have reopened. According to Israel Railways, Tel Aviv HaShalom station will also reopen tomorrow, and train traffic will fully resume except for a few delays: the Ashkelon - Binyamina line will temporarily terminate at Herzliya, and the Carmiel - Beer Sheva line will operate with train transfers. Direct trains are expected to return to service on September 1."

(i). "LRJ." 19.08 reported thus:

"IR services have been severely disrupted following extensive damage to overhead electrification equipment at two locations caused by a freight train on August 14. The freight was heading north from Ashdod to Haifa, and first became entangled in overhead wiring at Ganot Junction, 4.3km east of Holon and south of Tel Aviv. The catenary may have sagged due to the ambient temperature of 39°C, and was dragged by the train which did not stop.

The train later came into contact with the overhead wires a second time at Kfar Vitkin, located north of Tel Aviv between Netanya and Hadera. The catenary masts did not break as the train dragged the wiring they supported, but were torn off their bolted foundations.

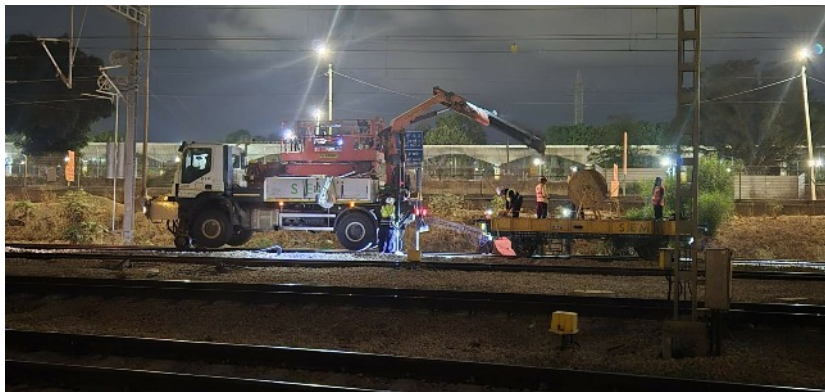
Electrification equipment has been severely damaged over several hundred metres, with repairs expected to cost millions of Shekels. IR began work to repair the damage on August 15, with crews working around the clock. Main repairs were expected to take three to four days to complete, and secondary repairs two weeks.

In the meantime, IR has fallen back on diesel traction and passenger services have been severely disrupted. The main line and Kfar-Habad and Ganei Aviv stations between Tel Aviv and Lod are closed, as is the line between Netanya and Binyamina, with replacement bus services in operation.

IR has launched an internal investigation headed by its deputy CEO, Yossi Ben Simchon, while the Ministry of Transport has opened its own parallel investigation. At this stage, the cause of the accident is believed to have been incorrectly secured steel plate or coil carried on double-deck wagons which came into contact with overhead wires."

(j). Then at last on 25.08.25:

"Yesterday, 24.08.2025, the services resumed at Tel-Aviv HaHaganah, Kfar-Habad (between Tel-Aviv and Lod) and Lod Ganei-Aviv. Today, 25.08.2025, services resume at Tel-Aviv HaShalom station, thus all the network is re-linked."



#### (xxii). LINES TO THE NORTH

On 18.08.2025: "Transportation Minister Miri Regev held a press conference in the Hula Valley, where she discussed plans for developing transportation infrastructure in the north, emphasizing an airport at Ramat David and a railway to Kiryat Shemona. "We are advancing with the planning of Ramat David, the planned railway already has a station there," Regev said, "so we don't make the mistake we made with Ramon,

which was established without a railway. It's not logical - national infrastructure must be connected and linked."

#### (xxiii). 2025 FIRST HALF RESULTS

On 13.08.2025, Israel Railways Ltd. unveiled its results for the first half of 2025:

—"The total profit for the mentioned period was \$17M (NIS 57.4M) compared with \$30M (NIS 101.76M) over the same period of 2024; down by about 45%.

The Adjusted EBITDA C \$20.2M (NIS 68.5M) compared with \$34.7M (NIS 117.2M) over the same period of 2024; down by about 41%.

The total income for the first half of 2025 were \$0.54Bn (NIS 1.81M) compared with \$0.5Bn (NIS 169M) over the same period of 2024; up by 10%.

#### Passenger Traffic:

Daily average number of passengers for the first half of 2025 was 265,000 compared with 250,000 over the same period of 2024; up by 6%; strongly affected by the war.

The total number of passengers carried over the first half of 2025 was 34.3M compared with 31.4M over the same period of 2024; up by almost 11%.

Income from passengers were \$0.47Bn (NIS 1.6Bn) compared with \$0.44Bn (NIS 1.49Bn) over the same period of 2024; up by almost 7%.

Average punctuality over the first half of 2025 was 95.7% compared with 96.81% over the same period of 2024; down by 1%; strongly affected by the war.

#### Freight Traffic:

During the first half of 2025 the railways carried 3.3M tons compared with 3.1M tons carried over the same period of 2024; up by about 8%.

The income from cargo haulage over the first half of 2025 was \$47M (NIS 152.6M) compared with almost \$48M (NIS 162.9M) over the same period of 2024; down by almost 10%.

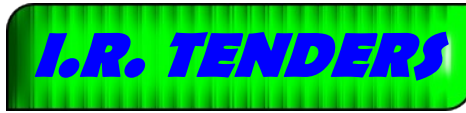
The loss from cargo haulage over the first half of 2025 was almost \$16M (NIS 52.6M) compared with \$8.9M (NIS 30.1M) over the same period of 2024; almost 180% higher loss!

The railways reached a profit of \$M8.5

150:04A

- Riyadh Metro





not rule out a proposal as long as the Respondent is able to prove, with no doubt, that such a proposal will provide substantial economic or other advantages.

(i). Israel Railways Ltd. Request for Information - RFI - Renting structures with a total area of 1,400sq.m. at Jerusalem Malkha station currently not in use: The renting is for commercial or services use. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.07.2025.

(ii). Tender No. 2: 0602: A Taxi Station at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station:

The contract is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.07.2025.

(iii). Tender No. 2506001: A 948 sq.m. area at Modi'in Central station to be rented for commercial purposes: The contract consists of the following: 6 months adjustment period; 60 months permission period; 60 months optional additional period. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.08.2025.

(iv). Tender 225192: Providing services of Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Building Fences along railway lines at the central part of the network: The tender is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to 36 additional months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 10.08.2025.

(v). Tender No. 1253185: Providing services of Maintenance, Supply and Installation of Air-Conditioning Systems at Depots, electric chambers, etc. The tender is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to 36 additional months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.09.2025.

(vi). Tender No. 124286: Providing services of Maintenance of Fuel Separators, and Removal of Depots' Waste Materials and Contaminated Oil: The tender is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to 48 additional months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 31.08.2025.

(vii). Request for Information ("RFI") Concerning ISR Future Shunting Locomotives.

"1. In recent years the railway lines in Israel have been undergoing significant development – constructing new lines and the electrification of many existing lines, particularly the main lines. In parallel Israel Railways (ISR) is expanding existing service yards and developing new yards for train maintenance, classification, sorting and shunting of coaches and wagons. To aid this activity ISR will need to acquire additional new shunting locomotives.

2. The objective of this RFI is to explore the options for future shunting locomotives for ISR, as well as to review and estimate the costs involved.

3. ISR asks for information from Manufacturers and Suppliers of such vehicles, which will include detailed particulars regarding the procurement, operation, and maintenance, all as generally defined in the "Technical Attachment" and its Attachments and as further described below. The Participants are invited to propose a standard (Diesel) or a non-standard (Electrical Batteries, Hybrid, Hydrogen or any other single or combined mode) solution for powering the shunting locomotive, provided it fulfils the operational requirements.

4. In case of slight deviation from the requirements listed herein, the Participant is still invited to submit its proposal. ISR shall

5. This RFI is not to be considered as a request for proposals or as a tender and the provisions of neither the Israeli Mandatory Tenders Law 5752-1992 nor the Government Procurement Agreement shall apply hereto.

6. Notwithstanding the aforesaid, ISR may, as a result of this RFI, at its sole and absolute consideration, approach one or more of the Respondents to this RFI and/or to any other party, in order to obtain additional information and may conduct an additional procedure, inter alia, tender

procedure, and may use, at its sole consideration, any of the information provided in this RFI..."

(This includes in §5: "Vehicle concept:

5.1.1 The primary function of the shunting locomotive will be shunting freight wagons and passenger coaches around yards and sidings operated by ISR. The wagons are of various types: flat wagons carrying containers and ISO tanks, hopper wagons carrying grains, potash, phosphates and sulfur, tank wagons carrying fuel, phosphoric acids, etc.

5.1.2 The locomotive shall be designed for continuous heavy-duty operations in dusty and relatively corrosive and abrasive environment. It is envisaged that it will be used in round-the-clock service and not less than 7000 hours per year.

5.1.3 It is envisaged that the locomotive will not be used on the railway mainline regularly, except in cases that it must be transferred from one site to another or occasionally perform short haulage missions to sidings, and it will not be used for any other purpose or require any special equipment.

5.1.4 It is essential that the proposed shunting locomotive is currently in use in similar operations and is, as much as possible, a commercial off-the-shelf item.

5.1.5 The shunting locomotive shall be suitable for one-man operation.

5.1.6 The locomotive shall include an on-board and a remote diagnostic system and communication.

5.1.7 The shunting locomotive shall have bi-directional shunting capabilities, able to drive the trains in push-pull mode. Furthermore, the operating controls should be suitable for driving in both directions comfortably for continuous time..."

(viii). Tender No. 224171: Performing works of Revetment, Digging, Excavation and Tunneling as Phase 1 of building Kukia entrance to Jerusalem Navon station: Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.08.2025.

(ix). RFQ: Call for information for renting fibre optics along the Jerusalem Navon - Modi'in Outskirts section: The contract is for 60 months with optional extension of up to 2 additional periods of 60 months each. Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.08.2025.

# Light Rail

(As with "News from the Line" we have decided to retain the chronological sequence of news items through a very disturbed period)

## A. JERUSALEM

(i). In the last issue Sybil reported on her discoveries concerning the planning (or lack of) for future light rail lines. Omitted from that report was this on the various maps available:

"One shows the Red (existing) and the Green (under construction) line running together in the section from Haturim to Shimon Hatzadik.

Then there's another map showing crossing points for the Red and the Green at (a) Nordau Junction (between the Central Bus Station and Haturim) and (b) Shragai Junction (between Shimon Hatzadik and Ammunition Hill. This flatly contradicts the first map.

The five numbered points are (my translation):

1. Shragai Junction: Connection between the Green line and the existing line near Ammunition Hill station.
2. Shivtei Israel crossover\*: electrification work for crossover.
3. Crossovers\*\* at City Hall and HaDavidka: Installation of two new crossovers to improve service on the light rail [yes, they never had enough and should have thought of that years ago - s.e.]
4. Upgrading Haturim station: including a third platform for the Green line
5. Nordau junction: Connection between the Green line and the existing line near Central Bus Station.

Another map is from some outfit called Jnet. It shows two city-centre routes for the Green line, one is a solid line on the map, which doesn't match the Red line, and the other as a dotted line, which does match the Red line."

### (ii) PROBLEMS ON THE JERUSALEM LRV PROJECT

As already reported, the works of linking the Red Line and the Green line, though already underway, are moving very slowly; there are two reasons:

The subcontractor has decided to perform the works (which include upgrading of some of the line sections) during daylight only, unlike the original plan to do it at night.

The second reason was disagreement between the police and the municipality; the first required allocation of special budget for the police claiming that the burden is too heavy; here the news is good; the budget has been approved.



HaRakevet page 12



• Information Board

Anyhow, the main street, Jaffa Street is empty of LRV traffic, at least at its central section. →

### (iii). BLUE LINE WORKS

On 03.06.2025, works started on building the Blue Line at the Pierre Koenig traffic junction in mid-eastern Jerusalem. The 31 km line will be the longest of its sort in Israel, it will have 53 stations and will be served by a total number of 132 LRV cars. It is forecast to carry 250,000 passengers/day.

### (iv). GREEN LINE TEST RUNS

On 18.05.2025 a test run took place on the Green Line (under construction) between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Givat Ram and the Givat Mordechai neighbourhood; the line will eventually link the southern neighbourhood of Gilo, Har Hotzvim high-tech area, the Central Bus Station and Mount Scopus Hadassah Medical Centre; foreseen opening at the beginning of 2026.

On 22.07.2025 the Mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Moshe Leon announced that the Green Line, expected to open at the beginning of 2026, will carry about 200,000 passengers/day and will significantly reduce congestion.

(v). Also on 18.05.2025 a technical failure caused a train on the Red Line to be put on hold.

### (vi). JUNCTION OF RED AND GREEN

Works of linking the Green Line with the Red Line are advancing, with completion expected in Mid-August 2025.

### (vii). HOUSE PRICES RISE

According to a survey performed recently by several professional offices, the prices of new apartments along the Red Line, particularly in the southern neighbourhoods of Kiryat-Menachem and Kiryat Hayovel, are already up by between 8% and 17% even though these sections are not yet fully operational.

### **(viii). On 25.05.2025 Aharon wrote:**

"Good news: Due to the cease-fire between Israel and Iran (for how long?), all the public transport services have returned to regular operation. The Jerusalem Red Line is operating in two sections due to works of linking the Red Line with the Green Line. There is progress in construction of the Blue Line intersecting with the Red Line at Jaffa Street/Nordau Street."



- An aerial view of the works not far from the Central Bus Station; credit: Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team & Kfir/Shafir

### **(ix). BLUE LINE WORKS START**

At the beginning of this week, works started on the eastern part of the Blue Line at the Talpiyot neighbourhood.

Since the works will be partially close to the walkway and pedestrian lane built on the alignment of the historical line to Jerusalem, and in order to minimize disruptions to business activities, the municipality has put food trucks along the alignment.

### **(x). ALONG EMEK REFAIM. PROTESTS AND GRUMBLES**

From 'Times of Israel' 04.07:2025, by Zev Stub. The usual grumbles. Experience teaches that within a couple of years of a line opening everyone is happy that it is there....

"After years of planning and protests, construction of a new light rail track on Jerusalem's storied Emek Refaim Street is set to begin next week. It's a fact that not everyone in the area has made peace with yet – but local business owners, such as Dalia Stav, who has owned a jewellery store on the street for 30 years, say they still don't know exactly what to expect.

"I'm very angry," Stav told 'The Times of Israel' during a survey this week of the street's merchants. "I grew up here. There's no other place like this in Jerusalem, a beautiful and authentic neighbourhood full of cafés and artists' shops. And now they are going to destroy it to add a light rail and make it more urban. For what? So the municipality can build taller buildings and make more money?"

Starting Monday at 7:00 a.m., development work on Emek Refaim is set to begin as the city, through its Moriah Development Corporation, begins repaving the street and sidewalks, upgrading infrastructure, adding benches and street lighting and setting up the future light rail station. Foot traffic on sidewalks will be open during the entire process, which is expected to take several years. Work methods will be used to minimize noise pollution and avoid damaging existing trees along the street, the city has said.

During this time, Emek Refaim will become a one-way street for transportation – southbound from the Beit Lehem Road to Rachel Imeinu Street, and northbound from the Oranim junction to Rachel Imeinu. Public transportation will continue to run on the street, with adaptations made for each route. Detour routes through adjacent streets have been mapped out and are expected to bring heavy traffic to the pastoral neighbourhoods of Baka and the German Colony.

According to the plan, this first stage of renovations will take several years. Subsequently, a quieter second stage of construction will begin as rails are laid along that portion of the train route known as the Blue Line. If all goes according to plan, the southern portion of the Blue Line, from the neighbourhood of Gilo to the city centre, will be operational by 2028, and the entire 52-station track, extending to Ramat Eshkol in the northern part of the city, will be operational by 2030.

A municipal spokesperson told 'The Times of Israel' that three tram stops are planned along Emek Refaim: One near the corner of Rachel Imeinu Street, one at Oranim junction, and one near the First Station complex on the north end of the street.

Stav, like many other business owners on the street, isn't exactly sure what the construction will look like for locals – or what it will mean for her business.

"I don't know what it will feel like walking around," Stav said. "A lot of my clients live around here, and I hope it won't be loud and dirty and disgusting. But tourists? There is no way they'll come here." "

According to Jerusalem online, the first day of works to build the Jerusalem LRV Blue Line at Emek Refaim street caused a lot of chaos because the street is now narrower with one lane in one direction and concrete bollards down the middle of the road.

### **(xi). BROWN LINE PROPOSALS**

The Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan project management has announced an additional LRV line – The Brown Line. This will serve mainly Eastern Jerusalem-Arabic neighbourhoods and will link the Atarot industrial zone in the north, with Zur Bahir in the south, consisting of three sections: northern, central, and southern. It will use also some sections of the Red Line. This will soon be discussed at district council.

### **(xii). AN ARTICLE ON JERUSALEM LIGHT RAILWAYS**

In the May 2025 issue of "Tramways and Urban Transit" is an illustrated article by Noa Tzur and Itay Levi of the "Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan Team" (JTMT) explaining the existing situation and future plans. Excerpted from this:

"A new milestone was reached in Israel's capital on 27 February with the completion of the important north-south Red Line corridor from the northern part of the city – Neve Yaakov and Pisgat Ze'ev – to the Hadassah Ein Karem in the south west. It follows the successful completion of all certification and safety tests and obtaining the necessary approvals to operate 12 new stations on the extended 22.5km (14 mile) route. There has been criticism of widespread cost overruns and it will be interesting to see how many new passengers are added to the 180,000 already carried each day. ....

Jerusalem is roughly 4,000 years old and its unique status as a religious centre and place of multi-faith pilgrimage means that it has perhaps suffered more upheaval than anywhere else in the world. It is home to three major monotheistic religions and the urban area covers over 126 square kilometres (46 square miles). Transport in Jerusalem generally is complex and unique due to the city's hilly topography, the density of construction in its historic sections and the large, diverse population. The city is situated on the central mountain ridge of Israel, along its watershed line between the Mediterranean and Dead Sea, at an elevation of 570-857m. Most of the neighbourhoods are built on hills, with valleys and wadis between them.

Jerusalem completely relied on urban buses, taxis and private vehicles until 1 December 2011 when the first light-rail line opened, forming the initial cornerstone of an intended large and comprehensive public transport network running from the city centre to Mount Herzl in the south and Mount Scopus in the north.

The construction programme was not an easy one and after a host of teething troubles, services finally commenced 35 months after the intended launch date. There had been a shortage of trained staff, signalling was not compatible at road intersections, the air-conditioning did not function on the initial 21 Alstom trams, automatic ticketing failed

to work, and there were also electrical and communications problems. End-to-end journey times of 80 minutes were twice what had been promised, so passengers were compensated with free travel.

All that is now in the past, and so are the events of July 2014 when unrest in the Arab areas of Beit Hanina and Shuafat included rock throwing, dislocating services and damaging two-thirds of the tram fleet.

## Seven New Lines?

Looking ahead, seven additional light-rail lines are to be developed to create the total network, which is the first of its kind in Israel. Also to be considered is the integration with inter-city buses, which primarily arrive at the Central Bus Station at the western entrance to the city. The national railway also meets up here, the one active station currently in Jerusalem. It is positioned 80 metres below ground on a separate underground alignment and forms an interchange for people to continue their journey using other transport modes.

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem's population was 997,000 at the start of 2025 and is growing at an annual rate of 1.4%. The metropolitan area, including nearby suburbs with a clear connection to the city in terms of employment and services, is currently more than 1.31 million. This total is only second in magnitude to the Tel Aviv – Jaffa metropolitan area.

Jerusalem is characterised by its diverse population. In the city centre west, and south, as well as in the city suburbs, most people are secular and traditional. There are, however, unique neighbourhoods where predominantly ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox groups have become established, and the eastern and northeastern parts of Jerusalem are primarily Arab. The average monthly wage is lower than the national average, which is why many residents rely on public transport on a daily basis.

## The Transportation Vision

The Jerusalem Metropolitan Area is the only one in Israel where an organisation exists to integrate all urban transportation activities, administer the road network and operate public services.

In 1968 the Jerusalem Master Plan Team (JMPT) was established to improve travel in the metropolitan area and contribute to the quality of life and the environment for both local people and visitors. The team examines development processes and changes in the urban space in both the short and long term, develops plans, and ensures that they are implemented. JMPT is a joint body of the Israeli Ministry of Transportation and the Jerusalem Municipality. It is skilled in transportation and civil engineering and urban planning, and its activities are carried out in cooperation with many entities, including government, public bodies, community leaders, operators and professional associations. The team is entrusted with planning, developing and controlling the light rail network in Jerusalem, as well as planning and expanding cycling and pedestrian routes

The grand plan is to reduce dependence on car use. The team aims to create a preference for public transport so that in 2025, 40% of journeys in the metropolitan area should not be on rubber tyres. By significantly reducing traffic volumes, congestion will drop significantly and environmental quality will go the other way. This is being achieved by allowing every resident to be within 500 metres of available and reliable public transport.

## Towards Light Rail

In the early 1990s it was already clear that a comprehensive future solution was needed for the worsening traffic problem. All estimates spoke of increased construction density, higher vehicle ownership and a growing shortage of parking spaces. In short, there was no suitable public alternative to the use of private cars. More and more abandoned the buses, but in the congested city centre, 450 buses were crowded at peak times. Journey time became slow (14km/9mph on average), waiting times and delays at stations increased and noise and air pollution became unbearable.

Thus the idea of light rail was conceived as the answer and the task assigned to the JTMT. The clear advantages were seen as being better traffic flow in the city centre (high capacity, traffic priority); urban regeneration and accessibility; being quiet, safe and non-polluting, with a four-minute service frequency in the peak.

Light rail's success relies on a combination of several factors. It operates on central routes. Buses are complementary feeders, serving areas where trams do not go, including the outskirts of the city and they transfer people to "cheek to cheek" interchanges.

Almost a decade ago, a policy change completely altered the role of bus transport in Jerusalem. For years, one company – Egged – was the sole operator in the city, but this is now divided up between three businesses. Egged continues to control the southern part of the city, while Superbus runs into the centre and Extra looks after the north. Competition has seen service levels improve and this will change again before 2030 when bus franchising next goes out to public tender. By then, the goal is for 40% of all buses travelling on city roads to be green-powered by gas and electricity. Today a total of 700 buses run at peak times. In the last ten years, the distances covered have also doubled, and direct fast services have also been added to central areas of employment.

Preparing for the creation of the first light rail line, the government decided to advance the project through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The costs incurred by the public sector were divided between the Ministry of Transportation and the Jerusalem municipality on an 80:20 ratio. The contract winner was promised a grant of NIS 4 Billion (€3.1 Bn) to be paid at the end of construction. The agreement included creating priority at junctions, a monopoly on rail travel routes and security in case of lower-than-expected passenger numbers. Setting fare rates remained the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation.

The public sector was tasked with planning, transferring infrastructure, evacuating properties along the rail route, compensating landowners, diverting other public transport and establishing park-and-ride facilities.

The private company's contract was for 27 years after completion (estimated to take three years) as well as track-laying and electrical and signal installation, plus purchasing rolling stock.

Activity on the first route, the Red Line, began in 2000, to ultimately connect the northeast to the southwest of the city and the central bus station. Its length is 13.8km (8.6 miles) with 23 stops, serving 150,000 residents. Infrastructure works were carried out by the municipal company Moriah, while the operator chosen for laying the tracks was Citipass. Test rides began in August 2011 and trams entered full operation after four months. Four years later, when Citipass was expected to lay the tracks to extend the Red Line, the company announced that it was not interested in doing so, leading the Ministry of Transportation to put the system out for a new tender. It was won by Kfir, which became the light rail operator in April 2021.

Lessons had been learned and an overarching transportation strategy was developed to streamline risk allocation between the private and public sectors, emphasising the advantages and capabilities of each of them. The public sector no longer commits to non-competition and security networks.

At a higher level, the state of Israel provides security and addressing of incidents. The incentive mechanisms for private winners have also changed, ensuring a payment of 3% of the actual collection (redemption) from ticket sales. There is a fixed incentive payment for each validation carried out on light rail above a threshold of 75%, a payment of 80% of the actual collection volume per month from increased charges (fines) and extra money according to the distance travelled.

The Red Line has contributed significantly to improving the city's landscape and revitalising the city centre. For example, the cantilever cable-stayed Chords Bridge was built in 2008 at the western entrance to allow for smooth passage of the tramway. It was designed by the

renowned international architect Santiago Calatrava and has become of the city's most public landmarks.

A strategic decision was made at key junctions (such as at the Patt Intersection and Zalman Shazar Street) to grade-separate the light rail line, with all vehicles diverted below ground level to reduce conflicts in the city centre. Traffic along the light rail route was halted, and entire streets turned into pedestrian walkways. This not only beautified whole areas, turning them back into bustling hubs full of people, businesses, hotels, restaurants and cafes, but also contributed to a substantial reduction in air pollution levels (from an average of 311mcg/ms of nitrogen dioxide at Jerusalem transportation hubs in 2011, to 24 mcg/m2 in 2013), earning the AB Plan team a Light Rail award in 2015.

### Performance

The Red Line operates from 05.00 - 00.45. Between the hours of 07.00 - 18.00 trams run at an average interval frequency of six minutes. During the Sabbath (Friday afternoon to Saturday evening) no public transport runs.

In the peak hours Red Line has demand for high service levels and there is extensive monitoring of its performance with intensive supervision to ensure compliance with service requirements (KPIs), with financial penalties for deviations from the required service level. End-to-end travel time was up to 50 minutes in 2013; this dropped to 44 minutes in 2022. Passenger volume has also increased steadily alongside this - from 33 million annually in 2012 to 46 million in 2023. This figure almost matches the pre-COVID peak of 47.8 M.

A satisfaction survey on Light Rail was conducted in 2023 by the Transportation Planning AB Unit, which found that the majority of Jerusalem residents are satisfied with the new mode of public transport.

Last year upgrades were made to the stops, ticketing and enforcement and the Passenger Information System (PIS). Upon completion of the Jnet network, which includes five lines, 114 new cars will be operated in addition to the existing 46.

### What's next?

The extension of the current Red Line to the east and west with a connection to the city's major hospital, has just reached its conclusion.

The entire Jnet network is intended to include five routes, including the Red and Green Lines, operating along a 27km (17mile) route with 52 stops. It will have 80 trams carrying around 350,000 passengers per day and the estimated total cost is NIS 12 Billion (€2.7 Billion).

The consortium selected to establish and operate Jnet is Kfir, which is owned by Israel's Shafir Engineering and Spanish company CAF. The planned start of operations for the 19.6km (12.2 mile) Green Line, begun in 2018, is perhaps only a few months away. It will connect the campuses of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and run via Patt Junction to Gilo, with 35 stops. It is hoped that daily ridership will be around 200,000.

Blue Line comprises three sub-routes - Blue, Azure and Purple. The builder and operator JTRAIN was selected in autumn 2023. The route is 31km (19 miles) of which 2.5km (.5 miles) is underground, with 53 stops and 66 trams carrying around 245,000 passengers per day. The project has a budget of NIS 16.5Bn (€4.1Bn) and it should be opened in stages between 2028-31.

In addition to this, two more lines are at the advanced planning stage, but have not yet received the necessary statutory approvals.

The Yellow Line will run from the Old City to the Israel Museum (6.5km/4miles) with 12 stops. The construction cost is estimated at NIS 1.1Bn (€250M). No start date has been determined.

The Brown Line will run from Atarot to Umm-Lisun, and the likely cost is NIS3.5Bn (€880M) for the northern section alone. It could be 16km (10miles) long and have 28 stops.

Four maintenance depots will eventually be required. They are Givat HaTachmoshet (French Hill), recently expanded for the Jnet network, and Depot 25 is also for its operation. Neve Ya'akov will play a similar role, while Malcha will be established for the Blue Line.

### Complementary Travel

Another key aspect of the transportation revolution in Jerusalem is the major expansion of the bicycle and walking trail network. The city is built on hills and valleys so travelling on two wheels can be quite a challenge. However, there are only about 30 rainy days a year on average, so it is definitely possible to build a network for both regular and electric bicycles.

Until 2020 there were roughly 49km (31 miles) of bike paths in the city, but this has more than doubled and an additional 25km (15.5 miles) are in various planning stages. According to the Urban Bicycle Master Plan there will be close to 300km (185 miles) throughout Jerusalem by 2030.

...Tracks, trams and stops are not enough to convince residents to abandon their private vehicles and use public transport, especially in a city like Jerusalem. The hilly topography and the city's large expanse mean that distances between places are not short, necessitating the construction of an additional supporting infrastructure to lead people to and from light rail stops, whether by lifts, escalators, bridges or inclined walkways. Steep terrain often results in fragmented walking spaces in many areas, hindering safe and convenient walking to nearby points of interest, including public transport and tram stopping places. The motor car is often seen as bet

### (xiii). CONGESTION CHARGING PLANNED

From 'Times of Israel' 06.08.2025, by Zev Stub: "Jerusalem plans to implement a congestion charge for cars driving into the capital once its expanded light rail network is operational. Mayor Moshe Lion on Tuesday told participants at a conference on transportation.

Once the three planned light rail lines are operational, and new stations for the fast train connecting to the centre of the country are built, Jerusalem will begin clamping down on drivers entering the city, Lion said.

Giant park-and-ride lots will be built at entrances to the city, where drivers can park their vehicles and then board public transportation, while those who insist on driving into Jerusalem will have to pay a fee.

"The transportation situation in Jerusalem is not easy at the moment, but Tel Aviv is worse," Lion said. "Within a few years, I promise a real revolution, and Jerusalem will be the first city to get rid of traffic jams."

The plan will only be begin to be implemented when city planners are confident that the public transportation infrastructure is operating at an optimal level, a spokesperson for the municipality clarified. In addition to city dwellers, residents of Jerusalem suburbs will likely be exempt from the charge, the spokesperson noted. The proposed congestion charge is at least seven years away from going into effect, and likely longer. Two of the city's three light rail lines, the Green and Blue Lines, are still under construction. The Green Line, which stretches from Mount Scopus in the north of the city to the Gilo neighbourhood in the south, is expected to begin operation early next year.

However, construction of the Blue Line, which will connect the Ramot neighbourhood to Gilo, began this year and is only expected to be completed in 2030. Several years of work on the Emek Refaim portion of the line began in July.

Construction work currently being performed on the Red Line, which opened in 2011, is expected to be completed by September. Nine stations on the Red Line in the centre of the city have been closed for several months as workers prepare to connect it with the Green Line.

The Red Line is considered a huge success, transporting some 200,000 people every day, a Jerusalem spokesperson noted. The other light rail lines are expected to be a similar boon to the city.

A separate infrastructure project will add two new train stations in the capital for the high-speed rail line that currently connects Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion Airport. Stations will be added in the City Centre and near the First Station complex in the German Colony. Currently, there is only one Israel Railways stop in Jerusalem, the Yitzhak Navon station at the western entrance to the city.

That project, which will extend the railway track by 5.5 kilometres (3.4 miles) at a depth of some 60 metres underground, is not expected to open until 2032.

All project timeframes, of course, are subject to possible delays.

### Driving forward

Jerusalem's city planners are ambitiously working to modernize the city, with aggressive construction plans that include revamped transportation options. "Most Jerusalemites don't really understand what the city is planning in terms of transportation," a Transportation Ministry representative told 'The Times of Israel' during the transportation conference.

In addition to the above-mentioned train and light rail options, the city is building new roads, adding more bus lines, and working to connect more than 80 kilometres of bike paths around the city, a city spokesperson said.

"More people in the city are traveling by bikes and scooters, and people understand the health and environmental benefits," the spokesperson said. "This continues to grow stronger."

Plans are also underway to build a cable car from the First Station complex to the Old City, taking riders over the Ben Hinnom Valley and Mount Zion. Authorities hope the 1.4-kilometre (nearly a mile) cable car will ferry up to 3,000 people per hour in up to 72 10-person cabins. That controversial project has been opposed by numerous parties for over a decade, but it remains a priority for the city and national government.

Another municipal strategy for reducing the number of vehicles on the road is promoting shared car services, whose members can rent cars for an hourly price.

"The municipality was a pioneer in promoting the field of shared mobility from the early days, and we have a strong partnership with the city," said City Car vice president Elyasaf Segre, whose company has 400 rental cars located in neighbourhoods all around the city. "Studies have shown that every shared car available reduces private car ownership in a city by 8-12 cars. Our vision is that within 10 years, everyone in the city will be a member."

Jerusalem is also seeing a major building boom, with construction and urban renewal projects dotting the city. Nearly 500 new skyscrapers of 18 stories or more are planned for construction in Jerusalem in the coming years, adding about 60,000 new housing units to the city, according to municipal documents."

(xiv) On 05.08.2025 the link between the LRV Red Line and the Green Line was completed; this refers only to track works. Hopefully, the Red Line will return to regular operation on 01.09.2025 with service frequency every 6 minutes and perhaps better. The Green Line is anticipated for partial service start only at the beginning of 2026, but as yet with no definite date.

### (xv). DEPOT

The Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team has recently unveiled pictures of the new LRV underground depot (the second such in the

world after Taiwan) located near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; It is 60m under street level and can contain up to 50 cars on 4 levels.



- The Transport Ministry's General Manager Mr. Moshe Ben Zaken at the depot; credit: Alex Kolomoisky.

### (xvi). PROGRESS ON THE CONNECTION

On 24.08.25: "After 14 weeks of works, the Jerusalem LRV Red Line is to be reopened soon; the works of linking it with the Green Line at the intersection of Jaffa street and Malchei Israel street are completed and the junction will open soon. A lot of test runs took place."

### (xvii). MORE POLITICS

I am indebted to the team at 'Lok Report' in Berlin for information on a bizarre political squabble in Belgium indirectly involving the Jerusalem Trams! Their report, based on several internet sources, reads as follows:

**Belgium: The Palestinian question interferes with the SNCB's order for new AM30 multiple units**

The 'contract of the century' concluded by NMBS/SNCB with the Spanish group CAF for up to 600 new multiple units, with a value of between EUR 1.7 and 3.4 Billion, is causing controversy. Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are joining a lawsuit originally filed by Siemens and Alstom before the Council of State against the award. According to these organisations, the CAF group is responsible for the construction and maintenance of a tram network connecting the Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel.

On Tuesday (26 August 2026), the non-governmental organisations announced that they would submit an application to the Council of State to request the exclusion of the Spanish company. In their request to revoke the possible award of the contract to the Spanish company, Intal, Vrede vzw, 11.11.11 and Al Haq Europe denounce CAF's involvement in the construction of the Jerusalem Light Rail, a railway line connecting illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank with West Jerusalem and Israel. The company is thus directly contributing to a policy that is internationally recognised as apartheid and annexation. The law firm Progress Lawyers Network, which represents the organisations, bases its argument on several legal grounds. In particular, it considers that SNCB, as a Belgian state-owned company, must comply with and defend Belgium's international obligations at the international level. The United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, supports the organisations.

SNCB states that it has 'complied with all legal requirements' and points out that there is currently no binding European legal instrument for companies operating in Israel and Palestine.

The first hearings will take place on 2 and 3 September. The Council of State's decision is expected to be announced a few weeks later. The next SNCB board meeting is scheduled for 5 September."

*Here are the statements from both sides:*

--- No Public Money for Apartheid Trains - Press release from the non-governmental organisations: Intal Globalize Solidarity, Vrede vzw, 11.11.11 and Al Haq Europe are filing a complaint with the Council of State against the award of billion-euro contracts by NMBS/SNCB to the Spanish-Basque train manufacturer CAF. According to experts, CAF is jointly responsible for the expansion of the Jerusalem tram network, which connects illegal Israeli settlements with Israeli territory.

At the end of July NMBS announced that it intended to name CAF as the preferred bidder for the delivery of more than 600 new train sets worth over three billion euros. However, NGOs (non-governmental organisations) pointed out to the railway company that CAF is directly involved in the Jerusalem Light Rail (JLR) project, a tram network connecting illegal Israeli settlements with West Jerusalem. According to experts in international law, this network plays a key role in war crimes and the expansion of settlement policy.

In early July 2025, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese explicitly mentioned CAF in a report on companies that profit from Israel's economy and policies of occupation, apartheid and – now – genocide. In her opinion, CAF explicitly contributes to the construction of roads and public transport that enable the expansion of illegal settlements and connect them to Israel, while Palestinians are systematically excluded and segregated. She wrote a letter urging NMBS to exclude CAF. She joins the coalition. At this morning's press conference, she reiterated: 'CAF plays a crucial role in connecting illegal Israeli settlements. Such involvement constitutes a serious violation of international human rights.'

On 23 July, the NMBS Board of Directors confirmed its decision in favour of CAF, despite earlier warnings from human rights organisations and a ruling by the Council of State suspending an earlier award decision. 'NMBS is well aware that CAF is directly involved in serious violations of international law,' says Ansje Vanbeselaere, chair of Intal Globalize Solidarity. 'We have presented numerous reports to management documenting CAF's involvement in the forced displacement of Palestinians and the development of illegal settlements. These are war crimes. Nevertheless, this is being brushed aside and only a statement from CAF itself is being requested. This attitude is pure hypocrisy.'

The civil society organisations argue that NMBS, as a state-owned company, is obliged to align its tenders with international law and human rights.

'It is unacceptable that a Belgian state institution entrusts public funds to a company involved in war crimes,' says Willem Staes of 11.11.11. 'We demand not only the exclusion of CAF in this matter, but also that NMBS adjust its selection criteria so that fundamental human rights are a binding evaluation criterion in future tenders.' ... and so on and on and on. Oh my heavens.

Ludo De Brabander of Vrede vzw: "While the population of Gaza is being slaughtered and starved and the Israeli government is openly pushing ahead with the annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, it is mind-boggling that NMBS wants to award a billion-euro contract to such a problematic company. Public funds must never be used to finance occupation and apartheid. Nevertheless, the Belgian railway company is threatening to conclude the "deal of the century" here – at the expense of fundamental human rights."

*[A quick google search reveals that Vrede (the word means 'Peace' in Flemish) is an extreme-left Flemish group that gets over €250,000 official subsidy per annum from the Flemish government and a group of citizens are now fighting this! So much for 'Peace']*

--- AM30 dossier – SNCB Response ---

"The SNCB has taken note of the content of the application for intervention submitted by four non-governmental organisations in the proceedings initiated by Alstom and Siemens before the Council of State concerning the AM30 dossier.

First of all, the SNCB views the events in Palestine with horror and feels deep sympathy for the local civilian population.

SNCB notes that the important industrial matter of the purchase of new AM30 railcars (with 54,000 seats in an initial order) has led to a media debate that goes far beyond the issue of SNCB's essential purchase of trains.

SNCB has always taken particular care to strictly comply with European public procurement rules in the context of this tender, which has been ongoing since December 2022. This has been, is and remains its guiding principle. In this context, SNCB has therefore complied with all legal requirements.

It is not SNCB's role to determine the foreign or trade policy of Belgian and/or European companies. For example, to date there is no binding legal instrument for Israeli companies or companies with branches in Israel and/or Palestine, such as that adopted by the European Union for Russian companies. SNCB cannot take the place of Belgian or European politicians in deciding on the adoption of such an instrument....." etc.

SNCB emphasises that the AM30 file is currently pending before the Council of State and reaffirms its full confidence in the impartiality and independence of this body. SNCB will present its position and arguments in more detail at the public hearings to be held on 2 and 3 September.

SNCB will therefore continue negotiations on the final award of the contract, but will examine whether CAF's activities are in line with international law and human rights. Federal Minister of Mobility Jean-Luc Crucke (Les Engagés) takes note of SNCB's decision, but expects the contract to benefit the Belgian economy and not lead to job losses at Alstom.

SNCB also specifies that the amount of €3.4 Billion mentioned is the maximum estimate for the contract, which will run for several years (12 years). This is a framework contract, and the discussions that will be held with CAF are aimed at securing an initial order worth €1.7 Billion for the delivery of 180 trainsets (out of a total of 600) with 54,000 seats,' Jihane Annane, Head of Corporate Communications at SNCB, told Lpost."

*[Of course in the meantime CRCC will be rubbing their hands.... Ed.]*

## **(xviii). RED LINE RUNS AGAIN**

On 31.08 Sybil wrote: "... except for Haturim station, which is being rebuilt. So I tried it today. I went from Mount Herzl to HaDavidka on an "old" train. The electronic indicator at Mount Herzl showed Neveh Yaakov North (as did the front of the train), as it indeed should. The destination indicator inside the train said Givat Hamivtar. This was obviously a hold-over from the time when trains were running only from Givat Hamivtar to Neveh Yaakov North, so this needs fixing. When we reached "Central Station" there was a recorded announcement that Haturim station was closed and passengers wanting that station should get off at Central Station. The announcement that Haturim station was closed continued incessantly and was still going when I got off at Hadavidka. On the way back, from Jaffa Centre to Central Station, it was a "new" train. There was no announcement regarding Haturim station being closed. As we left Mahaneh Yehuda station there was a recorded announcement: "Next stop Haturim", which of course it wasn't.

Definitely room for improvement there. Still, it's good to have it running."

## **B. TEL AVIV**

### **(i). START / STOP**

The Transport Ministry has recently announced that works on the Tel-Aviv M3 METRO LINE will start soon by building the Yigal Alon station at the city of Or-Yehuda, but last week NTA announced that any work on any metro line will not start before 2037...

## **(ii). NTA Tender No. 031/25:**

Providing services of Documentation and Film Productions:

The winners will consist of two groups:

One winner for Filming.

Two winners for Editing and Final Production.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months.

Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.06.2025.

## **(iii). NTA Tender No. 125/2025:**

Providing various Engineering Professional Services NTA intends to select up to 3 winning bidders. The contract is for 48 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.07.2025.

## **(iv). Tender No. 143/2025:**

Invitation to Bid in a Tender for the Assurance Management and

Technical Auditing Services for the Metropolitan Tel Aviv Mass Transit System. NTA is looking forward to receiving a Bid for a consultancy company to conduct an external independent program and quality assurance role, create and manage a Programme Assurance Office, and carry out the role of a Technical Audit Team to ensure that the Programme is world-class and performed according to agreed requirements duly reviewed and validated. NTA intends to select one Successful Bidder in this Tender.

## **(v). THE (BRIEF) MISSILE WAR**

From "Times of Israel" 18.06.2025, by Ariela Karmel:

Echoes of the Blitz in Ramat Gan's underground Bialik Station, an unlikely wartime refuge

"As Iranian missiles hit central Israel, many residents without adequate bomb shelters have found safety in the Tel Aviv-adjacent city's well-maintained light rail station.

Lit by neon signs, pulsing with foot traffic, packed with bars, falafel joints and cafés that spill out onto the sidewalk, Bialik Street is usually one of the liveliest arteries in Ramat Gan. On a normal weeknight, you'd hear music from open windows, laughter from street corners, delivery scooters weaving through the crowd.

But on the fourth night in a row of Iranian missile strikes, the street is eerily silent, following a Home Front Command alerting residents to remain close to protected spaces.

The restaurants are dark. The windows are shuttered. There are no strollers, no couples walking home, no late-night smokers leaning against the curb. Just empty pavement, and the low hum of the light rail beneath your feet.

Then, suddenly, signs of life appear.

At the entrance to the Bialik light rail station, a small crowd has gathered. Some smoke quietly by the door. Others sit on benches, scrolling through their phones or chatting in low voices. Several signs mark the station not as a transit hub, but as a protected space – a public shelter with a new, urgent purpose.

Those descending the escalator are greeted by a surreal scene: rows of mattresses line the floors of the train platforms, each claimed by someone who has nowhere safer to sleep. Families unpack meals, children burrow into sleeping bags, friends chat quietly in corners.

This is what night looks like now in the heart of Israel's most densely populated region – not in the bars and boulevards, but 92 feet deep underground, where a subterranean ecosystem has formed over the last four days.

Since Friday, when Iran began launching its missile salvos toward central Israel, some 1,000 people have taken shelter in Bialik Station each night. Most begin arriving around 9 or 10 p.m., though a few come as early as 4 p.m.

Many return every evening, even when the Home Front Command says it's no longer necessary. For them, the risk above ground feels too great and the alternative too uncertain.

A former English teacher from Russia who is now working at H&M, Tatiana looked calm but visibly frustrated. "We were at a public shelter before," she said. "It didn't feel protected. It doesn't feel safe at home, either."

Around her, the station pulsed with the quiet rhythm of people settling in for the night. It's a strange and sobering sight: families wrapped in blankets on thin mattresses, workers eating dinner from plastic containers, children sprawled on mattresses watching YouTube on a phone. A few played cards. Others lay silently with earbuds in. All were waiting – for morning, for quiet, for safety.

The scene feels dystopian, evoking a different place and era: Londoners huddled in the Underground during the Blitz; Ukrainians riding out airstrikes in the Kyiv metro. And now, in the heart of central Israel, a similar reality has taken hold.

There's a palpable heaviness and frustration that hangs in the air. Many are here because their homes lack adequate shelters – or any shelters at all.

### **Complete with clean bathrooms**

Bialik Station is neat, organized and not overcrowded, in contrast to many public shelters and other shelters in most residential buildings. It boasts clean bathrooms, air conditioning, Wi-Fi and coordinated management, offering a safer, more humane alternative for many residents.

Station employees patrol the space throughout the night, not as train staff but as temporary wardens: distributing mattresses and supplies, mediating disputes and ensuring the tightly packed floor stays clean and usable. When one man set up a tent for privacy, they gently asked him to take it down. Tents take up too much space – a scarce and precious resource.

The result is an underground space that functions better than many of the public shelters purpose-built for emergencies.

A large number of those sleeping in the station each night are foreign workers like Sura and Naveen, or immigrants from Russia and Ukraine. Many have no family nearby, few community ties and limited resources. For them, the station offers not just protection, but a rare sense of stability.

This is a miserable situation to be sure, but this isn't a miserable place. Even laughter can ring out. The normalcy of it all is almost disarming.

Photographer Avishai Finkelstein, who lives nearby, came to document the light rail station turned bomb shelter. "We never thought we'd have a functioning light rail here and it finally happened. Then we didn't expect it to work," he said. "And it works." He said it with a kind of sad irony: The long-awaited, long-delayed Tel Aviv-area light rail, whose first line was only opened in August 2023, is now functioning as a bomb shelter.

Yet, it has become one of the few things in this moment that's functioning. Not as it was intended, but as it must."

- [Shelter Entrance](#)

**(vi). RENAMING**

The Yoseftal station of Bat-Yam on the Tel-Aviv LRV Red Line has been renamed Yoseftal-Eli Cohen to commemorate a person of the security forces who was executed in Syria

the involvement of the Chamber of Appraisers. A compromise was reached with the Finance Ministry: this betterment tax in the Metro influence zones would be reduced to 60% for the next five years, after which it may be updated to 72%.



According to today's announcement from the Finance Ministry, the local planning committee will issue the tax assessments to landowners, but the Israel Tax Authority will be the official body to confirm that the tax has been paid. Without this confirmation, property owners who receive a Metro tax bill will not be able to change the Land Registry (Tabu) or obtain a building permit.

The ministry added: "The finance minister signed the wording of the notice that the local authority will send to taxpayers. The Tax Authority will soon announce the opening of a digital system on its website for paying the tax."

This material is from the Web-site."

•Shelter entrance

**(vii) NTA Tender No. 076/2025:**

Providing services of Consulting, Follow-Up and Management, regarding Information, Transportation and Infrastructures. NTA intends to select one winning bidder. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.08.2025.

**(ix).**

For the first time in its history, the Tel-Aviv LRV Red Line will run 24/7 from today - 28.05.2025 - until the end of Friday, 29.08.2025 as part of the White Night events.

**(viii). METRO TAXES**

On 25.08.25 the following appeared on the website:

"A significant move toward advancing Israel's largest infrastructure project was made today as Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich signed regulations governing the collection of the "Metro Tax". This levy, part of the Improvement Tax imposed on landowners near metro stations, will serve as a key funding source for the 150 billion shekel metro project.

**(x). NEW APPOINTMENT**

From a press release of 15.07.2025 by the Transport Ministry:

"The government approved on 14.07.2025 the appointment of Mrs. Sigal Gabai as the Chairman of the Metro Authority Regulatory Committee. She has degrees in Economics and Law and a rich experience in both fields."

The Ministry/ Finance announced this morning (Monday) that the minister signed the regulations determining how the Metro Betterment Tax will be collected from landowners in the vicinity of the future Metro stations. The purpose of this tax is to finance the construction and development of the Metro, considered the most expensive infrastructure project in Israel's history.



According to the (Knesset) Metro Law, enacted in 2022, landowners in the "areas of influence" around stations - as defined by National Master Plan 70 - must pay an increased betterment tax of 75%. Of this, 40% goes to the local municipality, while 35% is allocated to the state as the "Metro Tax." These funds are one of the government's primary financial resources for the project, whose total cost is estimated at 150 Billion shekels.

- Computer simulation of bridge running over Agalon highways, and the railways' line to Haifa and the north, towards the university (the building of which are on the hill through a tunnel; credit: NTA.

Following strong criticism from developers and appraisers, who argued that such a high levy would make projects economically unfeasible, negotiations were held in 2024 under the leadership of then-chair of the Knesset Interior Committee, MK Yaakov Asher, with

## A. JORDAN

*(Thanks to Lorenz Degen): This appeared (in German!) on Facebook on 27.05.2025:*

(i). "Amman: The Jordanian Railway Foundation today celebrated in the building of the President of the Foundation the 79th Independence Day of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, sponsored by the Transport Minister Engineer Mrs. Wassam Al-Tahatmouni. The ceremony was to celebrate the national achievements since Independence and act as reminder on the historic role which the Foundation has played in the service of the country, strengthening the infrastructure and encouraging tourism to the historic sites.

The ceremony honoured a succession of General Directors as well as various organisations which co-operate with the Foundation from the Communes and the Security Forces, to recognise their efforts and the continuing support for the achievement of the aims of the Foundation and supporting its role in social development.

In her speech during the ceremony the Minister spoke of the importance of the role of the institution in maintenance of the historic heritage of the Al-Hijazi Railway and praised the efforts of the administration and their workers, for expanding their services and their presence in the transport system by organising holiday excursion trains for the public.

In response the Chief Executive of the Al Hijazi Jordanian Railway Foundation reminded that the stability we enjoy and the independence are not just a memory that we celebrate but also a responsibility and a national duty that calls upon us to work further and to give this land order and peace.

Khalil stressed our role in the service of this valuable homeland and our constant effort to develop our services and to maintain this historic heirloom, that forms the deep link between the old past and the much-vaunted future. The General Manager of the Jordanian Al-Hijazi Foundation said at the end of his speech: May God protect Jordan and may the blessing of security and stability come for us all under the shadow of the Hashmiya flag and the leadership of His Majesty the King."

*[Ed. adds: It should be noted that the railway in Jordan seems to be treated still as a part of the historic Waqf or Moslem Foundation for Charitable Purposes; It is therefore neither a State Railway nor a commercial company.]*

(ii). Online there appear to be several companies which offer to arrange excursions for tourists. From the Jordan Hedjaz Railway itself comes this announcement:

"Programme. Meet at 08.15 in the Amman Station (Marka). Train departure 09.00, arrive Gizah Station 11.00. Time to sit here from 11.00 to 14.45. Train will be prepared and depart 15.00 and arrive Amman station at 17.00. Ticket prices for Adults: 5 Dinars. For Children aged 3 to 10: 3 Dinars. Children under 3: Free."



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHaRYE0FJko>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lhdgL\\_grSQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lhdgL_grSQ)

### (iii). TURKISH AID:

On 04.06.25 came: "The head of the Jordanian Hejaz Railway Foundation Dr. Zahi Khalil met with the Director of the Turkish Agency for Development and Coordination (TIKA) Jaoud Kusa Oglu, who visited the organisation in order to inspect continuing developments which are supported by the Turkish government. These cover an area of three thousand square metres. Khalil explained during the visit that the Foundation is hoping to make this into a unique museum in the Near East inasmuch as the collection includes relics and equipment that have been used since the origin of the line for the transport of pilgrims from Damascus and running through the area of Jordan to Medina, which shortened the travel time for pilgrims from fifty days to seventy-two hours.

He added that the Museum uses the most modern technological means to make this into an attractive tourist site for Jordanians and foreign visitors.

During the visit Oglu saw the project's completed phase and hear a detailed explanation of the progress on these works, some 80% of which have now been completed. For his part Oglu emphasised the importance of the project for the maintenance of the historic heritage of the Al-Hijazi line and the continuing brotherhood between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Turkish Republic. At the conclusion of the visit both parties were in agreement that through efforts to accelerate the project it could be brought to a conclusion by the end of the fourth quarter of this year. This visit took place in the framework of the continuation of development projects of the TIKA Agency in the Kingdom, aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and exchange of experiences in the areas of Heritage, History and the Maintenance of the historic Inheritance."

Then on 22.7.2025 came another Facebook entry: "The Jordanian Hejaz Railway Foundation received a delegation of Turkish students who are studying Arabic in Jordan and whose visit was arranged by the Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Coordination. The visit included a tour within the historic Amman station and the delegates could see the exhibits in the museum which explains the history of the line and its most prominent stations, as well as enjoy a train ride, a unique experience for the participants who thereby undertook a journey into history.

Taking part were not only the Cultural Attaché of the Turkish Embassy in the Kingdom but also the Ministry's commissioner, who expressed her appreciation for this unique experience which strengthens the cultural and historic links between Jordan and Turkey. Dr. Zahi Khalil, head of the Foundation, stressed the significance of this visit for the strengthening of cultural exchange and the transmission of the historical heritage of the Foundation and mentioned the desire of the Foundation to undertake similar events in the future to open new horizons for cooperation in tourism and cultural cooperation."

*[What lies behind all this? Since the Ottomans built the HR in the first place and Prime Minister Erdogan is keen to reassert Ottoman concepts in the modern Turkey, this "cooperation" seems to have some political undercurrents.*

*Steve Sattler posted a hypothetical "nightmare scenario" in July:*

*"Let us consider a likely scenario whereby The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan suffers from local riots, and then national riots, and the pro-King police and then army cannot control or reduce the anger of the people. The kingdom of Jordan today has 11.2 million residents and proud Jordanians are only 19% of the population. The resident Syrians are 13.3%. Arab-Palestinians are 56.7%. Egyptians are 6.7%. Iraqis are 1.4%, and others are 2.6%. This mix of many different Arabic nationalities (and most of the population is male - there is a shortage of women), is a powder keg.*

*The King, his household and the inner circle of Hashemites could finally decide to flee to London and the UAE. Wealthy Jordanian families could find their way to the UAE where they have property. The main catalyst for the sudden collapse of the kingdom would be the poor economy, very low wages and the high unemployment. The average income for most of the population is well under \$8,000 per year, and unemployment is over 18%. For the youth it is over 40%. Jordan has no oil, gas or water.*

*Immediately after the King and his 'own people' flee the country, local armed militias would begin their violent activities in the cities - and especially in the smaller towns. Ex-ISIS and Syrian 'terrorist' groups could invade from the North, and unofficial armed PA 'police' from the West Bank find their way into Jordan and set up local independent units...." and so on. All rather apocalyptic, but it may be that Jordan is trying to stress Jordan's history to Jordanian youth, and Turkey is beginning already to seek further influence should the current regime change. One should never forget that NOTHING in this region is wholly free from political calculations... Ed.]*

## **B. SAUDI ARABIA.**

### (i). TENDERS FOR RIYADH METRO LINE

From "I.R.J." 28.05.2025: "Bids to design and construct the city's seventh metro line are due in mid-June. The revised deadline for submission of bids for a contract to design and build Riyadh's seventh metro line is expected to remain as June 15.

Following a request for proposals (RFP) in September, bids were originally due by March 10. However, earlier this year, the Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) in Saudi Arabia extended the tender deadline by three months.

The proposed line will be 65km long with 19 stations, connecting Qiddiya Entertainment City, King Abdullah International Gardens, King Salman Park, Misk City and Diriyah Gate. It will run in tunnel for 47km, with 19km of elevated infrastructure and 14 underground and five elevated stations. According to local media, four consortia are among those planning to bid for the project, headed respectively by Alstom, Siemens, Hitachi Rail and CRRC.

Riyadh's six-line network currently extends to 176km with 85 stations, and opened in three phases from December 2024.'

### (ii). "KEN ABROAD"

One of the modern phenomena is people who travel the world, video themselves doing it, add a rather banal or uninformed commentary and put it online. However this does from time to time allow one to see parts of a country that one might otherwise see.

Rather than giving a complex link to a website that may not work after a month, we recommend that one seeks online "Ken Abroad Saudi Arabia Train" and one will be led (hopefully) to several longer and shorter videos of the main character riding the Haramain high-speed service.

### (iii). MAKKAH METRO

From "R.G.I." 09.07.2025: "The 18km Al Mashaer - Al Mugaddassah metro line in Makkah, which only operates during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, completed 2,154 trips and transported 1.87 million passengers over seven days in June. Operator CRCC said 'challenged by high temperatures and extremely high passenger volumes, CRRC's operation and maintenance team again delivered a pleasant passenger experience for pilgrims through professional service and unwavering dedication'. Each 12-car CRRC Changchun train is able to transport more than 5,000 passengers per trip, with a throughput of 72,000 passengers/direction/h."

### (iv). AL ULA

Final Tenders are being called for by the Saudi government for the construction of the Al-Ula light rail scheme.

### (v). MAJOR RAIL EXPANSION PLANS

From "Railfreight.com" 28.07.25: "Saudi Arabia will be adding 2,700 kilometres of tracks to its rail network in the coming years. A major expansion, and one that looks to grow the position of rail in the country's economy: it should double the contribution of transport to GDP."

The future rail infrastructure will connect industrial zones, cities, ports, airports, and inland logistics hubs, the Saudi transport minister said at a transport summit. The Saudis are making serious investments in rail: around half of all logistics investment is now going towards rail infrastructure.

Ultimately, new rail infrastructure could help enable growth in key economic sectors, according to Saudi authorities. They highlight mining, manufacturing, and energy as branches that stand to profit from more rail.

Part of the plan is to build a railway between coastal cities Jeddah and Dammam on opposite sides of the Arabia peninsula. The "Saudi Landbridge" would also link up to capital city Riyadh. Investment plans also include enhancements along the North-South railway, which is important for the mining sector.

### Alstom and Local Industry

In late 2024, the Saudi transport minister explained that the country seeks to establish its own rail industry. By doing so, Saudi Arabia hopes to reduce its reliance on foreign enterprises. Despite that, it will still depend on French company Alstom for the foreseeable future. In a deal valued at 80 million dollars, the Saudis secured technical support, spare parts and staff training for five years. The deal focuses on the Jeddah - Dammam railway."

### (vi). MORE HARAMAIN TRAIN SETS

From 'R.G.I.' 06.08.25: "Saudi Arabia Railways has invited expressions of interest in the supply of 20 high-speed trainsets to support the operational expansion and strategic development of the Haramain High Speed Railway, in line with the country's Vision 2030 national objectives.

The 453km electrified high-speed line connects Makkah and Madinah via Jeddah and King Abdullah Economic City, and is currently worked by a fleet of Talgo 350 trainsets running at up to 300 km/h. Commercial services began in October 2018, and the 20 millionth passenger was carried in November 2024.

Services are operated by Spanish national train operator RENFE on behalf of the Saudi government. A special timetable is operated to meet the needs of both residents and large numbers of pilgrims during the Ramadan period. During the March to April 2024 Ramadan the number of services was increased from 66 to 91 trains per day, including night services after the breaking of the fast, offering 1.1 million seats in total.

SAR's business strategy running to 2035 includes an 8,000 km expansion of the network, becoming financially self-sustaining and partnering with leading technology suppliers, CEO Dr Bashar bin Khalid Al Malik told RGI at Inno Trans 2024."



### (vii). ROLLS ROYCE ENGINES FOR NEW DIESEL TRAINS

From "R.G.I." 18.08.2025: "Stadler has awarded Rolls-Royce a contract to supply 50 MTU Series 4000 diesel engines for use on 200 km/h inter-city trainsets it is to build for Saudi Arabia Railways' Dammam - Riyadh route.

In 2024 SAR awarded Stadler contracts worth SFr600M to supply and maintain 10 trainsets for use on the East line, with options for 10 more. The trainsets will be 175m long with a capacity of about 320 passengers. Each set will have two diesel-electric power cars, with each power car having two 12V 4000 R64 MTU engines with an output of 1 500 kW and

meeting European Stage V emission standards. The remaining 10 engines are for reserve power cars and for swapping during maintenance.

There is an option for Stadler to order a further 40 engines if SAR orders the additional trains. Rolls-Royce said more than 70 12V 4000 engines have been in use on trains operated by Saudi Arabia Railways since 2012. 'They ensure smooth operation despite extreme ambient conditions with temperatures above 50°C and the influence of desert dust', said Christopher Weckbecker, Director Global Rail at Rolls-Royce, on August 21. 'This order supports our strategy by expanding further into regional growth markets, enlarging Rolls-Royce's global foot-print in rail applications.'

MTU propulsion technology from Rolls-Royce is a central component in this project', said Tobias Arnold, Commercial Project Lead at Stadler. 'It not only enables high speeds, but also meets the highest standards of environmental compatibility, energy efficiency and operational safety.'

## C. EGYPT

(i). From "Metro Report Intl." 09.12.2025: "Alstom delivered the first of 55 nine-car trainsets it is supplying for Cairo Metro Line 1 on May 22. The train arrived in the capital a week after its unloading at the port of Alexandria.

Under a November 2021 contract valued at €876M Alstom is supplying 55 Metropolis trainsets for Line 1. The order is being financed by the French government under an agreement between the two countries. It includes maintenance of the vehicles and the provision of spare parts for eight years. The new trainsets are intended to boost capacity on Line 1, which carries 2.5 million passengers per day on its existing 44 km route, while they will also be used to support a planned northern extension from New Marj to Shabin Al-Qanater.

The fleet will be the first rolling stock on Line 1 to have air-conditioning. Other features include wide gangways, internal and

external CCTV cameras, real-time passenger information, dynamic route maps, video displays and spaces for wheelchairs. As part of the modernisation of the city's first metro line, which opened in 1987, CAF and original supplier Mitsubishi were appointed to refurbish 23 existing trainsets and maintain them for two years.

Under an €850M contract let in September 2024, a consortium of Colas Rail, Orascom Construction and Hitachi Rail is to upgrade the signalling, control and telecommunication systems, power supplies, catenary and electromechanical systems, and renew the tracks."

### (ii). MITSUBISHI INTERESTED IN CAIRO METRO

FROM "LRJ." : "The President and CEO of Mitsubishi Corporation Machinery, Junichiro Nakatsuka, has met with Egypt's minister of industry and transport, Kamel Al-Wazir, to explore potential avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the metro sector."

### (iii). HIGH SPEED PROJECT

*Steve Sattler writes again on one project:*

"Egypt is currently developing a high-speed rail network that will connect the Red Sea and the Med Sea. This project, named the "Suez Canal on Tracks" is a key part of a larger 2,000 km high-speed rail network connecting 60 cities. The first line, known as the "Green Line," will link the Red Sea port of Ain Sokhna with the Mediterranean port of Marsa Matrouh. This line is part of a larger plan to connect industrial areas, tourist destinations and neighboring countries with a modern, safe, and fast transportation system. The project is expected to create jobs and boost economic development in the region. The network will be further expanded with lines connecting Cairo with Aswan and Abu Simbel, and Luxor with Hurghada.

The project is being established by a coalition of German Siemens companies, the Arab Contractors and Orascom Construction, where Siemens will carry out all the works of the project's electrical, mechanical, control and control systems, as well as the manufacture and supply of electric trains, the establishment of a maintenance workshop and the installation of its equipment, while the Arab Contractors and Orascom companies implement earthworks, bridges and industrial works for track, passenger terminals and fences.

Once completed, the railway system will be operated and maintained by Deutsche Bahn and the Egyptian Elsewedy Electric."

### (iv). TRAINING FOR METRO ENGINEERS

*From "Metro Report Intl." 06.08.2025:*

—"Hyundai Rotem has completed the first training sessions for domestic manufacturer National Egyptian Railway Industries Company's engineers and managers on July 25. The local company is the Korean group's local assembly partner responsible for the delivery of 40 eight-car trainsets being supplied for Cairo metro lines 2 and 3."

### (v). ALEXANDRIA TRAMS MODERNISATION

FROM NVBS "OP DE RAILS", TRANSLATED FROM DUTCH BY MARC STEGEMAN: 'In May 2025 a contract was signed for extensive modernisation of the Ramle Tram, which is the blue tram running on separate right-of-way between El Ramle just outside the city and the more easterly El Nasr, also known as Victoria. Of its thirteen kilometre track length, more than seven kilometres will become elevated track on viaducts. Starting at Ramle, a subterranean extension will be built for a couple of hundred metres. The high number of stops, which in many cases are near to



each other, will be reduced to 25. The Japanese Kinki Sharyo trams, now mostly of three cars (and some double decker trams) will be replaced by 30 new trams by Hyundai Rotem. By modernisation the present-day one hour travel time can be reduced to 35 minutes."

#### (vi). ANOTHER TRAIN CATASTROPHE

*This translated from 'Bahnblogstelle' 30.08.2025:*

"The tracks in the Egyptian railway network are old and the engine drivers are not always well trained. Now another train has derailed. In a severe rail crash at least three people have been killed and more than fifty have been injured. The Health Ministry explained the train derailed on the line between Alexandria and the provincial centre of Mersa Matruh to the west. The state authorities announced that two of the seven carriages had overturned and Egyptian media show both carriages lying in a ditch. According to reports there was a track deformation which led to the event. Thirty ambulances were in action to care for the injured and bring them to hospitals. The Ministry speaks of a "tragic accident"."

## D. TURKEY

#### (i). ESKISEHIR FREIGHT CONNECTION

From "R.G.I." 16.06.2025:

"Construction has begun on a 7.5km branch to connect the Organised Industrial Zone in Eskisehir to the city's Hasanbey logistics centre. The line, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2025, will reduce local road traffic by enabling goods produced in the industrial zone to be transported by rail to other parts of the country and to ports for export. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Turkey's Minister of Transport & Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloglu said a further 169 km of lines linking industrial zones with logistics centres would be completed by end of 2028."

#### (ii). TÜRASAS PRESENTS HOME-BUILT STOCK

From "I.R.I." 19.06.2025: "Turkey's minister of transport and infrastructure, Abdulkadir Uraloglu, presided over a ceremony on May 30 to mark the hand over to national rail operator TCDD Tasimacilik of a range of new generation rail vehicles designed and produced by Türasas at its production facilities in Eskisehir, Sakarya and Sivas in cooperation with more than 100 domestic suppliers.

The first five of 95 E5000 25kV ac locomotives to be produced for TCDD Tasimacilik were on show. Uraloglu says Türasas will deliver another 15 locomotives this year. "We will complete the production of the 95 locomotives by producing 30 locomotives in 2026 and 45 locomotives in 2027," Uraloglu announced.

"Our E5000 National Electric Locomotive, produced in our facilities in Eskisehir, has been made for the first time for a mainline locomotive with 100% domestic and national design," Uraloglu said. This includes the traction converters, traction control unit, central control unit, and transformer.

The E5000 has a maximum output of 5MW and a top speed of 140km/h. It is suitable for hauling both freight and passenger trains. Uraloglu said the E5000 locomotive is designed to meet the European Union's Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI). He pointed out that each of the traction motors has an output of 1.28MW, making them the most powerful traction motors designed in Turkey to date.

#### EMUs & Battery Locos

The first three New Sakarya national EMUs with a top speed of 160km/h entered service between Adapazari and Gebze in 2023. Two more trains have now been completed for TCDD Tasimacilik. Another 17 sets will be produced by the end of 2026, followed by 34 trains by 2020.

Uraloglu said production started of Turkey's first 225km/h train in February. He says Türasas plans to produce 14 of these trains between 2026 and 2028.

Türasas has completed the first two 700T battery-powered shunting locomotives, which are designed for low-speed, short-distance shunting at stations, depots and terminals. The zero-emission shunter is expected to have low operating and maintenance costs compared with diesel shunters. Series production of six units is currently underway.

Finally, the fire extinguishing and rescue wagon developed by Türasas is designed for rapid and effective response in emergencies. The wagon has a water capacity of 92 tonnes, which Uraloglu says is equivalent to 42 fire trucks and nine tankers, and a foam spraying capacity of 4cu.m., equivalent to the capacity of 20 fire trucks.

#### Expansion

Uraloglu also gave a brief update on the expansion of the national network. "Our railway network, which was approximately 11,000km in 2002, has reached 13,919km today, 2,251km of which are high-speed lines," he said.

Uraloglu added that construction is continuing of the following high-speed projects: Halkali - Kapikule, Ankara - Izmir, Bandirma - Bursa - Yenisehir - Osmaneli to connect with the Istanbul - Ankara high-speed line, Mersin - Adana - Osmaniye - Gaziantep in the south and from Yerköy on the recently-completed Ankara - Sivas line south to Kayseri.

"We aim to increase our railway network to 17,500km by 2028," Uraloglu said. "However, our goal is not only to expand our railway network; but also to produce every vehicle and every component to be used on this network with local and national resources." "



- Line up of new locos

#### (iii). ASELSAN TO SUPPLY TRACTION COMPONENTS AND TRAIN CONTROL EQUIPMENT FOR TURKISH FLEETS

~~From "R.G.I." 27.06.2025. "Rail and defence specialist Aselsan signed contracts at the Eurasiarail trade fair held in Istanbul between June 18-20 for the supply of traction and control equipment and train management systems for trams and high speed trainsets. One contract covered the supply of motor and traction systems for trams being built by domestic manufacturer Bozankaya.~~

A second agreement, worth €70.6M, was signed between Aselsan and Turkish state-owned systems integrator Türasa for the supply of traction, control and train management systems for the National High Speed Train fleet currently being developed. The order covers transformers, traction converters, auxiliary converters, traction motors and train control management systems. Deliveries are due in 2025-28.

Production of the 225 km/h National High Speed Train fleet began in February, and 14 are to be delivered in 2026-28. They will be up to eight cars long, with a capacity of up to 584 passengers.

Aselsan has also supplied principal components including traction motors and transformers for Turkey's National Train electric multiple-units, first two of which were delivered to national operator TCDD Tasimecilik on May 30."

#### (iv) TENDERS CALLED FOR SIIRT RAILWAY.

From "I.R.J." 03.06.2025: "Infrastructure manager TCDD has called tenders for the construction of a 34 km extension of the Yolcati – Diyarbakir – Batman – Kurtalan railway to Siirt.

There would be stations serving Siirt airport and university and in the city centre. The planned 160 km/h alignment would include six bored tunnels totalling 15.6 km, 12 service and emergency tunnels totalling 11.7 km, cut and cover tunnels totalling 1.5 km and two viaducts totalling 600m.

Bids are due by June 17, with completion planned within 1,800 days of the contract signing.

The line is to be electrified. Minister for Transportation & Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloglu said electrification and modernisation of the existing line from Yolcati to Kurtalan would also go ahead, and confirmed plans to build a new alignment from Diyarbakir to Mazidagi as a first stage in the planned rail connection between Diyarbakir and Mardin.

The tender comes after militant group the Kurdistan Workers Party announced that it would disband, and Uraloglu said the new and modernised lines would make significant contribution to economic, commercial and tourist activities in the southeast.

A railway between Kurtalan and Siirt was planned in the 1940s as part of through line to Iran, but the route through the mountains south of Lake Van proved too challenging. An alternative route opened in 1971 runs from Elazig to Tatvan, where a train ferry crosses the lake to Van for onward transit to Iran".

#### (v) MORE ELECTRIC LOCO DEVELOPMENT

In "R.G.I." 28.07.2025: "The third version of the E5000 series of electric freight locomotives developed by Turkey's state rail vehicle manufacturer Türasas has entered service. The E5003 locomotive completed its first commercial run with national operator TCDD Tasimecilik, hauling 26 wagons 125 km between Hasanbey, Eskisehir and Sazilar."

#### (vi) NEW BRANCH TO FLYOS HARBOUR

"Turkey's infrastructure manager has awarded a consortium of REC Uluslararası İnşaat, Ballast Nedam and Heitkamp a TL2.5Bn contract to build a 7.2km double-track branch line connecting the Black Sea port and energy terminal at Filyos with the Zonguldak – Kirikkale main line. This will include a 387m long bridge. The project is receiving financial support from the World Bank under its Rail Logistics Improvement Project."

#### (vii) NEW WAGONS

In "Eisenbahn Kurier" 8/2025 pp.36ff is an article on new goods wagons displayed at the "Transport Logistic 2025" Trade Fair held in München in June.

Several new firms were represented including Delta from Ankjara with the prototype of a container flat wagon Type Sggn(s) 80. With a nett weight of 22T it can carry up to 68T. The text seems to indicate that actual construction is however carried out by Shinvoz in Serbia. Three further prototype vehicles are expected at "Innotrans 2026".

Also from Turkey is Winton Industries which offers compressed-air wagons with an aluminium container – on display was a silo wagon type Uacns with 82 cu.m volume and a Zags with 117 cu m volume for transport of liquid gas. A bogie type Uais is also on offer for transporting cement.

GATX demonstrated its 30,000th wagon... The Turkish manufacturer Gökyapi had built the Sgns 60. This container flat incorporates three 20ft cassettes which fit onto the basic frame, allowing more flexibility." [Note: The various letter codes for wagon types follow international UIC practice.]

#### (viii) IRAQ LINK PROJECT

From "RailFreight.com" 05.08.25 In late June, the World Bank announced a \$950M grant for the so-called Iraq Development Road. It would constitute a whole new rail corridor for goods to reach Europe from Asia (and vice versa) and take ten days fewer than going via Suez. It also aligns perfectly with the ambitions of Iraq's neighbour Turkey to become a regional logistics hub. Despite the near-billion dollar grant and growing trade with the Turks, the project remains in a very early stage, and Turkish involvement is limited, for now."

#### (ix) FUNDING FOR LINE TO AZERBAIJAN

From "R.G.I." 04.08.2025: "Infrastructure manager TCDD has secured US\$2.8Bn in external financing for the development of the planned Kars – Igdir – Aralık – Dilucu line which would extend its network to the border of Azerbaijan's Naxcivan exclave.

The 'green' financing package is led by Japan's Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, with Sweden's EKN Export Credit Agency and the OeKB export credit agency of Austria.

According to Turkey's 2025 investment programme, the 224 km double-track electrified line is expected to cost TL139.5Bn, of which TL103.4Bn would be sourced as external credit.

The project was first listed for investment in 2022, with an anticipated completion date of 2029, but the only budget allocation prior to 2025 was TL1.31Bn for consultancy work. For 2025 the project has an allocation of TL2.47Bn with TL2.03Bn from external credit, in line with the sum required to call tenders for the project. No announcement has been made on when the line is expected to be open.

#### Zangezur Corridor

The line could eventually form part of the long-mooted Zangezur Corridor, which would connect Azerbaijan's Caspian Sea ports of Baku and Lankaran with Armenia and Naxcivan, and then with Turkey's rail network and by extension the European network. This would form a new section of the Middle Corridor freight route between China and Europe, relieving pressure on the Baku – Tbilisi – Kars route which also serves Georgia and Turkey's Black Sea ports.

The Zangezur Corridor would involve rebuilding and upgrading a single-track line running from Imisli in Azerbaijan, parallel with the Iranian border west through Armenia and Naxcivan terminating close to the border with Turkey.

The bulk of the line through Azerbaijan and its Naxcivan exclave is operational. The section through Armenia is isolated from the rest of Armenia's rail network and is believed to be derelict. The main stumbling block for development of the Zangezur Corridor has been the state of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armed conflicts in 2020 and 2023 saw areas which had been under Armenian control returned to Azerbaijani control, with preliminary peace talks having resulted in an informal agreement to develop the Zangezur transport corridor. Long-stalled talks over a formal peace settlement allowing for a restoration of normal political and economic relations were recently restarted in Abu Dhabi.

Separately, Turkish and Armenian officials have been holding preliminary meetings aimed at discussing possible joint projects in transport and energy."

For more on this "Corridor" see below under (M).

*BUT ON 25.08.25 "RAILFREIGHT.COM" ANNOUNCED: Türkiye starts building Kars - Dilucu railway, a key part of the Zangezur Corridor*

Türkiye has officially started construction works for the Kars - Igdir - Aralık - Dilucu railway line, a 224-kilometre project that will link up to the future Zangezur Corridor."

And also: **TURKEY AND KAZAKHSTAN STRENGTHEN RAIL FREIGHT TIES**

Kazakhstan Railways (KTZ) launched a new intermodal connection to Türkiye. The route connects Medeu, in the Almaty region, with Köseköy, southeast of Istanbul, through rail-sea-rail...

#### (x) ANKARA METRO EXTENSION

*FROM "METRO REPORT INTL." 15.08.25: "A GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY HAS BEEN HOLD FOR THE 7.5 KM SOUTHWESTERN EXTENSION OF THE ANKARAY LIGHT METRO LINE IN Ankara, WHICH WILL RUN FROM DIKIMEVI TO NATOYOLU."*

## E. DUBAI

METRO. From "I.R.J."

"A groundbreaking ceremony has been held in Dubai to mark the official start of construction on the 30km Blue Line project, the Emirate's third metro. Dubai's ruler and vice-president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, laid the foundation stone at the future Emaar Properties station on June 9.

A consortium led by Mapa Group of Turkey, that also includes fellow Turkish company Limak Holding and CRRC, secured a Dirhams 20.5Bn (\$US 4.88Bn) contract to design, build and equip the line in December. Mapa and Limak will be responsible for civil works, while CRRC will supply rail systems and a fleet of 28 driverless trains.

The Y-shaped Blue Line includes a 21km section with 10 stations that RTA says will run from Al Khor on the Green Line to Dubai Academic City, via International City 1. At this station there will be an interchange with a 9km branch with four stations running to Centrepoint on the Red Line. The Blue Line will include 15.5km of underground and 14.5km of elevated alignment, serving five underground and nine elevated stations. A new rolling stock depot will be built at Al Ruwaiyah 3.

The new line will have capacity for 46,000 passengers per hour per direction. Trains will operate at approximately 2-minute intervals with the Blue Line expected to carry 200,000 passengers a day by 2030, rising to 320,000 passengers a day by 2040. The line is scheduled to open on September 9 2029, the 20th anniversary of the first metro line in Dubai entering service.

#### *World's tallest Metro station*

With a 74m-tall structure at its centrepiece, Emaar Properties is being dubbed the world's tallest metro station. US architectural practice Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) is responsible for the design, with the portal-like structure intended to resemble a gateway. It will incorporate a glass roof to enable natural light to enter the building as well as a combination of stone and metal construction materials. The three-level station will have capacity 160,000 passengers per day and is expected to serve 70,000 daily by 2040.

## F. IRAQ

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$US 930M FOR IRAQ'S RAILWAYS

From "I.R.J." 25.06.2025 & "R.G.I." 01.07.2025:

The World Bank has approved US\$930M of financing for the Iraq Railways Extension & Modernisation project to upgrade the 1,047 km route between the southern port of Umm Qasr, Baghdad and Mosul. The project aims to improve and augment the existing rail infrastructure to expand capacity, reduce travel times, increase freight volumes and provide improved access to sustainable transport.

Key activities include rehabilitating the existing single track where needed, installing ETCS, maintaining the locomotives and rolling stock, refurbishing the Baiji workshop, and procuring maintenance equipment and spare parts. A safety management system will be introduced, with level crossing improvements, community awareness campaigns, emergency preparedness and staff training.

The project will also include technical assistance to improve the institutional performance of Iraqi Republic Railways. The scope of this element of the work includes the development of a railway sector reform action plan, and the identification of opportunities to dispose of non-core assets and to attract private sector resources and skills including for the establishment of dry ports and logistics hubs. There will be training for IRR staff and support for female participation in the rail sector.

The project is to be implemented by IRR under the oversight of the Ministry of Transport. An international firm will be appointed to act as capital expenditure management agent. It is envisaged that by 2037 the railway will be carrying 6.3 million tonnes/year of domestic freight and 1.1 million tonnes of exports and imports, including grain, construction materials and containerised freight, as well as 2.85 M passengers

The World Bank said the Middle East is 'witnessing a resurgence in regional railways, bolstering trade routes within the region and with Asia and Europe to enhance connectivity and drive regional economic growth'. It said Iraq's rail sector suffers from limited connectivity, disrepair and underfunding, and investment is an essential first step towards enhancing national and regional connectivity.

*'As Iraq shifts from reconstruction to development, enhanced trade and connectivity can stimulate growth, create jobs and reduce oil dependency,' said Jean-Christophe Carret, World Bank Middle East Division Director, after the project was approved by the board on June 24."*

## G. IRAN

#### (i). ELECTRIFICATION

From "R.G.I." 28.07.2025: "A Chinese company is to electrify 1,000 km of the east-west corridor connecting Serakhs on the border with Turkmenistan to Razi on the border with Turkey. Speaking after a meeting with China Railway during the 106th General Assembly of the International Union of Railways in Beijing, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Jabbar Ali Zakeri said the project would include the construction of a second track on parts of the corridor to triple freight capacity to 15 million tonnes/year.

China and Iran signed a 25-year cooperation agreement in March 2021, with China planning major investments in Iran's infrastructure as part of the Belt & Road Initiative. This aims to provide China with reliable freight links to Europe, western Asia and onwards to Africa.

Meanwhile Iran is stepping up investment in developing its transport infrastructure as part of a plan to diversify the economy away from dependence on energy exports, and to benefit from increased transit freight traffic.

#### (ii). PASSENGER FLEET RENEWAL

From "R.G.I." 28.07: "On July 9 RAI signed a 882Tr Rial agreement for private operators Raja Rail Transportation and Rail Tarabar Saba to upgrade its passenger fleet under a public-private financing structure. The two companies are to purchase 60 and 70 new coaches and upgrade 100 and 37 existing coaches to the same standard."

#### (iii). INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT

From "R.G.I." 08.08.25: "Islamic Republic of Iran Railways has granted MAPNA Multimodal Transport a license to provide international rail freight forwarding services."

(iv) BORDER TO TURKMENISTAN

From "R.G.I." 25.08.25: "Iran and Turkmenistan have agreed to construct one standard and one broad gauge line to increase capacity through the Sarakhs border crossing."

"... les pots d'échappement troués crachent une épaisse fumée noire, des klaxons stridents et agressifs, l'ancienne gare de Tripoli représente un havre de paix. La nature y a repris ses droits. Bien qu'un anarchique, épaisse et parfois piqamte, elle apaise le visiteur. Dans son enceinte, des deux-roues sont stationnés près de colosses de béton et de machines de fer, roillées à l'abandon. La porte de la cheminée d'une locomotive massive est ouverte. Deux jeunes hommes y sont installés et discutent. 'Pour les gens, c'est comme un parc public... Loin de la ville et de tous ces inconveniens' décrit Carlos Naffah, président de Train-Train et ardent défenseur du patrimoine ferroviaire libanais. Quelques rayons de soleil viennent gratifier ce qu'il reste de l'ancienne gare de Tripoli. ici, le temps semble s'être figé..."

Translation: "... the exhaust pipes spew thick black smoke, the horns blare stridently and aggressively, Tripoli's old railway station is a haven of peace. Nature has reclaimed its rights. Although a little anarchic, thick and sometimes prickly, it appeals to the visitor. Within its walls, two-wheelers are parked next to concrete colossi and iron machines, left to rot. The smokebox door of a massive locomotive is open. Two young men are sitting there, chatting. For people, it's like a public park... Away from the city and all its inconveniences", writes Carlos Naffah, president of Train-Train and ardent defender of Lebanon's railway heritage. A few rays of sunshine grace what's left of the old Tripoli station, where time seems to stand still."



H. LEBANON

- Above - Iran Freight Train

Some positive news from Lebanon, at least in terms of nostalgia. Maybe this has to do with some tentative general settling of the situation there... At the end of July 2025 the UNESCO Office in Beirut published online pictures of progress on the project to restore the buildings at the disused Mar Michael station as an "Industrial Heritage Park Project". "Part of UNESCO's #LiBeirut initiative and funded by Italy, this project is transforming the damaged 19th century station into a vibrant cultural and creative hub - preserving Beirut's urban memory while creating space for community and artistic exchange."

The French magazine 'La Vie du Rail' for July 2025 also had a cover feature on derelict G8 steam locos in the shed at Tripoli, the title "Au Libanon, Le Desir du Train": It opens:

TV PROGRAMME ON THE RAILWAYS:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1GfPVMKW6j/>



should hopefully lead to a brief section of a young woman presented in a long vivid orange dress exploring the Tripoli shed and standing on a loco cab.

### MUSEUM PLAN FROM 40 YEARS AGO...

This was published in 'L'Orient Le Jour' in Beirut in 1985, in a different world... (Translation from the French by Editor).

### "Locomotives from Beirut and... a National Museum of Transport. by Jean-Louis Dollfus

Jean-Louis Dollfus, a French expert resident in Lebanon, is responsible for the development of the Beirut metropolitan area. After mentioning the locomotives, he proposes below the creation of a "National Transport Museum in Rayak".

"Daddy, what is a locomotive?" That's the question of a seven-year-old child. Yet ten years ago, everyone in Beirut knew what a locomotive looked like and what noise it made.

The train to the Bekaa and Damascus was admittedly a little slow, but it dutifully made its way every day. It continues to make the journey between Zebedani and Damascus, covering some fifty kilometres several times a day.

Although the Beirut-Zahle mountain railway in Mount Lebanon is no longer usable, there are still five locomotives in storage that look as if they want to get going again.

These old "ladies" are 91 years old for the oldest, known as "BA 8", and 59 years old for the youngest. They were all built in Winterthur, Switzerland, and are as precise as clocks, made to stand the test of time.

It's worth remembering that to reach the Baidar Pass at an altitude of 1,500m our locomotives needed to hook onto a kind of toothed rail installed all along the line, on which the cogwheel of the engines hung. There are still rack-and-pinion trains in operation in Switzerland and other mountain countries, but they have often been completely modernised and electrified.

In France, various associations for the protection of the historic railway heritage have succeeded in reviving some of these abandoned railways. Not content with preserving and maintaining old steam locomotives in a museum, passionate enthusiasts have managed to obtain permission to run some old trains on Sundays and public holidays, much to the delight of travellers, who take a trip back in time. It should be pointed out that many of the enthusiasts in these associations are former railway employees who have retained a nostalgic interest in their profession.

The Beirut locomotives are all designed for narrow mountain tracks with a gauge of one metre between the rails and for a rack rail. They are sturdy climbers. Designed to be able to traverse short curves, these models have become very rare and are valued by museums all over the world.

The history of the railways in this country is also a page in the history of Lebanon, and as such, a "National Transport Museum" with a large locomotive department could be envisaged. It could be built at Rayak, for example, as the land is too expensive in Beirut, and in all countries this type of museum is decentralised. Our locomotives are part of our national heritage, and it would be a good idea to show them off before they disappear into the scrap heap. What's more, at Rayak, it would be possible to reopen the metre-gauge line to Damascus, so as to offer a living museum where the rolling stock works and transports visitors. It will then be possible to show children who want to see a steam locomotive not only the Transport Museum, but also the beautiful route through the Barada valley.

Rayak also has a standard-gauge railway line that runs north to Homs. This would make it possible to bring the old steam locomotives from the coastal line currently parked in Tripoli back to the Museum. While these are not as interesting as the rack machines, they are nonetheless rare specimens in the Middle East.

But the Transport Museum is also about cars, coaches and so on. In recent years, certain groups of young people have been restoring superb limousines from the glorious years of the motor car. They would look great in a national museum.

With the visit to Baalbeck, the Bekaa will have another tourist hub to attract foreigners when they return to fill the country's hotels.

But all this cannot be achieved in a few months. It takes years to assemble, restore and present the various items in a museum. Isn't it now time to bring together all those who feel the desire to participate in this undertaking to save our national heritage?

Isn't it about time we got together with former railway employees to find people willing to lend a hand and help restore these locomotives and other collectors' items?"

## I. SYRIA

First mention for a while: DAMASCUS METRO PROJECT.

From "Metro Report Intl." 15.08.2025:

"SYRIAN TRANSPORT MINISTER YARUB BADR AND GOVERNOR MAHER MARWAN MET A UAE-BASED INVESTMENT COMPANY ON AUGUST 4 TO DISCUSS REVIVING LONG-STANDING PLANS TO DEVELOP A METRO IN DAMASCUS. THE PROPOSED GREEN LINE WOULD RUN 16.5 KM FROM AL-MAADAMIYA IN THE SOUTHWEST TO AL-QABOUN IN THE NORTHEAST."

## J. LIBYA.

(i). From "R.G.I." 17.07.2025: "*CHINA CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION CORP AND LIBYAN RAILWAYS HAVE SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH COULD SEE WORK RESUME ON THE STALLED NATIONAL RAILWAY PROJECT.*"

(ii). From "Metro Report Intl." 27.08.25:

"THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN LIBYAN RAILWAYS THE GO-AHEAD TO COMMISSION STUDIES AND DESIGNS FOR A PROPOSED TRIPOLI METRO."

## K. CHINA PUSHES WESTWARDS

(i). From "I.R.J." 17.07.25: "China Railway (CR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Azerbaijan Railways (ADY) to strengthen cooperation, highlighting the strategic importance of developing intermodal freight traffic along the Middle Corridor or Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR)."

(ii). CHINESE INVOLVEMENT IN THE "MIDDLE CORRIDOR"

From "Railfreight.com" 08.03.25: "Middle Corridor Multimodal, a joint venture between the national rail operators of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, is getting a new participant. Stakeholders have agreed to China Railway Container Transport entering the joint venture during a meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

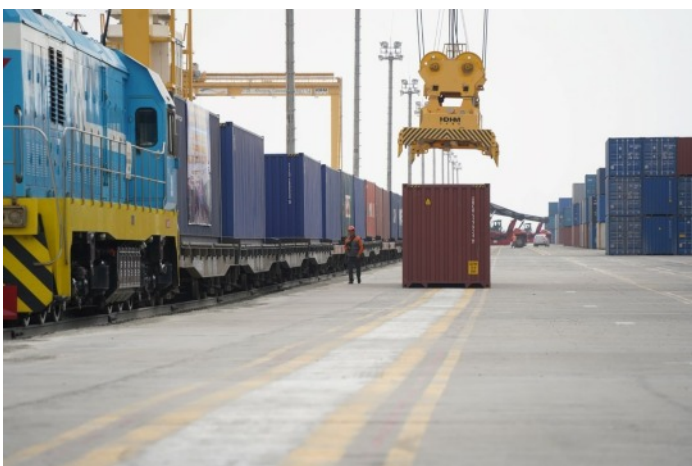
### Train monitoring

Other points on the meeting agenda in Baku concerned bottlenecks, digitalisation of logistics and container train monitoring. When it comes to the latter, the attendees agreed to implement train travel time monitoring. "This will ensure schedule stability, enable prompt resolution of logistical issues, and improve route efficiency", Kazakh Railways stated".

"R.G.I." of 14.08.15 worded this slightly differently with additional information: "China Railway Container Transport Corp is to join the Middle Corridor Multimodal joint venture formed by the national railways of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Georgia to facilitate reliable and efficient freight services along the Middle Corridor between China and Europe. In 2024 Azerbaijan received 287 block trains from China, rising

to 225 in the first seven months of this year alone. It expected to hit more than 400 this year."

## L. UZBEKISTAN TO PAKISTAN PROJECT



From "I.R.J." 23.07.2025: UAP Railway feasibility study agreed. "New railway to connect Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan could cost \$US 7Bn to build.

The governments of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have signed an agreement to conduct a feasibility study of building the UAP Railway to connect the three countries.

It was signed in Kabul on July 17 by Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Works, Uzbekistan's Ministry of Transport, and Pakistan's Ministry of Railways. The signing ceremony was witnessed by the acting foreign minister of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, Uzbekistan's minister of foreign affairs, Bakhtiyor Saidov, and the foreign minister of Pakistan, Ishaq Dar.

The new 760km line would run from Termiz in Uzbekistan to Hairatan in Afghanistan, and then via Kabul and Logar to the border with Pakistan at Kharlachi. Expected to cut transit times between Uzbekistan and Pakistan from 35 days to three to five days, the project would provide access to ports on the Arabian Sea.

The route of the UAP Railway, also known as the Trans-Afghan Railway, was agreed by the three countries when they signed a joint protocol to build it in July 2023. The project was first proposed by Uzbekistan in December 2018, and its cost is reported to have increased from an initial \$US 5Bn to \$US 7Bn.

By facilitating regional trade and transit freight traffic, the project is expected to promote regional stability, growth and development. In statement, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry described the signing of the framework agreement as an important step towards its implementation."

[We really need a Rubric heading for "General Plans over the whole of Central Asia and Elsewhere" inasmuch as these also impinge upon what is more commonly considered to be the "Middle East".... Ed.]

## M. CENTRAL ASIA & INTERNATIONAL

From "R.G.I." 28.07.2025:

### (i). TURKMENISTAN:

The government of Turkmenistan has called tenders to design and supervise construction of two train ferries, to be financed by the Islamic Development Bank and the OPEC Fund and produced at the Balkan Shipbuilding & Repairing Yard in Türkmənbaşı."

### (ii). KAZAKHSTAN:

"On July 9 KTZ Express announced the arrival of the first container service by rail and sea from Shanxi Province in China to Azerbaijan via the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and the port of Aktau. This comprised 50 containers with photovoltaic equipment dispatched from the Zhongding logistics centre in Jinzhong. 'The launch of this new route from northern China along the Middle Corridor highlights the growing relevance of TITR as an effective alternative to traditional routes, reinforcing Kazakhstan's role as a key transit hub in Eurasian logistics,' the operator said.

Kazakhstan's KTZ Express and the UAE's AD Ports Group have established the GulfLink 49:51 joint venture to develop international multimodal routes through Pakistan, Turkey, Gulf ports and the Indian Ocean, as well as the Middle Corridor. Plans included a grain terminal and multi-purpose freight hub in the Caspian port of Kuryk."

### (iii). LOAN FOR KAZAKHSTAN RAILWAYS

From "I.R.J." 31.07.2025: "Kazakhstan Railways (KTZ) has signed a syndicated loan agreement with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank and Deutsche Bank to borrow up to SFr 480M (\$US 595.5M), which will be used to finance key infrastructure projects along the Trans-Kazakhstan corridor. The loan has a term of three years and was arranged with the support of Kazakhstan's sovereign wealth fund Samruk-Kazyna, which owns 100% of KTZ.

KTZ says the new finance will be used to accelerate development of the Trans-Kazakhstan corridor and increase capacity for transit freight traffic, as directed earlier this year by the president of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Key projects include the construction of a new line between Moiynty and Kyzylzhar and upgrades to increase capacity on congested sections of the network. KTZ says that the new loan will also be used to refinance existing debt.

Development of the corridor is seen as being of strategic importance for strengthening Kazakhstan's position as a key component of the rail route between China and Europe. KTZ says that the infrastructure projects within the corridor will reduce transit times for freight, and lower transport costs.

At present over 80% of freight moving from China to Europe by rail passes through Kazakhstan due to its location on the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), also known as the Middle Corridor.

Freight traffic on the Middle Corridor grew by 60% in 2024 to reach 4.5M tonnes. Kazakhstan aims to more than double this figure by 2030 to reach 10M tonnes a year, as it seeks to increase its presence within global supply chains."

### (iv). On 25.08.2025:

"Kazakhstan's KTZ and Turkey's TCDD Tasimacilik have signed an agreement to develop traffic on the Middle Corridor, including an increase in transport volumes along the Baku—Tbilisi - Kars line, technology improvements and simplification of customs and administrative procedures to ensure faster clearance of goods at borders."



Ardalstangen plant to the fjord side slag tip until 1959.

### (i). A TRAM IN DARMSTADT

A tram No. 779 has been named 'Nahariyya' as part of the city partnership programme. The link:



<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1PapiwUfU1/>

will lead to a photo but also some quite unpleasent comments... as is unfortunately to be expected. The Israeli delegation nevertheless were moved by the action.

### (ii) MORE ON SMOSCHEWER:

(a) In "Deutsche Museums-Eisenbahn" 1/2025 p.14 is a reference to Feldbahn-Industrie Smoschewer & Co of Breslau who began construction of the Neumarkter Kleinbahn in the Province of Niederschlesien at the end of September 1925.

(b). In "The Narrow Gauge" No. 295 p.30 is an article by Graham Fairhurst entitled "A Remarkable Survivor" and the story is indeed remarkable: (now Wroclaw in Poland).

Under an awning in a landscaped area at the junction of roads Fv53 and Fv303 in the small town of Ardalstangen in Western Norway resides a preserved seam locomotive. This 900mm gauge 18 tonne 0-4-0 well-tank locomotive was built by F. W. Budich of Breslau (now Wroclaw in Poland). F. W. Budich was established in 1938 following the confiscation of the Feldbahn-Lokomotivfabrik Smoschewer which had been established by a talented German-Jewish engineer Leo Smoschewer in 1899.

The locomotive has works number 965 of 1943 and is remarkable for a number of reasons. The line it worked on was isolated from all other railways. It is a survivor from World War 2 and the efforts by the occupying Germans to establish aluminium factories at a number of sites in Norway to supply material for aircraft manufacture. It is one of the few surviving Budich steam locomotives (possibly the last survivor). In 1943 locomotive building in Germany was reorganised to meet wartime needs and Budich ceased building steam locomotives to concentrate on small diesel locomotives.

According to the aluminium plaque alongside the locomotive, it was one of four ordered by the German company A/S Nordag for the works at Ardal. The plaque states that another two were ordered for the works at Saudasjoen also under development in World War 2.

The German origin of the railway accounts for its very unusual gauge for Norway. Nordag built a 15km long railway between the two aluminium factories under development at Ardalstangen (at the head of one of the innermost arms of the Sognefjord) and Ovre Ardal. Much of the railway followed the road (actually laid on it or within it.) These projects were very demanding on resources and were not entirely successful in their aims and economics despite using forced labour.

The full railway was short-lived, being removed between the two Ardal factories soon after the War was over. However following the takeover of the Nordag operations by the Norwegian Company Hydro Aluminium, a short section of the line was kept in use linking the

A further remarkable aspect of the survival of this locomotive is that one day in 1954 it was left unattended by its driver with the brake not fully on and started to move slowly towards the slag tip. Unfortunately the driver was not quick enough to catch up with the locomotive and it went over the edge and into the deep fjord. It lay there until 1990 when divers discovered it. Recovery of the locomotive took place in 1994 and it was then restored by a group of retired Hydro employees. It owes its survival to its deep dive for the period 1954-1994. The restoration seems to have been comprehensive and the locomotive is complete with all fittings, including turbogenerator and steam-worked bell, and plates. Following restoration, it was given the name "Torbjorn", the name of the driver who was unable to stop it falling off the quay in 1954. The location where the locomotive now resides is possibly on the trackbed of the former railway."

(c). Then in an article in "Eisenbahn Kurier" No. 635 of 8/2025 about the 50th anniversary of the Frankfurt Feldbahnmuseum. (60cm gauge) - for the celebrations a guest loco was "Budich 1059/1944" of the Feld- und Grubenbahnmuseum Fortuna!

(In Solms in Westerwald - see: <https://feldbahn-fortuna.de/fuer-besucher/das-museum>)

The FF/M museum itself has two Smoschewer passenger carriages, museum Nos. 107 & 108, which had been built for the Bulgarian State Railways in 1925 for the 60cm gauge line Burgas - Pomorie and which remained in use on the Radomir - General Torodov line until 1969. They have steel panels over a wooden framework, electric lighting, toilets, stoves and opening windows and were therefore at the most modern level of their time. In 1998 the carriages were rediscovered in a shed and acquired by the museum; their restoration was carried out in Blankenburg (Harz) as part of a project to occupy the unemployed.

(d). Coincidences continued: In "Hessen Schiene" No. 140 Juli-September 2025 in an article on the Museum is a photo showing the guest Budich loco, formerly employed at the Fernie Ore mine (Erzgrube) at Giessen, and I am fairly certain the first two carriages are the Smoschewer ones referred to above.

### (iv). NITZANA

During World War I the Ottoman forces extended a railway line of HR gauge into the Negev and the Sinai to a lonely spot named (by Paul Cotterell in his book) "Nitzana"; there are of course other versions of the name and in the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Vol. 157 No. 2 pp.160-173 is an article by Yana Tchekhanovets and Temo Jojua entitled "Georgian Graffito from Nessana, Dating to the "Dark Age" of Christianity in Palestine".

Leaving aside any religious significance to this definition, the place referred to is actually the same and so, since this is a name which appears briefly in railway history but about which most of us know little, some relevant sections are excerpted here:

"The ancient site of Nessana is located in the south-western Negev, on the Israeli-Egyptian border. Established during the Hellenistic period (ca. third-second centuries BCE) Nessana eventually became a Late Roman garrison site and reached its peak in the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods (fifth to seventh centuries CE). At that time Nessana served as a main caravan hub on the route of Christian pilgrims travelling from the Holy Land to Mount Sinai. Abandoned sometime during the late Abbasid period, probably in the tenth century CE, the site was inhabited again only a thousand years later when, on the eve of the First World War, the Ottoman authorities decided to turn Nessana into the administrative and military centre of the region. A new settlement, known as 'Auja al-Hafir was established close to the border between Ottoman Palestine and British-ruled Egypt. It was built on top of the ancient remains and damaged the antiquities. During WW1, the site served as a main logistics base for the Ottomans for their raids on the Suez Canal, and a military hospital operated in the lower part of the

settlement.... During the British Mandate, Ottoman buildings were used for storage and as a police station. The ruins of Nessana have been explored by numerous researchers since the late nineteenth century.... Two archaeological expeditions worked at the site during the twentieth century. The first was the expedition of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, led by H. D. Colt from 1935 to 1937. This campaign concentrated its efforts on the acropolis and uncovered the remains of a military fort and two monumental churches, both preserving archives of papyri, written in Greek, Arabic and Aramaic, and dated to the sixth-seventh centuries...."

"From 1987 to 1996 the site was excavated by an expedition of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev headed by D. Urman and J. Shereshevski. Excavation areas were opened in the upper and lower town, revealing private and public buildings, among them the monastery and the church. More recently, the Nessana cemeteries became the focus of a particular study, and their trash mounds were excavated within the framework of a wide-scope project on the Byzantine-Islamic transition in the Negev. A new archaeological project of Nessana excavations, led by one of the authors, started in 2022 on behalf of the Department of Archaeology of the BG University and aims to focus on the problematics of the archaeology of early Christian pilgrimage.

#### P. L. O. Guy's Report of 1926

In 1917-18 the British defeated the Ottomans and conquered Palestine. The strategic site of 'Auja al-Hafir was taken by British troops in 1917. Although its military structures and the railway were demolished, the civil authorities of British Mandatory Palestine kept 'Auja al-Hafir as an administrative centre. In the 1920s. A few surviving Ottoman structures located down the hill were declared government property and repaired. Since 'Auja al-Hafir was known to be an ancient site, prior to its further development the Department of Antiquities of Palestine was consulted. In the internal correspondence preserved in the British Mandatory Archive of the Department, we found a letter from the director, J. Garstang, dated 12 April 1926, specifying that according to the Antiquities Ordinance of 1920 (Official Gazette No. 76) the ancient site is limited only to the acropolis, while in reality archaeological remains were also observed down the hill. Garstang recommended surveying the site once again to ensure that "the whole of the ancient town is declared to be an historical site". This is how P. L. O. Guy, \* then the Chief Inspector of the Department, came to visit the site on 30 June 1926. His detailed report of 25 August 1926 is preserved in the archive.

In the results of the inspection, Guy made some remarks regarding the poor preservation of the basilical churches on the acropolis and the massive looting of the ancient stones "during the war" and recommended that the territory down the hill also be included within the boundaries of the historical site, according to the primary plan presented by the Lands Department. "In the lower town practically no trace of ruins remains visible above the ground, though walls can be traced if one is accustomed to looking for them. .... Altogether the site is shallow one and I can see no traces of anything earlier than the Byzantine period, nor indeed of anything later if one excepts the Turkish buildings...".

It should be remembered that this report was prepared nearly a decade before the Colt excavation, with its important discoveries of two monumental churches and the papyri archives. ....

Nessana possessed an unusually large number of Church institutions. Two Basilicas were found at the acropolis, dedicated to Sts. Sergius and Bacchus and to the Holy Theotokos. In addition a small monastery with a chapel was unearthed on the lower northern step of the acropolis by the expedition of BGU. Down the hill, three more churches are known; of these, the Central Church was exposed by the BGU team... Another church, perhaps associated with a monastery, was found during the Ottoman construction activity in the early twentieth century. Remains of yet another chapel were discovered during the survey conducted at the site by the BGU expedition..... All the churches of Nessana were built of stone, colonnaded and lavishly decorated with locally made carved elements, imported marble and mosaics. It seems that most of the churches functioned simultaneously during the Byzantine and the Early Islamic period. Perhaps the unusual number of churches at the site is

related to the economic wealth of Nessana and its role in the pilgrimage movement.....

Although Nessana is not related to any event mentioned in the Scriptures, during the Byzantine period it became one of the most visited and crowded hubs of the Holy Land. The prosperity of Byzantine-period Nessana is related to its strategic position: the settlement was located on the route of Christian pilgrims travelling from the Holy Land to Mount Sinai. The Sinai Peninsula with its venerated sites and strong monastic presence attracted numerous Christian visitors, and their presence is well attested by archaeological and epigraphic remains. Pilgrimage played a major role in the life of the Nessana settlement, the last inhabited site before the Sinai desert road.... Apparently Byzantine Nessana became an essential stopping point for pilgrims entering the Sinai desert, a place where caravans were formed and guides and other essential services were supplied, and it kept this role also during the Early Islamic Period....."

So this explains to some extent why the Turkish railway line was extended to here. Unfortunately there is no mention to any remaining relic of the very brief railway presence, we know the Imperial troops demolished the tracks and many bridges in 1917/18. There is always something mysterious about a deserted spot in some wilderness where once thriving settlements existed.

(\* Even I with my warped sense of humour would never dare make up a name like this in this context, and even though it would be an anachronism since the PLO was only founded in the 1960s.)

#### (v). IC3 SETS

In 'Eisenbahn Geschichte' No. 140 3/2025 p.86 appeared a Reader's Letter from your Editor with a photo of an IC3 set by Chen Melling. Chen writes on 01.08 that seven more former IR sets have safely arrived in Romania and set 01 has been returned restored (albeit still without markings) to the Railway Museum in Haifa. (See 150.02)

#### (vi). THREE DIGITS

In the 'Jüdische Allgemeine' of 30.07.2025 is an article by Nicole Dreyfus which explains how Jews in Switzerland refer to each other in a form of code as "Eight-Two-Fivers" or "Eight-Twenty-Fivers". The origin for the use of this combination '825' is: The first railway line in Switzerland was the so-called "Spanish-Brötli Bahn", opened in 1847 between Zürich and Baden - (the nickname refers to a form of roll that people from Zürich bought in Baden and brought back with them - some people joke that the current initials "SBB" are also a hidden reference to this!) At this time Jews were only allowed to live in Switzerland in the two villages of Lengnau and Endingen in the Surb valley. It was only in 1866 that the Swiss constitution allowed Jews to live where they wished and finally only in 1874 that they were granted freedom of religion.

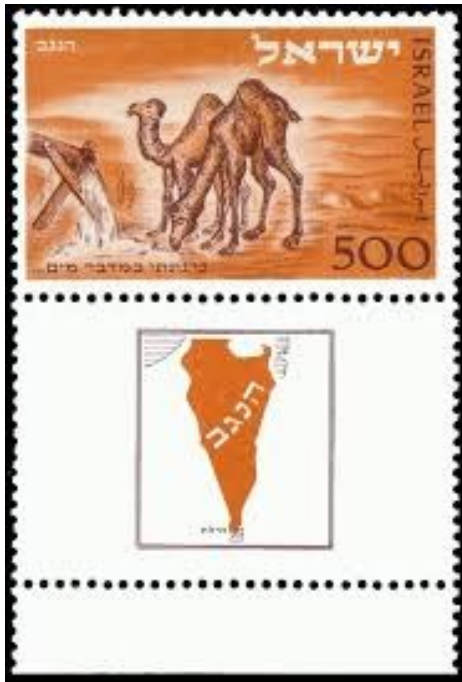
Prior to this any Jews wishing to engage in commerce had to get each day the 08.25 train from Baden to Zürich and so the term came into existence for "those who catch the eight-twenty-five each day" and was eventually applied - of course - to fellow Jews.

(Ironically I then learned from Lorenz in Switzerland of a new booklet on plans to build a railway along this valley, some 15km linking Niederweningen near Baden via Endingen and Lengnau with Döttingen. A Committee was formed in 1890 and in 1892 obtained a concession but finance proved difficult, in December 1915 the Federal Assembly even passed a law (the Surbtalgesetz) compelling the SBB to build the line but post-war the SBB also lacked money and so from 1921 established a road bus service instead.... and in 1937 the Gesetz was cancelled. So clearly any Jews from these villages could never have taken a train to Baden to connect to the 08.25....

#### (iii). ISRAELI STAMPS AND TRAINS.

From Dr. Steve Sattler: "Israel is famous for her colourful, quality and multi-subject stamps. From 1948, Israel has produced thousands of stamps that cover all the facets of Israeli, Jewish and Middle East life.

Here is a review of those stamps that reflect 'railways' inside the Israeli experience.



•The 26th December 1950 first transport stamp. Camels were and are a famous and practical means of bulk-transport.



• 14th December 1966 the first TRAIN stamp. This is the four-stamp Postal series, issued on Stamp-Day. The train motif is a Krauss 0-6-0T.



• The famous 13th December 1977 set of four TRAIN stamps. Each stamp has a tab of the Holy Land (the J&J train, 1892), or Jezreel valley (the El-Afula arm of the Hejaz railway, 1907) or British Mandate (from 1920) or Israel Railways (from about 1950).



Next column a selection of more modern Israeli stamps.



• Bezeq phone card



#### (iv) TRONDHEIM SYNAGOGUE

From "JGuide Europe": Trondheim's synagogue is doubly unusual: it is the northernmost synagogue in Europe and the only one that has served as a train station, before the building became a synagogue in 1925! Jews first settled in Trondheim in the 1880s. They quickly became very integrated, participation in all economical, social and cultural aspects of life. The Jewish community in Trondheim has never really recovered from the mass deportation of its members in March 1942. The city's Jews were arrested by the Norwegian police and were detained at the Falstad camp, near Trondheim.

Today, the synagogue also welcomes the city's Jewish Museum. The museum opened in 1997, celebrating the city's 1,000th anniversary. The latter proposes two permanent exhibitions. One devoted to the life of Jews in Trondheim and in the area. A second one focuses on the historical aspect of the Jewish community in Trondheim, especially during the Holocaust and the impact thereafter."

*Then in 'Times of Israel' 11.07.2025:*

"TRONDHEIM, Norway (JTA) – If ever there was a synagogue that's earned the right to throw itself a birthday shindig, it's this elegant and intriguing house of worship in central Norway only 220 miles south of the Arctic Circle.

Over the past century, the Trondheim Synagogue has weathered isolation from the rest of the Jewish world; the Holocaust, which wiped out half its community; challenges related to Shabbat observance because of its far northern latitude, and persistent antisemitism that has only grown worse since the war against Hamas in Gaza began in 2023.

This fall, the synagogue will be observing its 100-year anniversary with a three-day celebration, culminating with an October 26 event that members of Norway's royal family, the country's prime minister, the mayor of Trondheim and other dignitaries are scheduled to attend.

"There will be speeches, songs and, of course, we will tell the history of the community," says John Arne Moen, president of the Trondheim Jewish Community. "We are on the outskirts of the Jewish world, living close to the polar circle. You will probably not find a community like ours any other place in the world."

With a population of about 200,000, Trondheim is Norway's third-largest city, behind Oslo and Bergen. Located on the shores of a fjord that's an inlet in the Norwegian Sea, the city was founded in the year 997 and was Norway's capital during the Viking Age. The city's most famous site is the Nidaros Cathedral, completed in 1300 at the burial place of King Olav II, who is credited with bringing Christianity to Norway.

The unlikely story of Jewish life in Trondheim began in the late 19th century, when Jewish immigrants began arriving from Poland and Lithuania, usually because they couldn't afford to go to America. Many worked as travelling merchants. By 1900, there were more than 100



Jews living in Trondheim and the city's first synagogue was established. During the next 20 years, the community grew to more than 300 members, prompting the need for a larger synagogue.

In 1923 an old railway station at Arkitekt Christies Gate 1 was purchased with the financial support of approximately 200 Jews from Oslo and converted into a synagogue. It was inaugurated in 1925 and remains – along with the synagogue in Oslo – one of only two synagogues in the country. The building, designed in the Neoclassical style, is fronted by a light-blue façade with arched windows and white molding. Inside, the two-storey sanctuary also features a blue motif. Originally, women were seated in the balcony during services. Now, the balcony is no longer used; men and women sit together on the main floor.

Germany occupied Norway from 1940 to 1945. The Nazis confiscated the synagogue and used it as a barracks, replacing the Stars of David in the windows with swastikas. It's believed that 165 local Jews – about half of Trondheim's Jewish population at the time – died in the Holocaust, fuelled by robust collaboration by local authorities. Most of the victims were deported by train to the Auschwitz extermination camp in Poland, where only a few survived.

Early efforts to memorialize the murdered Jews of Trondheim were undertaken by the remnants of the community that survived. But in the mid-1990s, the city embarked on its own memorial enterprise, choosing Cissi Klein – who was 13 when she was seized from her school, deported to Auschwitz and killed upon arrival – to become a symbol of Trondheim's Nazi victims. A statue of Cissi stands in a quiet park a short walk from the Trondheim Synagogue. Built in 1997 as part of the city's millennium commemorations, the memorial is located outside the apartment building where Cissi lived with her parents and brother. A street alongside the park has been named in her honour.

### A Unique Halachic Challenge

Today, Moen estimates there are 200 Jews living in Trondheim; about three-quarters are members of the synagogue. Shabbat services are typically held every other Friday. The chief rabbi of Norway, Michael Melchior, lives in Israel but periodically travels to Oslo and Trondheim to conduct services. (Melchior's father was the longtime chief rabbi of Denmark.) When Melchior isn't in town, services are usually led by Israeli-born Asher Serussi, a religious leader in the community who has lived in Trondheim for 30 years.

Serussi describes the Trondheim Synagogue as "Orthodox but very flexible and modern." "Most of the people here are not observant Jews," he said. "Our members are interested in the Jewish culture and traditions, but they don't keep kosher and they don't keep Shabbat. They enjoy very much when we have celebrations for holidays. Then it's a full house here."

For the more religious who follow halacha, or traditional Jewish law, the question about how to handle the starting and ending times of Shabbat has been a topic of debate ever since the congregation was founded in 1905. According to halacha, Shabbat begins a few minutes before sunset and lasts until roughly an hour after sunset the following day. But Trondheim is located so far north that the amount of daylight can vary between 20 hours in the summer and just four hours in the winter. So what's an Orthodox congregation to do in a country known as "the land of the midnight sun"?

Other communities in far northern latitudes handle the issue in a variety of ways. Some set the Shabbat clock based on Jerusalem time, while others divide the day equally into two 12-hour segments. Some start Shabbat at the traditional moment, even if that means lighting candles around midnight. Moen says the congregation developed its own approach in its early years of existence that seemed to be palatable to its members and blessed by most of the Orthodox rabbis who have examined the question. For the Trondheim Synagogue, Shabbat begins at 5:30 p.m. on Fridays and ends at 6:30 p.m. on Saturdays, regardless of the time of year and whether or not there's sunlight or polar darkness. "It's been our rule for 120 years," says Moen. "We have grown up with it. We are the only Orthodox synagogue in the world doing it this way."

### Rising Antisemitism leads to fear of Physical Violence

Relations between Norway and Israel are strained – last year Norway formally recognized Palestine as a sovereign state. As for antisemitism, Serussi says that while it's long been an accepted part of Norwegian society, things have gotten worse since the war in Gaza started.

According to a recent report from Israel's Diaspora Affairs Ministry, there has been a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in Norway since October 2023, with 69% of the Jewish community personally experiencing hostility related to their Jewish identity. In 2024, the Trondheim Jewish cemetery was vandalized and someone threw a Molotov cocktail at the synagogue. The attack caused no damage, and the perpetrator was never found.

"We are telling our congregation not to show any Jewish symbols when they are walking the streets," said Serussi. "So we're taking some precautions. We feel like it's not like normal days."

Designed in part to combat antisemitism, there is a small museum in the same building as the synagogue. The Jewish Museum Trondheim opened in 1997 and attracts 7,000 visitors a year, many of them local schoolchildren. They come on field trips to learn about the Holocaust and the history of Jewish life in Trondheim. A particularly moving exhibit devoted to the Holocaust tells the stories of several of the city's victims and includes a rack with 165 empty coat hangers, each representing one of the Jews who perished during the war.

The basement of the museum has a small mikveh, or ritual bath, that hasn't been used since before the German occupation. At the urging of two Orthodox families now living in Trondheim, the mikveh is in the process of being restored and Serussi says the goal is to have it functioning in the next year or two.

Moen says that despite its many challenges, the Trondheim Jewish Community is now on solid footing and looking forward to continuing to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of residents and tourists as it heads into its second century.

"We have survived the Shoah and now we are growing," said Moen. "We have a lot of young people and we haven't seen this much activity in our community since before the war. We have a beautiful shul. If you want a place to pray, the synagogue is open to any Jew who wants to come."

### (v). LOCOMOTIVE NAMES

Apropos of nothing much at all: LNER Class A2/3 Pacific 4-6-2 designed by Edward Thompson No. 60518 was named "Tehran"..... (admittedly, probably named after a racehorse...)

But considering locomotive names with some link to the Middle East: 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST WD 203 "Ahwaz" that had worked on the Longmoor Military Railway was bought by Woodham Brothers in 1963 and scrapped at Barry in South Wales in May 1965. Ex-Longmoor Austerities 106 "Spyck", 108 "Jullundur" and 178 "Foligno" were also scrapped by Woodham Brothers. (Taken from a caption in "Steam World" June 2025, p.54).

### (vi). SZEPIETOWO

On a recent journey from Warsaw to Bialystok in Poland the Editor noticed at this station, plinthed on the right side of the track, a small 4-wheel diesel shunter and a goods van. Later internet researches revealed:

"On June 16, 2024, a memorial train car was ceremoniously unveiled in Szepietowo. It is a place of remembrance in honour of those deported to the USSR and to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The railway carriage symbolizes the tragic fate of Poles deported to the East and to Auschwitz-Birkenau. It stands in a square next to the railway station from which transports departed 80 years ago... "

and "On June 6, 2024, a ceremony was held in Szepietowo to unveil and consecrate a monument commemorating the residents of Szepietowo and surrounding towns who were deported from the Szepietowo railway station to the USSR in 1940-1941. At the same time, on the initiative of the Central Council of Roma in Poland, a monument commemorating the Roma/Gypsies deported in 1943 from the railway station in Szepietowo to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was unveiled and consecrated in the same place.

The ceremonial unveiling and consecration of the monuments was preceded by a Holy Mass in the parish church of Our Lady Mother of Mercy in Szepietowo.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Stefan Krajewski, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Jacek Bogucki, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Ms. Anna

Bogucka, Senator of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Stanisław Stankiewicz and Mr. Karol Kwiatkowski, members of the Board of the Central Council of Roma in Poland, together with other representatives of the Roma community, representatives of the Siberian Association Branch in Łódź, local government authorities, representatives of uniformed services, local social organizations, and residents. The Białystok Branch of the Institute of National Remembrance was represented by Iwona Mudel, an employee of the Branch Office for the Commemoration of Struggle and Martyrdom of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

The commemoration of the residents of Szepietowo and the surrounding villages who were deported from the Szepietowo railway station to the USSR in 1940-1941 was unveiled thanks to the efforts of the Branch Office for the Commemoration of Struggle and Martyrdom of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok, among others.

### "MEMORY LOCKED IN A CLOSED RAILWAY CAR"

*[It is worth noting here how complicated the issue of Remembrance is in these countries. During the terrible years of the mid-20th century, some saw the German Army as liberators from the Bolsheviks while others saw the Red Army as liberators from the Nazis and some saw them as oppressors rather than liberators. At Vilnius station is a plaque which states vaguely: "In 1940-1941 and 1944-1955 from Vilnius Railway Station there were massive Deportations of Lithuanian people to the most distant locations of the Soviet Union." In Lithuania over 90% of the Jews were murdered and often with the help of non-Jewish Lithuanians, so the survivors saw the Soviets as Liberators whereas the Lithuanians did not... The Roma had also been despised by the Poles but became posthumously honoured as "Polish victims of Nazi racism"... Ed.]*



### (vii). THE JEZREEL VALLEY LINE CONSTRUCTION

In the 'Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly' Vol. 157 No. 2 p.176 in a rather scathing review of a book on excavations in Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s is the following: "Usually these expeditions were regarded as highly prestigious endeavours and received support from different constituents. The Wellcome-Marston Expedition received railway tickets at reduced costs and Ernst Sellin usually travelled for free on the Austrian Lloyd, the shipping line connecting Trieste with Palestine... There are also similarities in the recruitment of the workforce for senior workers and foremen: Starkey relied on people from the Upper Egypt village Quft who were originally trained by Petrie, as did the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on their excavation at Megiddo. For his excavations at Tell Ta'annek, Sellin also recruited Egyptian workers who were formerly employed for building the railroad between Haifa and Beth Shan (Sellin 1904.5)"

Presumably this reference to Beth Shan [sic] applies to the Syria Ottoman Railway scheme and indicates that the contractors preferred to import workers from abroad rather than employ local Arabs!

### (viii). THE GREAT ORME TRAMWAY

(a) A RABBI IN AN ACCIDENT. The Editor was able recently to ascend and descend this cable-worked tramway and purchased a history of the line, by Keith Turner. 2003. (pub. Gwasg Carrfeg Gwalch 2002.) p.36ff. From this:

On Tuesday 23rd. August 1932 an accident occurred on the lower section of the Great Orme Tramway, shortly after noon on Ty Gwyn Road, when Car 4 broke loose and ran away and hit a wall, crushing and killing the driver and a 12-year old girl. "The scene was one of utter chaos with crowds of onlookers besieging the rescue workers – many of whom were themselves injured passengers – and a constant ambulance shuttle service taking the casualties to hospital. In all two died, eleven were kept in hospital for treatment and three others treated there for cuts and shock. One of those badly injured was the wife of a Manchester rabbi – who escaped unscathed himself, as did the Bishop of Killaloe, another passenger...."

It transpired the emergency brake had been removed some time previously; after the Inquiry : There was great uncertainty, for the directors reluctantly admitted that the company had no reserve fund and that the claims for compensation (still being finalised) were not fully covered by insurance. ...The logical outcome of this state of affairs was obvious – and inevitable:

"Surprise was caused in Llandudno yesterday when it became known that a Sheriff's Officer had under a writ of fi. fa. taken possession of the Great Orme Tramway Co...." (8 June 1933)

This action came three weeks after a suit for damages, filed by Rabbi H. Levin and his wife Sarah of Cheetham Hill, Manchester for £4,000 in respect of injuries and shock received in the accident, was settled for £1,000 plus costs. Thus the directors failed in their attempt to persuade those claiming against the tramway to wait until the line was working again and earning revenue out of which they could be paid. The Company's financial position can best be judged by the fact that it was unable to meet even Levin's reduced damages and therefore applied for and obtained a writ of fi. fa. (a sheriff's order to sell the goods of a debtor in execution of a judgement)..."

Thanks to Nigel Grizzard and Carole Davies several links to accounts of the accident have been found, which provide additional but often contradictory accounts.. This from:

[https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/llandudno/tram-crash-on-tabor-hill\\_memory-61231](https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/llandudno/tram-crash-on-tabor-hill_memory-61231)

"Car no. 4 broke away from the haulage cable at the spot that the tram is shown above. Rapidly gathering speed and toppling onto the wall to the left of the image, it uprooted a tramway standard (pole) flinging it up the lane by where the children are standing. The roof of the wildly canted tram crashed along the wall, this dislodged coping stones from the wall which fell into the tram causing passenger injuries. The driver, Edward Harris was thrown sideways from the front platform, into the wall and was sadly crushed to death. Apparently riding with the driver on the front platform, was a twelve year old girl named Margaret Worthington. She was badly injured and died at the local hospital within hours of the incident. Other passengers sitting near to the glazed bulkheads were thrown into the windows suffering severe cuts. Almost all of the others suffered severe shock and whiplash injuries. The conductor was Jim Coleburn who had jumped from the rear platform without injury.

The driver had courageously scooped up the child and was thrown from the tram with her in his arms. Sadly they were thrown between the wall and the tramcar... Normally, such an act of bravery would earn substantial recognition but – passengers were not supposed to be carried on the platforms while the tram was in motion. [Apparently she was the daughter of a tramway employee and had just brought her father his lunch.]

There were only three small motor ambulances available in the town that afternoon and they were soon overloaded. Some casualties

were taken to the hospital by taxis impressed by a local Police sergeant. After treatment 20 passengers were released but 15 were either kept in hospital or had to receive ongoing attention.

Of the passengers, the most notable was the Bishop of Killaloe. Rabbi Harris Levin of Cheetham, Manchester was also on board, accompanied by his wife Sarah, who fared rather badly. This gentleman subsequently sued the Great Orme Tramway for the [then] enormous sum of £4,000 for shock and injuries - a subsequent settlement was agreed at a more modest £1,000 however. But there were also other claims of over £10,000 by other unfortunate travellers. The tramway company whilst viable was hardly awash with funds and these claims compelled the winding up of the company. Subsequently it passed into the hands of The Great Orme Railway Co. - but that's another story..."

From: <https://voicemap.me/tour/llandudno-conwy/jewish-llandudno-explore-the-town-s-alternative-history/sites/the-tramway-accident-of-1932-and-the-rabbi-great-orme-tramway>

"Among the seriously injured was Rabbi H. Levin of Manchester who had been on the tram with his wife Sarah. Both suffered terrible injuries and as a result of this accident, Levin was paralyzed. After the accident, his doctors were desperate for him to take the fresh air to aid his recovery and sent him on a successive seaside holiday during which he sadly succumbed to his injuries and died at the age of 66. The Levin family successfully sued the tram company to the tune of 1000."

They had married in 1918; Sarah died in January 1970 aged 83.

#### (b) COFFIN VANS ON THE TRAMWAY

p.21. May 1898, an Act for construction of the Tramway: A Clause was included at the insistence of Llandudno UDC: "The Company shall make provision for the conveyance at a reasonable and fixed charge and in a decent and seemly manner of corpses for interment in the St. Tudno cemetery."

p.67. Nos. 1-3 were four-wheel vans built by Hurst Nelson & Co. at the same time as carriages 4-7, in 1902. They had an overall length of 16ft 7in; the bodywork consisted of a 9ft long closed centre section and a 2ft 6in long open platform at each end. An overall roof was fitted and double folding doors, 4ft 6in wide provided in each side while the upper half of the end bulkheads were glazed with further doors here to allow access through the van. ... In September 1902 the Company decided to fit two of the vans with seats, at a cost of 6 Pounds per vehicle and install two panes of glass in each side of the body - though it is not certain if the work was ever carried out. .

Details of the actual method of working these cars has not unfortunately survived, nor has the history of their eventual disposal. All three were recorded as officially withdrawn from service in 1911.... The likeliest theory is that they were used to carry coffins up to Summit for burial in St Tudno's churchyard; this is in fact extremely probable, since it would have been virtually impossible (and most undignified) to manoeuvre a coffin into one of the passenger cars, lacking as they did the benefit of side doors, and would also account for the decision to fit two of them with seats..."

#### (ix). THE FORMER CROATIAN DIESELS

These General Motors design Yugoslavian Co-Co diesels were acquired and rebuilt by Gredele in Croatia for sale and use elsewhere. Some are in use in Israel. Through correspondence on the Continental Railway Circle the following has come to light:

Thirteen or more locos were withdrawn and sold. Of these,

HZ 2063 012 became 710T

HZ 2063 011 became 711T

HZ 2063 009 became 712T

HZ 2063 010 became 713T

HZ numbers unknown became 714T - 720T

721T & 722T were rebuilt but on a new frame and therefore do not technically count as "rebuilt" but as new, albeit incorporating existing components.

Were 'GenRail' 2007/2008 (TAZARA), built on the frames originally intended for 723/724T?

In addition some were used on construction trains in Saudi Arabia for the firm TSO:

1001 HZ 2063 002 became 1001

1002 HZ 2063 004 became 1002

1003 HZ 2063 005 became 1003

1004 HZ 2063 013 became 1004

Original number of 1005 is unknown, or else it was built on a new frame.

Then a member posted the following list which deviates from the above. (These are all minor technicalities except for obsessive number-collectors, but this is included here to warn future historians of some of the issues and conflicts involved...):

#### FORMER YUGOSLAV LOCOS.

63-001 - became HŽ 2063-009 - sold to NRE 2015, Israel No. 712T

663-002 - GM 712349/72 - HŽ 2063-001

663-003 - GM 712350/72 - HŽ 2063-001 - NRE 2005, 2008 TSO 1001

663-004 - GM 712351/72 - HŽ 2063-003

663-005 - GM 712352/72 - HŽ 2063-010 - NRE 2015, Israel 713T

663-006 - GM 712353/72 - HŽ 2063-011 - NRE 2015, Israel 711T

663-007 - GM 712534/72 - HŽ 2063-004 - NRE 2005, 2008 TSO 1004

663-008 - GM 712535/72 - HŽ 2063-007

663-009 - GM 712356/72 - HŽ 2063-008

663-010 - GM 712357/72 - HŽ 2063-012 - NRE 2015, Israel 710T

663-011 - GM 712358/72 - HŽ 2063-013 - NRE 2005; 2008 TSO 1003

663-012 - GM 712359/72 - HŽ 2063-005- NRE 2005, 2008 TSO 1005

#### (x). HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL IN PRAGUE STATION

Thanks to the crew at 'Lok Report' in Berlin for this item:

Czech Republic: Praha-Bubny Railway Station becomes a Centre for Remembrance and Dialogue

After many years of effort, the project to revitalize the former Praha-Bubny railroad station has been successfully launched and the main construction work has begun. This is where the Bubny Centre for Remembrance and Dialogue is being built, whose mission is to preserve the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and create a living place that connects the past with the present through educational and cultural programs.

Between 1941 and 1945, almost fifty thousand Czechoslovakian Jews and people who were considered Jews under the Nuremberg Laws were deported from Prague-Bubny station. From here, they were deported to the ghettos of Łódź and Theresienstadt, which in many cases were only a stopover on the way to the Nazi extermination camps.

"The Holocaust was preceded by years of hatred, polarization and the gradual disintegration of democratic values. This is precisely why it is so important to have a place where we can remember these contexts and learn from them. The Bubny Center for Remembrance and Dialogue is being created to preserve the memory of the victims, but also as a call for civic responsibility, critical thinking and respect for human dignity and otherness. I believe that it will be an important place where past and present meet - and with it the hope that we will not have to experience similar tragedies again," explained Culture Minister Martin Baxa. "I would like to pay tribute to the cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and the Railway Administration, thanks to which it was possible to overcome many years of stagnation and bring this project to the stage of actual implementation. An important role was also played by the new management of the Bubny Center for Remembrance and Dialogue, which has given the project new energy and a new direction," he added.

"I would like to take this opportunity to remember July 10-12, 1944, when the second part of the murder in the Terezín Auschwitz family camp took place - the largest mass murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War. For me, the fact that we were able to give the go-ahead for the main phase of construction work today and that a memorial will soon be built here that will preserve the memory of the victims of the Shoah and pass on their legacy to future generations is not only a symbolic sign of all the lives that were destroyed, but also an expression of the hope and continuity of Jewish life," said Pavlína Šulcová, Director of the Bubny Center for Remembrance and Dialogue.

The design for the conversion of the former Praha-Bubny railroad station was developed as part of an architectural competition and was created by the Hradec Králové architectural firm ARN STUDIO under the direction of Jirí and Michal Krejčík. The project extends the original station building, preserving its characteristic elements as a testimony to the times and at the same time creating new space for contemporary use. The visual contrast between old and new encourages a conscious perception of the past and its relationship to the present.

The aim of the revitalization is not only to preserve the memory of the site, but also to create a modern infrastructure for a cultural and educational facility with an exhibition and event programme. The project also envisages a café and the revitalization of the adjacent public space, which is directly adjacent to the Holešovice and Malé Beránky apartment blocks.

"The Bubny Center for Memory and Dialogue is an example of a modern approach to cultural memory in an active public space. The Praha-Bubny train station will become an important transportation hub where trains run daily, people rush to work and students go to school. And it is precisely in the midst of this everyday hustle and bustle that a place for reflection is being created. It is not a museum on the edge of the city, but a living monument in the midst of life that combines daily human traffic with historical reflection," explained Transport Minister Martin Kupka.

On the basis of a vertical cooperation agreement, the Bubny Center for Remembrance and Dialogue is responsible for the preparation and costs of the reconstruction, while the railroad administration Správa železnic is responsible for the design and construction management.

"The surrounding area has great potential and a modern district for 25,000 residents will be created. A harbinger of this is the new Bubny station, which we will open on August 1. Part of the overall transformation is also the conversion of the former station building, which begins today and will take on a completely new role. It will become a worthy memorial to the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime," said Jiří Svoboda, General Director of Správa železnic.

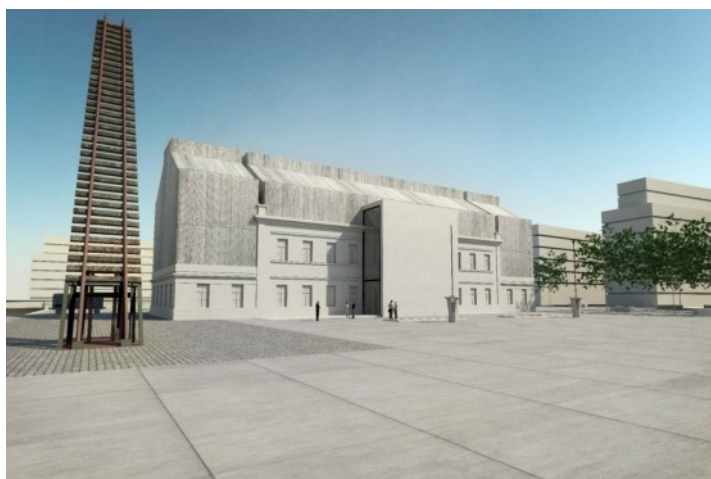
The contractor for the work, worth 186,860,697 crowns, is the company Metrostav DIZ. Completion is planned in two years.

"We consider the creation of the Bubny Centre for Remembrance and Dialogue to be an extremely important project and greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in its realization. From a social point of view, it is one of the most important construction projects we will be working on. From a technical point of view, it is the reconstruction of a railroad station building, which requires maximum sensitivity to the original architecture, but also the integration of modern elements and technologies. We have many years of extensive experience with this type of building. We are convinced that the finished building will be a worthy representation of the significance of this place and its message," explained Karel Volf, Director of Metrostav DIZ.

## The History

Construction of the Praha-Bubny station began in 1866, as a connection had to be established between the Praha-Dejvice station via the Negrelli viaduct to today's Masaryk station. The current station building was rebuilt in 1928-1933 and served as a station until 2022. Subsequently, a comprehensive modernization of the Prague-Bubny - Prague-V stávková line began, including the construction of a modern station, which will be relocated closer to the Vltavská metro station.

In March 2015, thanks to the initiative of the non-profit organization Památník šoa Praha (Prague Shoah Memorial), the art installation Brána nenávratná (Gate of Return) by sculptor Aleš Veselý was unveiled next to the station building, which became a monumental symbol of the dark history of this place and provided the impetus for the establishment of a memorial. This was founded in 2021 by the Ministry of Culture under the name "Památník ticha" (Monument to Silence). In autumn 2024, there was a change of management and the organization was renamed "Centrum paměti a dialogu Bubny" (Bubny Centre for



Remembrance and Dialogue). The non-profit organization "Památník šoa Praha" was subsequently renamed "Památník ticha".

In September last year, a pedestrian and cycle path was opened near the building, connecting Veletržní and Dřevnická streets and bearing the name of Sir Nicholas Winton. A mural with motifs of rescued children, created by the artist Toy Box, is dedicated to him.

WKZ, source Správa železnic'

(xi) BAGNALL 0-6-OPT 'Brookfield'.

This preserved industrial shunting engine in Britain has an intriguing history: "No. 2613 was originally designed by W G Barclay as a narrow gauge (one metre) locomotive to go to work in the coal fields in Turkey to meet an order placed in August 1939. As construction was starting it was commandeered as part of the war effort and built as standard gauge and unusually for a small industrial locomotive it was fitted with Walschaerts valve gear. It was one of a batch of five locomotives that were originally intended to go to Turkey. The other four were used by the Admiralty at Rosyth.

When completed in September 1940 it went to the Admiralty Machinery Depot at the California Works at Stoke-on-Trent where it was used as a shunting engine. The depot closed in December 1959 but the locomotive was purchased by Brookfield Foundry which took over the site. It worked on at the site until rail operation ceased in 1961 or 1962 after which it remained on the site. In 1982 the company went into liquidation and the following year it was sold by auction...."

(xii). THE JÜDEL SIGNAL WORKS

The name 'Jüdel' is often found on German railway equipment and sometimes causes raised eyebrows, so the Editor indulged in a little online research:

"The swift rise in railway traffic demanded a strong degree of signalling in order to enable the operations to continue smoothly and at the same time provide better safety on the railways. More and more signal boxes were erected with this aim. In 1870 the engineer Heinrich Büssing (1843-1929) was commissioned by the Herzoglich Braunschweigischen Staatseisenbahn to erect two signal boxes which had been imported from England, at Börssum and Jerxheim. However he considered their quality inadequate for the State Railways and so decided to open his own factory to build railway technical and safety equipment to his own design. He therefore founded a factory in the Wolfenbüttler Strasse. Due to shortage of money, in 1871 he had to sell his to the railway technician Gustav Ungnade and the firm became "Eisenbahnsignal-Bauanstalt und Velocipedes-Reparaturwerkstatt G. Ungnade." Büssing rented the firm back and in the first year was so successful that the number of employees rose from 2 to 30.

There was however neither money nor room for any expansion. A coincidence led Büssing to meet in 1873 the businessman Max Jüdel (1845-1910) and he provided the necessary capital. Ungnade was bought out and the firm renamed "Eisenbahnsignal-Bauanstalt Max Jüdel & Co". In 1874 the firm moved to a 37,000 sq.m. property in the Ackerstraße um. Here in the first ten years already 200 signal boxes with a total of 3,000 levers were constructed and delivered as far as Switzerland, Austria and Russia. In the following years Büssing was able to obtain 90 patents in signalling technology and turn these into industrial products, for example the 'Büssing Brake', which enabled brake shoes to be removed from wagon wheels during shunting operations. In 1897 a contract was drawn up between Siemens & Halske AG, Max Jüdel & Co and the Maschinenfabrik Bruchsal AG; Siemens provided a third of the capital and a year later the organisation became a Limited Company, in 1903 Büssing withdrew, together with his capital, and formed a factory to produce road lorries and omnibuses. In 1928 the Siemens & Halske AG took over the majority of shares and in 1942 the entire works. The Siemens-Werk Braunschweig exists still today and with some 3,000 employees is one of the largest employers in the city."

Max Jüdel (10.10.1845 - 09.10.1910) was born into a Jewish commercial family in Braunschweig. Following his schooling he initially took over control of his father's textile business. In 1873 together with Heinrich Büssing he founded the 'Eisenbahnsignal Bauanstalt Max Jüdel & Co.' The merchant and the engineer between them saw the opportunities provided by the technical developments during industrialisation and the expansion of the railway network. They produced and sold signalling systems, electrical block systems and electromechanical points. By the turn of the century the firm belonged to the leading signalling companies in Europe. From 1897 there was close cooperation with Siemens & Halske which led in 1928 to a fusion and the Siemens

Works for Rail Automation is still situated on the premises in the Ackerstrasse.

As one of the largest employers in Braunschweig, Jüdel was always concerned for the welfare of his workers and their families. He established a 'Support Fund for Medical Treatment and the Acquisition of Medications', a 'Workers' Pension and Widows Fund' and other foundations. He donated a substantial proportion of his income for social and care purposes, for the establishment and support of welfare agencies and for the support of young artists. His especial love was Music and modern art. He was also for a while member of the Freemasons' Lodge 'Carl the Crowned Pillar'.

Jüdel was very engaged in the social life of the city and founded the Braunschweiger Baugenossenschaft, a Care Home (today the Herzogin-Elisabeth-Hospital), a People's Reading Room and the "Braunschweiger Carneval-Club". He was also politically active as a member of the Braunschweiger Landtag, as a member of the Stadtverordnetenversammlung and from 1893 to 1910 he was President of the Chamber of Trade, The Technical University Braunschweig awarded him an honorary doctorate.

When Jüdel died on 9. Oktober 1910 he left his entire property to the city with the instruction it was to be used to establish a Foundation for Welfare purposes., for loans to poor inhabitants and for social institutions. His Villa in the Adolfstraße had been designed by the Baumeisters Constantin Uhde. Jüdel left it following his death to the city as a residence for the current Mayor, however it became a victim of Allied bombing during the war. Even today the Max-Jüdel-Stiftung has the task of supporting Braunschweig inhabitants who are in need."

So: It appears he left no direct family and he died well before there could be any discussion of 'Arganisation'. This is different to the fate of Orenstein & Koppel, founded by Benno Orenstein and Arthur Koppel in Berlin-Schlachtensee in 1892, moved to Babelsberg in 1899; in 1935 the Orenstein family was forced to sell all its shares, the company was placed under a Trust administration and in 1941 renamed MBA (Maschinenbau & Bahnbedarf AG).

Postwar the East German works was renamed the LOWA (Lokomotiv Plant Karl Marx (LKM) and produced locos again from 1946; in West Germany the plants regained the former name and turned also to construction of earth-moving machinery and escalators. Ed.

(xiii). VOLLERT

Vollert has produced a number of automated shunting machines (I suppose they COULD be called locomotives) of which a few are at work in Israel at industrial locations. In mid-August 2025 the firm filed for bankruptcy.

(xiv). AN UNUSUAL INVENTOR

In "Today's Railways" No. 281 p.48f I stumbled across a Reader's Letter by Nick Kelly of Shoreham-by-Sea:

"As for battery trams, this is nothing new. As early as 1886-7 a battery tram and a battery tram engine was tested on the Brighton District Tramway (BDT) between Shoreham and Aldrington. The earliest regular battery service on a tramway in the UK was on the North Metropolitan Tramways in north London using six 4wBE locomotives built to the design of the splendidly-named Mr. Chaimsonovitz Prosper Elieson (1849-1919)! It was one of these Elieson locomotives that was tested on the BDT. The service commenced in 1886 and ceased in 1889 when five of the locos were exported to Buffalo, New York State (the sixth being rebuilt as "The Connelly Motor")."

This set me searching online:

From: "Grace's Guide To British Industrial History":

Charles Prosper Elieson Charles (Chaimsonovitz) Prosper Elieson (1849-1919) and connected with the Elieson Lamina Accumulator Co and Elieson Electric Co.

c1849 Born in Schaulen, Kovno, Russia.

1869 Married Antoinette

1885 News item. 'Great progress appears to have been made with Mr. C. P. Elieson's patent electric engine for drawing trams and other purposes, and it has been shown that it possesses superiority over horse or steam power for such service. An engine has for some time past been tested and run at the works of the North Metropolitan Tramway Co, at Leytonstone. An engine of greater power is now being constructed with a view of shewing what can be done on a railway...'  
[1]

1885 Mention of C. P. Elieson's patent for an electric engine. [2]

1886 Director of the Electric Locomotive and Power Co. Elieson is an electrical engineer of Drayton Road, Leytonstone. [3]

1887 News item. 'An experimental trip has been made with the Elieson electric locomotive on the tramway which runs from Stratford Church to Manor Park, a distance of about two miles, and if a bill is passed in the present session of Parliament, it is intended to run electric locomotives alternately with the horse cars. The locomotive carries 80 storage cells, which are charged at the Stratford depot, and is propelled by means of an Elieson electromotor placed under the flooring of the car; the motor itself revolves, instead of being a fixture, as is usual. A prolongation of the spindle of its armature carries a pinion which gears into a circular fixed rack. Motion is transmitted to the road wheels through bevel gearing. The total weight of the locomotive is 6.5 tons, and that of the tramcar empty 2.5 tons, or, with its full complement of 46 passengers, 5 tons. But on the occasion of the actual run there were about 60 passengers on the car and engine, so that the total weight moved was in excess of 12 tons.' [4]

1889 Mention of Chaimsonovitz Prosper Elieson as a partner in the American Dental Manufacturing Co, [5]

1894 Became a naturalised British subject. Of 75 Edith Road, West Kensington. Married with five children.

1893 & 94 Listed as Charles Prosper Elieson, 75 Edith Road, Fulham. [6]

1899 Listed as Charles Prosper Elieson, 75 Edith Road, Fulham. [7]

1911 Living at 24 St Mary Abbots Terrace, Kensington: Chaimsonovitz Prosper Elieson (age 62 born Poland), Electrical Engineer. With his wife Antoinette Elieson (age 59 born Switzerland) and their daughter Olga Elieson (age 21 born Fulham), Actress. Also his grand-daughter Odette Alphantery Elieson (age 5 months born Acton). One visitor. One servant. [8]

1919 March 19th. Died. Chaimsonovitz Prosper Elieson, 24 St. Mary Abbot Terrace, Kensington. Probate to Cecilia Anne Elieson, widow."

1. ? Woolwich Gazette - Friday 13 November 1885

2. ? Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle - Saturday 07 November 1885

3. ? London Evening Standard - Saturday 16 October 1886

4. ? The Star - Thursday 03 March 1887

5. ? [1] The London Gazette Publication date:13 December 1889 Issue: 26001 Page:7219

6. ? Electoral registers

7. ? Electoral registers

8. ? 1911 Census

150:09.



By John Hilton. (From 'The Mancunian' Bulletin of the Manchester Locomotive Society, No. 236 Sept. 2003)

Wed. 12th. August. "...Despite requests at Heathrow that you must be at the airport three hours before departure, I spent most of the extra hour waiting for Egyptair to open for baggage check. Then a pleasant hour was spent at Terminal 2 watching landings and takeoffs before boarding SU GBX, a Boeing 777-200 for the 4 hour flight to Cairo. During the flight you adjust your watch by two hours to Egyptian time. Landing at Cairo seemed a long procedure. Touchdown and braking were normal but we seemed to taxi for ages to the parking spot, then there was a relatively long bus ride to the terminal building. The Thomas Cook rep. was soon located; he was well-organised, visas were paid for, luggage collected, then into the bustling car park where chaos seemed to reign, even at 01.30 in the morning. On the way to the hotel I asked why we had just driven through a red traffic light and was politely told they were just decorations.

Tuesday 13 August was for sightseeing ...

Thursday 15 August was a free day until we had to go to Cairo Main station for the 18.50 'Luxury' train to Luxor. An American introduction to the country many years ago was 'Baksheesh', a tipping system that is expected and at Cairo Main a porter took the cases to the platform, held out his hand and disappeared. I had time to spare, so I set off to take a few railway pictures. Unfortunately steam had become extinct here many years ago, so modern traction was the order of the day, and not having any pre-information about Egyptian railways I took what I saw. Recording was difficult as all cabplates were in Arabic, but there seemed to be three main types, two Co-Co types for the main line, one having sloping cab windows (similar to the British 67s) and both with cabs at each end. The

third type was a single cab Bo-Bo of obvious American design used on local passenger trains and in push/pull formation. Half an hour before departure our train rolled in and some guy appeared from nowhere, grabbed the cases, took them to the compartment, then demanded more Baksheesh.

I had hoped to observe the country en-route but not long after departure it was dark. Dashing through the metropolis to the first stop at Cairo El Gaza was as though in dusk conditions. Level crossings are quite numerous with generally nothing more than a lifting iron barrier controlled by a crossing keeper on each side of the line; there are always crowds waiting to cross. Included in the ticket price was a pre-packed dinner supplied by the same company who does meals on aircraft, but being a vegetarian, a bit of careful picking took place. By this time we were running at a reasonable pace through the outskirts of Cairo and I would suspect the line limit was in the region of 60-70mph, being quite smooth due to the double glazing. The occasional village was passed with its crowded level crossings and generous street lighting. Beds were released by the attendant's carriage key and dropped down from the compartment walls; arrival in Luxor was 05.30 so early to bed was the order.

Friday 16 August. Breakfast on the train, a roll and cuppa included in the ticket price. Arrival at Luxor was to time, so the allowance of 11 hours for 671 kms at an average of 60 kph doesn't really tax the 2000+ hp loco. Walking along the crowded platform made one think it was rush hour, an endless supply of taxis and "carry your case" offers being available.

Home for the next four days was a Nile Cruiser, "Sunesta Moon Goddess", quite luxurious and modern, built locally in 2000.

Saturday 17 August. Cast off at 08.00, the highlight of the cruise to Isna being able to see a train at speed along the Nile bank, and to my surprise what seemed like lower quadrant home and distant signals of LNWR appearance. There is a lock at Isna where we had to stand for 3 hours as it wasn't available until 16.00. The lock was part of a dam across the Nile, the wall being 400 to 500 yards long; the rest of the wall was utilised by water driven generators. The lock was large enough for two vessels and once through we continued towards Idfu, our overnight stop

Sunday 18 August.....we sailed for Kom Combo and I was constantly aware of the railway line. Another train passed and through the binoculars I saw further examples of lower-quadrant signals. From Kom Combo Temple we departed for our final destination, Aswan, at 17.30.

Wednesday 21 August - The last chance to visit the town as the train was due to leave at 18.30. The car came at 17.30 for transfer to the station and it was like a step into the past. Once cases were stored and safe, I went to see and photograph the lower-quadrant LNWR-type signals which were so beautiful to behold, just like a station in England but with more modern diesels present. Our train was in platform 1 whilst in platform 2 was the 18.00 which would precede us all the way to Cairo. Off the end of the platform was North signalbox; I couldn't resist and asked and was welcomed for a brief visit. The levers had a release catch at the back, rather than the push-down release of the LNWR boxes, and down the yard was a Bo-Bo carriage shunter. So I was off down the yard to get a shot, little realising that when the 18.00 left, she would bring tomorrow's early departure into the vacant platform. Once the 18.00 had left, off came the peg, her American engines roared into life and I took her as she passed under a nice gantry of signals.

It was a welcome relief to settle into the compartment as departure time drew near, and as meals are included in the train ticket and food is given in compartments, the lounge car was quite appealing as it gives a far better view of the landscape. The barman was offering the local brew called "Stella". Once darkness descended I went back to the compartment and dinner. The attendant told us to detrain at El Gaza which is more on the outskirts of Cairo and much easier for the taxi to pick us up. Sleep came quite easily.

Thursday 22. August. Wake-up call followed by continental breakfast at 05.15 and El Gaza at 06.10, then transfer to El Gezira Hotel. This was on an island where the Nile splits into two and I became aware that Cairo had a Metro system, a station only a short walk away. I got someone to write in my book in Arabic "Ticket to.... please" as I wanted to go to El Marg and eventually got a ticket for which I was charged 1.25 in Egyptian pounds. The Metro is heavily subsidised and at platform level the stations are kept and maintained very well and would make any city proud. It is a third-rail collection system in the middle of the two lines and boxed in. Signalling was modern colour-light configuration. When the train was coming I got my camera ready until an ominous-looking policeman began waving his arms at me. I went back to the ticket office and found three Egyptians, one of whom spoke a little English. All I could fathom was that it was against the law and when I said "O.K." one grabbed me, kissed me on both cheeks and shook my hand vigorously.

I descended to the platform again and boarded the next train as far as Sadat where I changed to Line B for El Marg. These trains collect current from overhead lines so the tunnels are much larger. After a few hundred metres we climbed to the surface and into sunshine for the rest of the journey. Being in the last coach I was able to talk to the driver for his return journey and was surprised when he pulled down a seat in the cab and offered it to me. The line took on a new aspect from the front and it was most enjoyable, but at a stop from where I was due to change I sat down in the train getting a glare from a policeman on the platform. Little did I realise that the first two coaches, no matter in what direction the train travels, are reserved for Ladies!

At Sadat I changed for Opera. Next I wanted to go to Imbaba, the end of Line C, but more ticket problems. I was supposed to change at Attaba but could not find any Imbaba signs so gave up and went on to Ghamra where there is another interchange on to a light rail (tram) system. When the tram arrived it was a double car with pantograph for pick up and I must have ridden for 40 minutes to the end of the line at Mezlat (so I found out). Most of the run was on segregated track except for a short stretch where we ran down the middle of the road. I suspect we ran at about 50 kph.

Friday 23 August. Free in the afternoon so I went via the Metro for another stint on the trams, but in the opposite direction. But the terminus was only one stop away at Cairo Main station, so I stayed on and found there was more than one route which took me past the airport to Nozha, returning via Metro to Opera.

Saturday 24 August. On Cairo Main Station for the 09.00 to Alexandria, provided with a catering trolley for the 200 km journey in Spanish-built stock. En-route I saw what was left of the steam era - two loco tenders sitting in a depot. We got off at Sidi Gaber to avoid the scramble at the Main station and were transferred to El Gezira. The front at Alexandria is 16 km long and seemed to go on for ever. The train service from the Main station to the suburbs was quite intense on a quarter-hourly basis operated by Bo-Bo American single cab locos with eight coaches on a push/pull system. Off the end of the platform the double track ran through high -rise housing without any form of fencing or protection at level crossings

Sunday 25 August. Free in the afternoon with a taxi to Sidi Bishr. A short walk took me to the tram stop, the system similar to the Cairo one but some of the three-car trams had a modern double decker in their consist, like a tadpole. There was some blockage at Saad Zaghloul where I detrained and boarded one for Sidi Gaber, which ran into the bay there. Returned by taxi and what I thought was an agreed price turned into an argument at the hotel. The doorman solved the problem and chased the taxi away.

Monday 26 August. Photographing the push-and-pulls in the morning then transfer to Sidi Gaber station for the train back to Cairo at 14.10. The station had four platforms isolating one system from the other and I ventured off the platform ends that seemed like a public right of way until somebody in authority told me by hand signals to stop. The return was a High Speed Train (Spanish origin I believe) with driving diesels at each end. The ride was reasonable but there was a detectable vibration at certain speeds. that kept recurring.

Wednesday 28 August. In the afternoon another session on the third-rail Metro to Giza Suburban. Return to Shubra El Kheima and an ideal spot for photography by the Alexandria main line. Suddenly a klaxon-type horn announced the passing of the Spanish-style HST which had brought me from Alexandria yesterday, and to my horror I saw two unauthorised persons on the roof systematically ducking at each overbridge. As the train is non-stop from Alexandria to Cairo and there are numerous signal boxes plus wayside stations on the 200 km line, it makes one wonder why the train was never stopped to remove them.

Thursday 29 August. On Platform A at Cairo Main Station for the 06.25 to Port Said and by this time I was getting to understand the Arabic numbers and could now read the numberplates. Highlights of the journey were at Tanta where we left the Alexandria line and its colour lights for lower-quadrant signals. The line singled at Al Ismailiyah and is also where the line runs along the banks of the Suez Canal for 75 km to Port Said. There were numerous stops on this section for the single-line tokens and the odd passenger. Arrival was at 10.30 so it took 4 hours for the 200km journey. Here our guide took us to the Military Museum, a strange looking piece of rock mounted on the side of the Canal as a demarcation of the Mediterranean and the Suez and the Statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French engineer who built the canal. After lunch there was a cruise along the canal, for which you needed a passport and this caused problems which were eventually sorted out. After this it was enjoyable and without further incident. The final foray was to cross the canal on the ferry (no passports requested) which was like a rugby match having to force the car forward to get on. There wasn't much to see at Port Fouad on the eastern bank.

The train back to Cairo was the last one at 19.30 from Port Said, which is an open port so we had to go through a form of passport control. The train was in the station and I indicated that I wanted to take a photograph before leaving. But another white-clad person popped in front of the lens. The guide said they were a bit touchy and that I had better get on board. We passed a number of ships along the well-lit canal. Arrival in Cairo was 23.30, on time.

Friday 30 August. Transfer to the airport at 11.15, boarding flight 779 to Heathrow..."

150:10 More repair work on the catenary

