

# HaRakevet

הרכבת

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The proposed new double deck high capacity electric multiple units to be built by Siemens; a computer image (courtesy of Siemens) shows such a train in Tel Aviv

121:02 EDITORIAL.

Thanks to those who have renewed subscriptions, and we hope to find a few more subscribers as time passes. This is very much a team-effort, all work for the love of it but there are production costs.

Material for this issue has practically flooded in; I had intended to give priority to items on Iran, since this country is currently the focus of so much attention by those concerned with the Middle East, but arrival of an extensive essay by Harel Even on the initial transformations of Israel Railways in the 1980's/90's led to reconsideration. The essay is also revealing as to how much depends on the initiatives and energy of a few individuals. The transformation continues; on IR now the Carmiel line is settling in, the new complex (including new line, new alignment, new junctions, rebuilt station) around Ra'anana and Herzilyya is approaching imminent completion and within a few months it remains the (revised) hope to open the A1 line to Jerusalem followed by the spur to allow Jerusalem – Modi'in services; Electrification work stumbles along but new locos and stock arrive steadily. An ambitious new scheme also appeared suddenly in the form of reports for a Japanese-built line to link Eilat with Ashdod. As regards urban transport, work on tunnelling in Tel-Aviv continues, on tramway extensions in Jerusalem likewise, together with new schemes for cableways (which are not technically railways but will be included here as part of the public transport networks). Just as we were going to press on 7.6.2018 came news of a large new scheme for a line from Rosh HaAyin to Ariel. Elsewhere in the Middle East some countries are expanding their networks, some are dreaming of doing so, some seem to be standing still. All in all there is an incredible amount of current news to report and therefore (again) less space for historical items though we have squeezed some in!

Enjoy! The Editor.

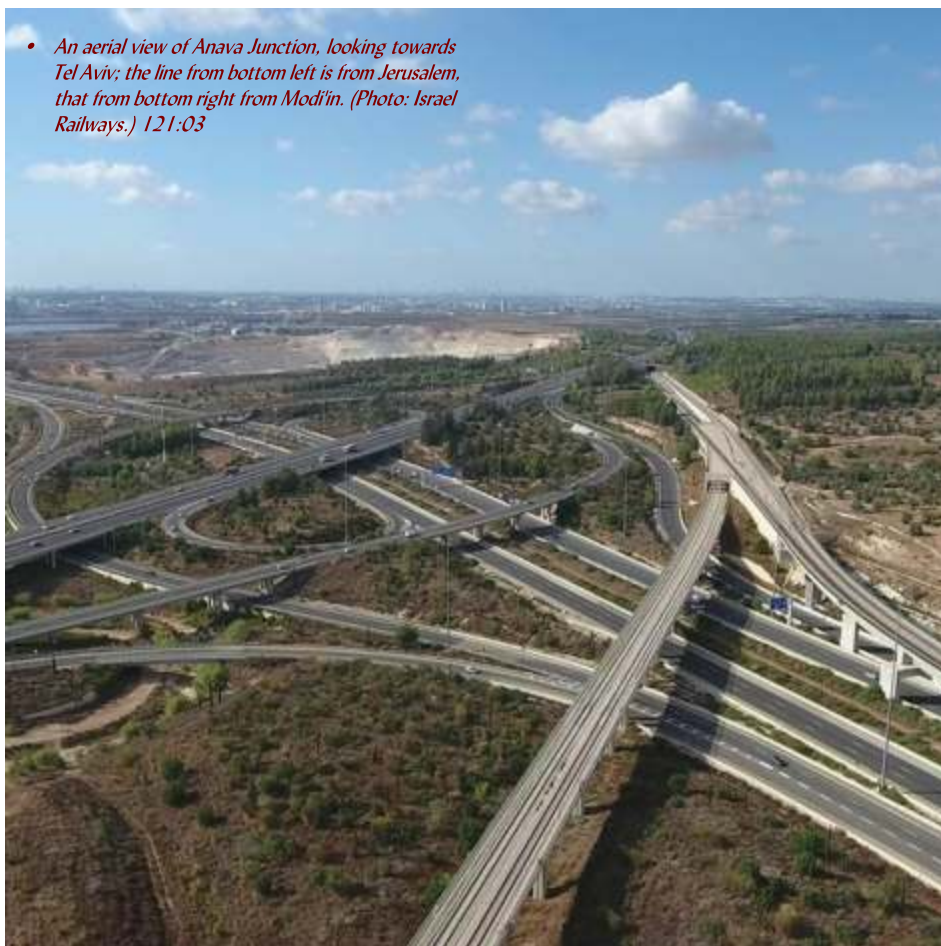
121:04.

## NEWS FROM THE LINE.

### (i). A1 LINE DELAYS.

Just after going to press with issue 120 this came out in the Jerusalem Post, 21.02.2018, by Max Schindler; It was hardly a surprise!

"JERUSALEM – TEL AVIV HIGH-SPEED RAIL OPENING TO BE DELAYED SIX MONTHS.



- *An aerial view of Anava Junction, looking towards Tel Aviv; the line from bottom left is from Jerusalem, that from bottom right from Modi'in. (Photo: Israel Railways.) 121:03*

The rail line, which has been under construction for years, would halve the arduous, traffic-congested route to a speedy 28 minutes between the two cities. Israel's long-awaited highspeed rail between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem will not open until September or October 2018, despite the originally promised opening date at the end of March, Israel Railways announced on Wednesday.

The rail line, which has been under construction for years, will halve the arduous, traffic-congested route to a speedy 28 minutes between the two cities. But Israel Railways has yet to receive the safety permits for the project.

"Not all the regulatory approvals required for the operation of the line for commercial use of passengers...have yet been received," Israel Railways said in its filing to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange on Wednesday morning. "Such operation is expected to be postponed by six months, subject to the receipt of all such approvals."

As recently as last month, Transportation Minister Israel Katz continued to claim that the train would open as scheduled on March 30 – the day before Passover.

Gil Yaakov, the head of the riders advocacy group 15 Minutes, blasted the delay and said the government was already not doing enough for mass transit users. "The delay in the opening of the high-speed rail line obliges the Transportation Ministry to provide solutions for public transportation passengers who are stuck in traffic jams on the way to Jerusalem," he said. "The insistence of Minister Israel Katz not to allocate a [special] public transportation lane [for buses] on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway is puzzling," Yaakov said, adding: "The travel times in public transportation in Jerusalem are long and do not encourage public transportation."

The high-speed rail line is the first of its kind in Israel, with construction costs tallying some NIS 7 billion. It would considerably cut back congestion between the two cities and ease commutes, as riders are now stuck on an almost hour-long bus. Trains would make the 56-km. trip at a speedy 160 kph, with plans to operate six trains hourly during rush hour.

A State Comptroller's report from October 2017 found that the initial March starting date was optimistic – warning that the train may not operate until December 2019 due to difficulties in electrifying railway lines and ceasing the use of diesel locomotives. The comptroller also opposed plans to expedite construction and cut regulatory corners, saying it could jeopardize the safety and run-up costs.

Earlier this week, Israel Railways said that test runs would begin on the line. Yet construction is still ongoing and a 'Globes' report from Sunday indicated that utility poles still hadn't been placed on one of the train bridges. A spokesman for the Transportation Ministry did not provide comment as of press time, adding that the ministry would publicly address the issue on Thursday."

Further down this section there are further comments on the progress and delays on this project. But we are used to waiting for the Messiah!

(ii). **SIGNALLING DISRUPTION**

Israel Railways Ltd. announced on their website that on 25.02.2018, there was a failure in the connection between the electrical and electronic signalling near Shefayim, where intensive infrastructure works are taking place. This caused not only traffic delays with average punctuality down to 59%, but also changes in traffic on some lines. The railways authorities have clarified, however, that the failure had nothing to do with the works which were carried out during the weekend and which have been successfully completed. Punctuality by next day was around 95%.

(iii). **SIEMENS CONTRACT FOR DOUBLE-DECK MULTIPLE-UNITS SIGNED.**

From 'R.G.I.' 07.03.2018.

"A contract worth up to €900m for Siemens to supply to Israel Railways with up to 60 four-car and six-car Desiro HC double-deck electric multiple-units over 10 years was signed in Lod on March 7.

This includes a firm order for the supply of an initial six four-car and eighteen six-car EMUs and the provision of 15 years of maintenance at a purpose-built depot in Ashkelon. There are further options for maintenance.

'This order is strategically important for us in two respects', said Sabrina Soussan, CEO of Siemens' Mobility Division. Siemens has previously supplied hauled stock to ISR, but now 'for the first time in our company's history, we will be delivering complete trains to Israel', Soussan said. 'And also for the first time, we've sold our innovative Desiro HC train platform outside Germany.'

Alstom, Bombardier Transportation, Hitachi Rail Italy, Siemens, Škoda Transportation and Stadler had submitted best and final offers for the EMU contract, which has been awarded as part of ISR's 25kV 50Hz electrification programme. Siemens was named preferred bidder in September 2017, subject to final approval from the Ministry of Economy."

From a Siemens (München) press release of 20.02.2018 adds: "The trains are the first electric multiple unit trains purchased for operating in Israel. The order is part of Israel's programme to electrify its rail system. Initially, 13 sections totalling 420 kilometres of the 1,080 kilometre network will be electrified. In addition it is planned to further expand the country's rail network and also electrify these routes. For this purpose, the contract just signed gives ISR an option to order additional trains beyond the current total of 60."

And see our cover picture!

(iv). **FOOD!!!**

It is a long time since IR ran actual buffet cars and even longer since a Wagons-Lit Restaurant Car was marshalled into the Cairo – Haifa through services. Stations now sport a variety of what are euphemistically called 'outlets' and catering trolleys also work up and down some routes but on 14.03.2018 there was a surprise press release from IR:

*The Restaurant Car: Gourmet Version*

The railways continue to surprise their passengers with active experiences along the journey, together with service improvements.

The railways are now introducing through their marketing department an activity called "The Chef Train" in which the Chef Shaul Ben Aderet - one of Israel's best known and successful chefs - will cook for the passengers a special kosher meal - to be served on a train specially fitted out for that purpose.

The passengers will be hosted and welcome by a hostess and after being seated, a tasty Gourmet meal consisting of 6 dishes will be specially prepared by the chef.

The initial train will depart from Haifa Central on Monday, 19.03.2018 at 19:52 and will arrive at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central at 20:58; upon arrival, the passengers will be invited to a special site prepared shortly before, where hot drinks and French Patisserie desserts will be served, while enjoying classical music to be performed by a pianist.

Both the railways' Marketing Department Manager Mrs. Esther Finkelstein and the Chef Shaul Ben Aderet said the combination of a Gourmet meal and rail travel always create a special experience. The six dishes consist of oriental food as well as a salmon fish and a herring fish of especial taste."

A later press release of 20.03.2018:

"150 passengers, who registered early and paid in advance, enjoyed riding on the "Chef Ben-Aderet train" yesterday evening between Haifa Central and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations on a double-deck train specially prepared for the event."

(v). **QUADRUPLING AND REALIGNMENT PLANS.**

The Finance Ministry's Committee for National Infrastructures has recently approved the railways plan for quadrupling the whole Tel-Aviv-Haifa line from Shefayim (north of Herzliyya) - between which and Tel-Aviv works are currently underway - up to the Efrayim (Kishon) railway workshops adjacent to Haifa Chutzot HaMifratz railway station.

The plan includes a 4-track tunnel section from Haifa Hof HaCarmel up to at least Haifa Central the 8; an interesting point is the new alignment planned for the line between Zikhron-Ya'akov (North of Binyamina) and Hadera West; it will replace the historical line between Zikhron-Ya'akov and Hadera West running through Binyamina where the 98-years old railway station would be taken out of use together with this section of line. New stations will be built at Zikhron-Ya'akov, Hadera West and an entirely

new one at Or Akiva, a city which until now never had a rail link.

Even more ambitious is the plan to run trains between Tel-Aviv and Haifa at 250 km/h in order to cover the line in 30 minutes; all level crossings will be replaced by grade separations.

Many questions are being asked:

1. The station at Binyamina is heavily used by commuters; a new location may cause passengers to consider using private cars, which is the opposite aim to that planned.
2. Between Binyamina and Hadera West there is the station of Pardes Hannah/Caesarea also heavily used by commuters who moved there from many other places only because of the railway station; how will they travel?
3. The Eastern line between Kfar-Sava and Hadera East (part of the historical Haifa – Lod - Kantara line) dismantled around 1974, and now in an advanced phase of design for revival, merges with the current Tel-Aviv - Haifa line at Remez Junction (just south of Pardes Hannah/Caesarea station); where will it be linked with the new alignment planned?

Clearly there were many other questions also aroused by this announcement and many protests, for only one day later a revised announcement was made!

Subject: correction of yesterday's report regarding the new line section between Zikhron-Ya'akov, Or-Akiva, and Hadera West:

Both the Finance Ministry's Committee for National Infrastructures and Israel Railways Ltd., have announced that the news was a little bit wrong due to misunderstandings (always good as an excuse for wrong information...): The stations of Binyamina and Pardes-Hannah/Caesarea will remain in use, as will the Zikhron-Ya'akov – Binyamina - Pardes-Hannah/Caesarea - Hadera West line section; the merging of the Eastern line at Remez Junction will also be retained.



• *Trackworks under way at km. 35 between Binyamina and Zikhron Ya'akov in April 2018. (Photos courtesy of IR Spokesman Israel Tal & Asst. Spokesman Matan Berkovich)*

The main change will be at the Binyamina station will have - not as a hub as today, while the line section Zikhron-Ya'akov – Binyamina – Pardes-Hannah/Caesarea - Hadera West will become a suburban/regional line rather than main line.

There were protests from line users against the closures, but it should also be mentioned that the citizens of Binyamina, in the centre of which the line

passes and the station is located, complained about the huge number of passengers who park their cars everywhere including on private property; this probably contributed to the decision.

#### (vi). MORE TRACKWORKS AND CLOSURES.

The railways have announced on their website that, due to track infrastructure works and improving level crossings, there will be no service between Thursday 22.03.2018 at 00:01 and Friday 23.03.2018 at 18:00 between Lod and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations, as well as closing the stations of Carmiel, Ahi'hud, Acre (Akko) and Nahariya. The service between Lod and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations will resume on Saturday night 24.03.2018 at 23:59. The railways will provide bus shuttle services over the closed sections.

#### (vii). COMPUTER CRASH.

Israel Railways Ltd. announced on Sunday 18.03 through all information channels and networks that, due to a failure in one of the train traffic management systems, serious disruptions occurred to passenger services.

The first announcement was at 06:00, then at 09:17 the railways reported that they had overcome the problem and traffic would return to normal gradually; the average punctuality at that time was about 67%. However, by 20:00 it was still only 76%!

It happened on one of the two busiest days of the week - the other is Thursday - which added to the chaos.

#### (viii). TICKET AND FARE COORDINATION.

Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz announced on 19.03.2018 that although his promise to open the AI at the end of this month on the eve of Passover (Pesach) holiday would have to be delayed to September 2018, his other promise for inter-metropolitan daily free and monthly free multi-liner smart cards as well as daily free and monthly free multi-liner smart cards for all over Israel (excluding Eilat and the Arava in the extreme south) would become a reality on 28.03.2018!

The cards will enable passengers to enjoy unlimited travel on all public transport modes: BRT-METRONIT, buses, minibuses, trains, Jerusalem LRV, and Haifa underground funicular train (from September 2018).

The average saving by using the cards will be around 40% and on some cases even 60%.

#### (ix). SUMMER TIME.

The railways announced on their website that summer time will start in the night between Thursday 22.03.2018 and Friday morning 23.03.2018; the main changes will be on Fridays with more trains and Saturday nights with fewer trains.

#### (x). SAFETY ACCREDITATION.

From a press release of 20.03.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.: "Israel Railways Ltd. are moving ahead to the next generation and, as part of preparations are adopting the world's most advanced

safety standards, while cooperating with the world's leading railways.

This week a delegation from the ERA (European Railway Agency) visited the railways in order to authorize them to the European high safety standard; the ERA represents those railways which are members in the O.E.C.D. and is authorized to approve the European high safety standard for railways worldwide.

The whole process was the initiative of Israel Railways Ltd. headed by the ministry's track manager Eng. Akiva Rom (formerly head of the railways' technical department), who also accompanied the delegation.

The main ERA delegates were: Mr. Peter Mihm, Head of Technological Cooperation Management, Mr. Ilyas Doud and Mrs. Rosa Exposito Guarne, managers of co-operations in the ERA.

The following Israel Railways Ltd. senior officers joined the delegation: General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon, Deputy General Manager for Safety, Security, and Environment Mr. Lior Eli, Safety Engineering and Information Manager Mr. Hagai Segev, Cooperation and Strategy Manager Dr. Alex Dan, and Legislation and Regulation Manager Mr. Dan Landau.

The agenda included: discussions regarding co-operations in safety and security matters, as well sharing knowledge accumulated during the years both at ERA and Israel Railways Ltd. The visit included also the AI line and the new Jerusalem Navon station.

The visit ended with a festive meeting during which senior members of the ministry and ERA members gave Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon an authorization certificate for the international standard of Safety Management Systems - SMS; This implements the principle of mutuality and cooperation between the European railways, and defines Israel Railways Ltd. as one of the EU's and world's leading railways (regarding safety)."

#### (xi). TIMETABLE IMPROVEMENTS.

From a press release of 25.03.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways are moving forward towards the 2022 rail vision; A new and updated timetable has been published, to be operated from Saturday night 31.03.2018.

Here are the main changes and improvements:

"Hey Southward"- Night Trains to the people of the south (Negev) too:

These two words were a slogan of encouragement during the 1950's and 1960's, when reaching Beer-Sheva and other southern towns was considered as a military operation; it is now used to show service improvements.

With the start of the new timetable, night trains will be operated at a frequency of 1 train/hour in each direction; trains will operate between Beer-Sheva Central and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations and will call at: Ofakim, Netivot, Sderot, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Yavne West, Rishon LeZion West (Moshe

Dayan) and Bat-Yam Yoseftal; thus the service for the south will become available almost 24 hours/day.

The night trains between Nahariyya and Ben-Gurion airport in both directions will call also at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station, which will start operating for 24 hours/day; This will enable a continuous service between Beer-Sheva and Ben-Gurion airport (by changing at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station) as well as providing a new service for night passengers between Nahariyya, Haifa and Beer-Sheva.

#### Additional updates:

The new timetable includes more station calls and more seats on curtain lines.

For example, the service between Beit-Shemesh and Herzliyya will be extended to Netanya during rush hours in both directions and trains will call also at Beit-Yehoshua station (south of Netanya).

In order to cope with the high demand on the Western Negev line, some morning services will be extended; for example, the 06:07 train between Ashkelon and Beer-Sheva will instead start back at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station and will thus provide services to the intermediate stations of Bat-Yam, Rishon LeZion West (Moshe Dayan), Yavne West and Ashdod.

The extension of this service has been done according to a passengers distribution analysis on the line, in order to enable workers living in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area and employed at Beer-Sheva and other southern work places (e.g. Soroka Medical Centre, government offices and I.D.F. -Israel Defense Forces bases) to arrive early at their destinations.

The 18.38 train between Hod HaSharon and Beer-Sheva will call at Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim; this train will enable those employed in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area to arrive home earlier in the evening, as well as providing more seats on the highly-demanded afternoon/evening trains.

As a response to many requests received from railway customers, resident in Be'er-Ya'akov and surroundings, the 14:37 from Binyamina to Ashkelon will call also at Be'er-Ya'akov in order to enable residents to arrive there before 16:00, the time when kindergartens and children day care centres close.

P.S.: Be'er-Ya'akov station, once a remote unused shed, became important thanks to upgrading the Lod - Rehovot line and the opening of the branch to Rishon LeZion East/HaRishonim station which starts at Be'er-Ya'akov; it will become even more important when the line between Modi'in and Rishon LeZion will reach here, thus making it into an important rail junction.

In order to improve night services provided to the Sharon area residents (using Herzliyya, Beit-Yehoshua, Netanya-Sapir, Netanya, Hadera West and Caesarea-Pardes-Hannah stations), the 22:18 from Modi'in Central to Nahariyya will call at all intermediate stations between Tel-Aviv and Binyamina.

However, and along with these improvements, and in order to enable the infrastructure works of the AI electrification and later the operation of fast

trains on the line, the services between Rishon LeZion East/Harishonim and Tel-Aviv will terminate between Sundays and Tuesdays at Lod; passengers continuing northwards will have to change trains at Lod; the railways have made arrangements to cut waiting times to several minutes.

As already reported, and in order to improve service frequencies on other lines, as well as due to electrification works underway, the 07.32 train from Beit-Shemesh to Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central will not operate between Sundays and Tuesdays; morning passengers from Beit-Shemesh will be somehow compensated by longer trains with more seats on all other trains; furthermore, the service will be formed of double-deck cars with many more seats than on the Bombardier IC3 Flexiliner dmsu operating on this line, which will also be reinforced by additional sets.

The railways will open during 2018 the following stations: Yitzhak Navon (HaUma) at Jerusalem, Ra'anana South and Ra'anana West along the 531 line (HaSharon railway).

Stations being upgraded are: entrances of Hod HaSharon/Sokolov, Be'er-Ya'akov, Kfar-Habad (between Tel-Aviv and Lod) and Caesarea-Pardes-Hanna."

#### (xi). NEW IR TIMETABLE BOOKLET: A PERSONAL REVIEW.

Against earlier concerns, IR has indeed published a thick new timetable booklet "Effective from 31.3.2018", with the various guidance notes only in Hebrew but the actual tables in Hebrew and English. Counting the covers there are now 120 sides and the front cover is blessed, for it shows a family who are teaching their young child to have an interest in railways, with model IR locos and sitting in a double-deck coach!

Just a few notes for the historical record:

The booklet opens with Southbound Trains (Suns.-Thurs. Exc. Holidays and Holiday Eves) on pp.6 - 33 – listed here are the Train Numbers, specific notes '1' for 'Sunday Only' and '2' for 'Mon.-Thurs. Only'; interesting is that the stations of 'Ra'anana - West' and 'Ra'anana – South' and 'Kiryat Malachi -Yo'av' and 'HaMifrats Central' are given a purple background, the key indicating this means "The station will be opened on a date to be announced."

The country is covered North to South in the following manner (branch lines that converge are separated by a slightly thicker line, indicated here by // ) (and using the spelling in the booklet):

Nahariyya / Acre //

Karmi'el / Ahihud / Kiryat Motzkin / Kiryat Hayyim / Hutsot HaMifrats //

Bet She'an / Afula /R. Eitan) / Migdal Ha'Emek – Kfar Barukh / Yokne'am – Kfar Yehoschu'a / Lev HaMifrats/Hamifrats Central / Haifa Center – HaShmona / Haifa – Bat Galim / Haifa – Hof HaKarmel (S. Razi'el) //

Atlit / Binyamina / Caesarea – Pardes Hanna / Hadera – West / Netanya / Netanya – Sapir / Bet Yehoshu'a / Hertsliyya //

Ra'anana – West / Ra'anana South / Hod HaSharon – Sokolov / Kfar Sava – Nordau (A. Kostyuk) / Rosh

Ha'Ayin – North / Petah Tikva – Sgula / Petah Tikva – Kiryat Ara / Bne Brak / Tel Aviv – University //

Tel Aviv – Savidor Center / Tel Aviv – HaShalom / Tel Aviv – HaHaganah / Holon Junction / Holon – Wolfson / Bat Yam – Yoseftal / Bat Yam – Komemiyut / Rishon LeTsiyyon – Moshe Dayan / Yavne – West //

Ben Gurion Airport / Pa'ate Modi'in / Modi'in Center //

Kfar Habbad / Lod – Ganne Aviv / Lod / Be'er Ya'akov / Rishon LeTsiyyon – HaRishonim / Rehovot (E. Hadar) / Yavne – East / Ashdod – Ad Halom (M. Bar-Kochva) / Ashkelon / Sderot / Netivot / Ofaqim //

Ramla / Bet Shemesh / Jerusalem – Biblical Zoo / Jerusalem – Malha //

Kiryat Mal'akhi – Y'av / Kiryat Gat / Lehavim – Rahat / Be'er Sheva – North / University / Be'er Sheva – Center / Dimona.

Then come – with a darkened background which does not facilitate easy reading – pp.35-51, the Southbound tables for Fridays and Holiday Eves Only, whereby some are marked in green or yellow backgrounds to indicate the differences between Winter and Summer times (from 31.03 and from 14.09 respectively); pp.52-55 are southbound on Sats and Holidays Only – with green background; pp.56-59 the same from 15.09.2018 – 20.10.2018 (thus indicating when the next timetable will be due.)

In the centre is a system map, and then comes the same for the northbound services.

Thus far the timetable fits fairly elegantly onto the two pages opened at a time, albeit 'Tel Aviv Savidor' falls into the fold this making times hard to read!! But the font is small..... Of course with the opening of the new Jerusalem line in autumn this layout will become even more cramped.

The transliterations are fine and interesting albeit not always those we prefer to use. For this report I have not distinguished between the 'h' and 'ch' sounds – these are printed with a line under the 'h' where necessary. 'Kh' is also used.

We see that some stations are referred to as 'Center' (American spelling) yet 'HaMifrats Central' – the high level platform on the Emek line – is so denoted. Dimona is included under the Be'er Sheva line rather than as a separate branch.

We see that future services on what we may call the 'northern loop' via Kfar Saba and (when it opens) Raanana are classed as 'southbound' starting at Raanana and not at the main line junction at Herzliyya.

What are the future options? The designers of the next and future issues are going to be faced with a quandary as the booklet is already quite substantial. One could envisage the various lines being given not just the existing different colours but also route numbers; one could envisage the system being divided into pages for 'Northern Section northbound' and 'Southern Section Northbound', in each case covering the Tel Aviv stations but no longer attempting to cover the entire routes open for passenger traffic (at present – the Eilat line is still to come!) from Dimona to Nahariyya. It seems

Israelis are going to have to get used to flicking pages to find connecting services. But this is a small price to pay for having such a busy and extensive and extending railway system! We still recall when everything fitted onto a single A4 sheet folded over.....

Sybil comments: "The new timetable has lots of changes. Beit Shemesh now has a lot more double-deckers. Israel Railways recognizes that there are not enough trains to and from Beit Shemesh, but the problem is the bottleneck on the Ayalon section, not a lack of rolling stock. No more trains can be squeezed in. We'll just have to wait until the fourth track at Ayalon is completed."

#### (xii). ANGER AT NEW TIMETABLE!!

The Israel Railways Ltd. new timetable started on 31.03.2018 - but already on Friday 30.03.2018 hundreds of people from the neighbourhoods around Rishon LeZion HaRishonim station who - they said - represent 150,000 passengers using the line annually, demonstrated against the decision to cancel the direct trains from there to Tel-Aviv and Herzliyya in favour of track and electrification works, with the consequent need to change trains at Lod. They claim that the solution offered of bus shuttle to Lod will make travelling time to Herzliyya significantly longer.

Both the demonstrators and the mayor of Rishon LeZion Mr. Dov Zur have appealed to the Supreme Court claiming that the change is worsening travel conditions; they further explained that the trains concerned that arrive at Lod from Ashdod, Yavne-East and Rehovot particularly in rush hours are already overcrowded, so they will not have even a chance to take any of those trains at Lod; they called upon the railway management to cancel the decision at once! Even the management promise of much higher service frequencies did not convince them.

It should be mentioned that The Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon, who heard about the demonstration, arrived there immediately and spoke with the demonstrators and with the mayor of Rishon LeZion.

#### (xiii). PESACH HOLIDAY SERVICES

From a press release of 27.03.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Israel Railways Ltd. are welcoming the Passover (Pesach) holidays, which are characterized by a lot of travellers, with an increase of services on many lines, as well as special events particularly for children at the National Railway Museum located at the historical Haifa East railway station.

On the eve of Passover, Friday 30.03.2018 and on Saturday night 31.03.2018 services will be as on Fridays and Saturday nights.

At the eve of the second Passover holiday, Thursday 05.04.2018, services will be as on Friday.

On Friday 06.04.2018 and Saturday 07.04.2018 there will be no services. Services will resume on Saturday night.

Between Sunday 01.04.2018 and Wednesday 04.04.2018 trains will operate according to the new timetable with services strengthened on the lines to Tel-Aviv, the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo station, Haifa Central the 8, Ben-Gurion Airport, Beit-Shemesh, Beer-Sheva - Tel-Aviv, Haifa - Tel-Aviv, Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem and the Valley Line.

The trains of 08:57, 09:57, 10:57 and 11:57 from Beer-Sheva to Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central will instead terminate at Haifa Central the 8, calling at Tel-Aviv University, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Haifa Bat-Galim.

In the opposite direction the trains of 11:06, 12:06, 13:06 and 14:06 from Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central to Beer-Sheva Central will instead start at Haifa Central the 8, calling at Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Tel-Aviv University.

#### (xiv). MORE LOCOS AND STOCK ARRIVE.

From a press release of 28.03.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

The railways continue their momentum towards the next generation: on 26.03.2018 and on 27.03.2018 two more Bombardier TRAXX electric locomotives arrived at the port of Haifa and were unloaded and brought to the new electrical operational depot at Lod; they join the first one which arrived in the summer and is making test runs on the A1 line, as well as the other two which arrived in February 2018; By 2022 the whole of the 62 ordered will arrive.

Also arrived at the port of Haifa and unloaded are 6 Bombardier double-deck cars which were brought to the Beer-Sheva depot for final assembling and tests; these cars are already equipped for electric traction. So far, 54 cars out of 93 ordered have arrived and the remaining 38 cars will arrive soon in batches.

There are an additional 48 cars ordered, to arrive in 2019, thus bringing the total number to 141, which undoubtedly will add a lot of seats and relieve congestion.

Israel Railways Ltd. Deputy General Manager for Rolling Stock Mr. Doron Lahav said: "The railways are in a constant development momentum in



• A Vossloh 1304 hauling two newly-delivered Bombardier Traxx locos 3305 and 3007 near Kfar Menachem on 11.05.2018. (Photo: Yarori Dozetaz)

electrification, which includes training drivers and technical teams and completion of depots for this purpose."

#### (xv). 2017 FINANCIAL REPORTS.

From a press release of 29.03.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

The Railways today published their data for 2017 including Financial Reports:

\*The operational profit from current activity was \$4.3 Million (NIS 15M) compared with about \$21.0M (NIS 73M) in 2016; the sharp decline is explained by increasing costs as a result of higher wages according to collective agreements signed and retroactive wage supplements from former years; also the recruiting of 297 new young employees during 2017 as part of introducing the latest technologies and huge purchases contributed to the low profit.

\* The 2017 net profit was \$3.71 Million (NIS 13M).

\* The railways have a positive cash flow from activity of \$24.3M (NIS 85.0M).

\* The passenger sector income for 2017 was \$213.7M (NIS 748 ); income including operation fees was \$578.0M (NIS 2.023 Billion); in 2016 the income was \$202.3M (NIS 708M); income including operation fees was \$538.86M (NIS 1.89 Billion); Profit of 2017 was up by 5.6 %; when including operation fees it rose by 7.3%.

#### Passenger Sector:

1. Passenger traffic for 2017 totalled 64.6M passengers compared with 59.5M in 2016 - up by about 8.6 %.

2. During 2017, the daily average passenger traffic was 245,000 compared with 223,000 of 2016 - up by almost 11%; On the busiest day – 03.05.2016 – with a Justin Bieber show at Hayarkon Park near Tel-Aviv University station - the number reached a record of 298,806 passengers; the daily average traffic on December 2017 was higher than the annual and totalled 262,000; on Sundays and Thursdays, however, it was 274,000.

3. Between 2010 and 2017 passenger traffic grew by 80% from 35.9M to 64.6 M; Traffic has grown five-fold since 2000.

Traffic growth in the period 2014-2017 has been affected by different events including the "Protective Edge" military operation in Gaza in 2014; stormy weather in 2015; and closure of stations in 2016, as well as opening of new lines and stations, where the initial number of passengers was low and had an influence on passenger traffic.

During 2017 a daily record number of passenger trains operated has been achieved - 586 trains, compared with 539 trains in 2017; up by 8.7%.

Lines with distinctive growth of passenger traffic in 2017 compared with 2016:

1. The Negev Western line between Beer-Sheva and Ashkelon: 22%; there is a growing demand from the passengers of Shderot, Ofakim and Netivot.
2. Beer-Sheva - Tel-Aviv line (through Kiryat-Gat, Ramla, and Lod): 17%
3. The southern coast line between Tel-Aviv and Ashkelon: 11%.

During 2017 a daily record number of passenger trains operated has been achieved - 586 trains, compared with 539 trains in 2017; up by 8.7%.

On a regular basis the daily passenger number of trains was 518 compared with 472 in 2016; up by 9.7%.

The passenger kilometrage in 2017 was 18M compared with 16.5M in 2016; up by 9%.

As already reported, on the Galilee line which opened about 6 months ago, 1.09M. passengers travelled, while on the Valley Line opened on October 2016 the number exceeded 2M.

During 2017 the railways advanced in upgrading many stations all over the network at a cost of \$18.3M (NIS 64M): Akko (Acre), Kiryat-Motzkin, Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel, Afula, Kfar-Yehoshua, Atlit, Binyamina, Hadera West, Caesarea-Pardes-Hannah, Netanya, Beit-Yehoshua, Hertzliyya, Petakh-Tikva Sgula, B'nei-Brak, Yavne West, Ramla, Beit-Shemesh, Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central, Tel-Aviv HaShalom, and many more.

The railways also put an emphasis on improving the service for bicycle riders, which significantly contributed to the rise of passenger traffic; dozens of advanced parking facilities have been added at stations.

Additionally, a project of building underground robotic bicycle parking facilities near stations is under way.

300 bicycle parking facilities have been added at 12 sites deployed all over the system, including tyre-filling sites, the first of which has been installed at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station.

The railways are checking several upgradings at stations in favour of customers, among which are specially designed seating areas, the first of which has been installed recently at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station; also checked are wireless charging facilities for cellular phones, the first of which was installed recently at Rehovot station.

#### Punctuality:

The average punctuality for 2017 was 93.62%; slightly lower than 94.3% in 2016; This is explained by the enormous growing demands at rush hours, which cause trains to stay at stations slightly longer, as well as temporary speed restrictions on sections where infrastructure works are carried out, and there are many of these at present.

#### Lines with highest Punctualities:

1. The Akko (Acre) - Haifa line: 98.2 %.
2. The Galilee (Carmiel - Haifa) line: 98.16 %.
3. The Valley Line (Beit-She'an – Haifa - Atlit): 97.50%.

#### Service for passengers with Limited Abilities:

During 2017 the railways continued improving service and increasing efficiency for passengers with limited abilities; more than 40,000 journeys have been coordinated compared with 30,000 in 2016; up by 33.3%.

#### Cargo Sector:

1. Income from cargo in 2017 were \$54.3M (NIS 190M); slightly more than \$53.43M (NIS 187M) = 1.6% up.

2. 9.1M tons of cargo have been hauled in 2017; slightly less than 9.2M in 2016.

The main sorts of cargo were so far: Grains, Ores, Containers, and Sand/Waste materials.

In 2017 the railways started hauling Steel, a segment currently increasing worldwide and which also helps the railways to increase cargo haulage.

The railways have started building a cargo terminal at Kiryat-Gat, operating one at Rosh Ha-Ayin, and completing one at Dimona – this is soon to start operating.

The cargo rolling stock fleet is growing by 50 flat cars and 7 freight locomotives - the latter purchased from NRE; all are in service.

The Cargo Department, has recently assimilated a new technology and new systems like a modern digital management system operated by personal tablets, smart system for terminal management, and a turntable to be installed at the port of Ashdod.

#### (xvi). THE TRAIN IS COMING – OR MAYBE NOT?

This article by Ralf Balke appeared (in German) on the 'Hagalil' newsletter site on 22 March 2018 and is a rather cynical but well-informed political view on the shenanigans of Minister Katz. (Translation by the Editor.)

"For two decades Israel has been expanding its railway network on a massive scale and it is investing heavily in the lines and rolling stock. But things do not always go to plan....

It should be the cream of all the current infrastructure projects in Israel: The new express train line between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. And actually from the imminent beginning of Pesach on 30. March the first trains should be rolling over the tracks. Those who possess the so-called Rav-Kav card, a sort of e-Ticket for local transport, can even travel for the first three months for free, it was generously stated. But for the moment there will be none of this. Neither the Rav-Kav holder nor anyone else will be able to get into the train at Tel Aviv at the end of the month in order to reach Jerusalem in under 30 minutes. However the safety engineers and the fire protection experts will be crawling over the line, in order to remove the last restrictions which are still there in plenty. But in six months, for Rosh Hashanah, the opening should really occur.

At least, this is what Transport Minister Ysrael Katz now promises. "In the end, Safety is more important to me than my own popularity" he explained a few days ago. "Already in my paratroop training I was taught that in extreme situations the rescue services must always have priority." In this way he has to put on a good face to cover the less-than-wonderful situation, because it was the administration of Israel Railways which announced to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange that the 30th. March opening day could not be maintained. "That happened without my knowledge," said the Minister, who was clearly bitter. "A wholly unacceptable way of doing things. Only I can decide something like this."

Whoever may have what power of decision-making, Katz will simply have to put up with the reality. Whereby it must be noted that back in

October 2017 the State Comptroller had already warned that March 2018 was rather risky as an opening date. Due to the difficulties which were to be expected with the electrification, especially in the section within Greater Tel Aviv, so that December 2019 seemed to be more realistic. But none of this held Katz back in January 2018, on a special train filled with press representatives on a PR trip over a section of the line, to announce on his own authority that operations would definitely begin at Pesach. As an expert he should have known that with such major projects such fixed dates can often become a work of fiction. The project is already some ten years behind original plans, for the construction proved to be much more demanding than originally envisaged. Nine major bridges and four tunnels with a total length of 38 kilometres had to be built, so that the route could be without curves and therefore suitable for fast trains. In addition there was much trouble with nature protection groups. The current costs are at least 7 Billion Shekels, around 1.7 Billion Euros. Initially 2.8 Billion Shekels, i.e. 0.7 Billion Euros had been estimated. Construction began back in 2001.

"One of the greatest challenges during planning was certainly the topography," says railway spokeswoman Batsheva Segev-Landau. "A gradient of over 3 per cent is too difficult for the trains. Either one runs around the hills and mountains – as was the case with the old Ottoman line which of course comes at the cost of speed – or intensive work on tunnels and bridges is necessary." So Tunnel 3 with just 12 kilometres is the longest in the entire Middle east. And the 95m high bridge over the Arazim Valley or the 1,250 metre bridge over the Ayalon River had all to be built in such a way as to be safe from earthquakes. "Firms from France, Russia, Spain and Germany were involved," says Shahar Wiesman, Chief of Communications at the Railway. The line ends in Jerusalem – for now, although an extension in the direction of Hebrew University or the Old City is under discussion - at the western edge of the metropolis in a new terminal 80 metres below street level. An air raid shelter safe against atom bombs and for up to 2,000 people is also included.

The project was certainly very ambitious from the very beginning. To this must be added that Israel had next to no experience of the construction of high speed lines over difficult terrain. It is in fact only about twenty years since Israel began at all to concentrate upon its railways. Until the beginning of the 1990's the railway network was in a desolate state; one trundled slowly in trains from the 1950s through the landscape and on many lines the operations had in any case been withdrawn. Then there came a new way of thinking. The growth in population and the enormous growth in traffic jams. These continue until today. Only a few days ago Craig Beaumont, one of the Directors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a study published together with the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) that "Israel suffers from the worst traffic jams in the OECD and the situation is getting worse, not better." There are 2,800 cars per kilometre of road and thereby three and a half times more than the OECD average, And that is despite the fact that Israelis possess substantially fewer vehicles than in

other OECD countries. It has been clear for years that the solution is not to be found in increasing personal mobility.

In addition it is important to link the periphery with the centres of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem and to network them. One reason is to reduce pressure on growth in these conurbations and another is to make the less-inhabited areas of the north or the Negev become more attractive. The whole enterprise began with the modernisation of the line from Tel Aviv to Haifa; Then Ashkelon and Ashdod were returned to the railway network and new rolling stock provided. Many of the lines opened since then have in fact existed for seventy years in some form. For example, the line Haifa – Yokneam – Afula to Beit Shean: It largely follows the old alignment of a branch of the Hedjaz Railway from Ottoman times. The link between Tel Aviv and Beer Sheva was recently upgraded to a high speed line, even if the speed of 140km/h is much lower than that of high-speed lines in Europe or Asia. Nevertheless the journey now lasts only an hour; in 2012 it was 80 minutes.

A substantial part of the equipment comes from Germany. In September last year it was announced that Siemens had won the tender for delivery of 60 double-deck regional trains with 330 cars, which was a bit surprising – until now the electro giant had been known in Israel largely for negative headlines concerning some bribery scandals. The first of these should roll on Israeli tracks from 2020. The deal with the guys in München is part of a modernisation project from which Jerusalem will pay out a total of 13 Billion Shekels (3.1 Billion Euros.) For the Diesel railcars, not so wonderful for the environment and slow, will soon disappear and the complete railway network will be electrified in stages. At present the Canadian firm Bombardier is still the main supplier for Israel Railways; for several years the former VEB Waggonbau Görlitz has been delivering their double-deck carriages, well known from their widespread use on the German railways.

There are even plans for the future of the railway. By 2040 it should at last reach from Eilat on the Red Sea to Kiryat Shemona in the farthest north, and the network will grow from currently 1,230 kilometres to 2,572 km. - more than doubled. On some sections of line speeds of up to 250km/h will then be possible. The proportion of rail traffic in the total transport will then rise from 10% to 40%. What that will all cost, Ysrael Katz remains silent. But plans are well known to be patient and to be quickly overtaken by events - especially when it comes to keeping set dates."

#### (xvii). LEVEL CROSSING SMASH NEAR RAMLEH.

From Sybil: "According to the TV, on Saturday evening April 7 at about 21:30 a car containing four people drove onto the railway near Ramle, just after – heading from Beit Shemesh – the concrete "tunnel" on the new section of line. (The tunnel was clearly visible on the news clip, which is how I know the location.) The car was hit by a double-decker train, two of the people in the car were killed, one seriously injured and one slightly injured. No injuries among the train passengers. The news said it was a train heading northwards, so it must have been

the 20:02 from Beersheva. It was definitely heading north, since it wasn't the loco end that hit the car, and northbound trains have the loco at the tail end. Service on that line was suspended for at least a few hours (there was a notice to that effect on the IR website)."

An official report: "On Saturday night 07.04.2018 at about 22:00 a report from a train driver was received at the railways' control centre that his train had hit a private car 2km east of Ramla. The collision occurred at a forbidden and unprotected crossing.

As a result, the Bombardier double-deck train driving trailer 423 which hit the car cut it into two parts which remained partially under the train. None of the train passengers and staff was injured, but 2 of the 4 passengers in the car were killed with the other 2 seriously injured.

The lines to Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem were closed for traffic; alternative buses were organized; train services between Beer-Sheva and Tel-Aviv through the western (Negev) line were increased in order to partially overcome the pressure. Only at 01:30 was the track cleared and traffic resumed."



#### (xviii). REMEMBRANCE DAY SPECIAL TIMETABLE.

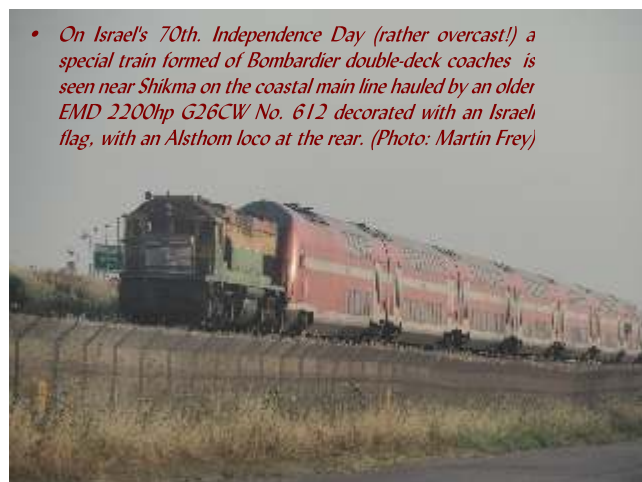
From a press release of 15.04.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

On Wednesday 17.04.2018, the 'Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terror', the railways will operate a special timetable:

#### (xx). 70TH. ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL.

Israel Railways Ltd. celebrated the State's 70th anniversary with a variety of special activities:

Through a series of meetings called "Smile along the Way", actors played the mythological "Kibbutznik" (a farmer who symbolized in Israel's first decades the typical Israeli who survived despite enormous difficulties) colloquially called Yatzek; they were at stations to greet the passengers with 'Happy Independence Day', could perpetuate the moment in a photo, and gave the pictures to every passenger who



• On Israel's 70th. Independence Day (rather overcast!) a special train formed of Bombardier double-deck coaches is seen near Shikma on the coastal main line hauled by an older EMD 2200hp G26CW No. 612 decorated with an Israeli flag, with an Alstom loco at the rear. (Photo: Martin Frey)

wanted them.

The railways issued 1 million special paper tickets with a unique design in honour of Israel's 70th anniversary; the tickets were to be issued at 500 automatic vending machines and manned points at about 60 stations all over the network.

#### (xxi). FELAFEL.

On 15.04.2018 between 07:30 and 10:30 and between 15:30 and 18:30 the railways placed a special stand at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station, where passengers received "a half portion of falafel" the Israeli national snack with oriental food and a variety of fresh salads.

#### (xxii). OECD REPORT.

The OECD has prepared a report - for the Transport Ministry - according to which much more money must be invested in mass transit particularly rail, but also buses, if the government wants to increase use of public transport which today counts for about 20% of the public movement.

#### (xxiii). BICYCLE HIRE AT STATIONS.

From a press release of 16.04.2018 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Good news for rail passengers: as an integral part of Minister Katz's plan to make all railway stations accessible, the ministry and the railways will soon launch a new pilot scheme for hiring shared bicycles at most railway stations.

This will start within a few months and will enable users to hire bicycles at several stations; the service will be provided at symbolic fees through the application in mobile phones; rail customers will receive a 10% reduction on hiring fees.

Both the ministry and the railways published on 16.04.2018 a Request for Information for Placing Shared Bicycles at the stations at areas selected for this purpose; latest date for submission of proposals is 15.05.2018. The shared service will enable 15 riders to use the same bicycle (though not at the same moment) instead of bicycles for one rider only.

The pilot scheme will first be launched at Beer-Sheva North/University station and extend gradually to most other stations; progress will be dependent on the cooperation with the local authorities. It will be operated through a computerized system to control and monitor the use and location of bicycles in real time; customer service will be provided both in Hebrew and English.

The number of bicycle riders is constantly growing; the same with riders using public transport.

According to a survey prepared per the ministry's request, about 5,000 passengers are boarding trains with their bicycles daily at rush hours, compared with 3,800 in 2014 – a rise of 35%."

#### (xxiv). REBUILDING WORKS AT TEL AVIV SAVIDOR.

The Israel Railways Ltd. Company for Developing Railway Sites published the following:

"Improving passenger services at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station which is the biggest and busiest station on the system:

"Works will include: Construction of a business building, upgrading the existing exit structure, upgrading the station-hall ticket-validators, upgrading an access to service area, construction of a shelter/safe zone at the station's northern area; demolition of existing buildings, creating parking and an operational area, and constructing a rear logistical area for operation; upgrading the exiting entrance hall, air-conditioning of the existing building, constructing a recycling room and a rubbish room, constructing temporary toilet rooms for sub-contractor employees; adding



toilets adjacent to the exiting toilets for the disabled; renovating the toilets on the first floor; renovation and upgrading of the Lost Property room, and rearranging manned ticket selling positions.

The contract is for 72 months; Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.05.2018."

#### (xxv). REBUILDING AND REFURBISHING OF OTHER STATIONS.

From a press release of 15.05.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways are currently completing an overall upgrading process at Tel-Aviv HaHaganah station at a cost of more than \$280,000 (NIS 1M), in addition to the opening of a new northern entrance at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station at a cost of \$8.9M (NIS 31.8M) and completing a new southern entrance at Tel-Aviv HaShalom station (works still underway) at a cost of \$14M (NIS 50M).

Due to the impressive growth in the number of passenger carried, the preparations towards the opening of the A1, plus the service to the south in which trains between Beer-Sheva, Ben-Gurion Airport, Tel-Aviv and Nahariyya are provided 24 hours/day, the Tel-Aviv HaHaganah station has become one of the biggest and important stations; it is therefore manned 24 hours a day and an average of 520,000 passengers use it monthly; during the first quarter of 2018 more than 1.5 million passengers used it - about 12.5% of the total passenger traffic.

(Tel-Aviv HaHaganah station is the last station in the south of Tel-Aviv; it is an important junction southwards to: Ben-Gurion Airport, Modi'in, soon the A1, the old line to Jerusalem, the rebuilt line to Beer-Sheva through Kiryat-Gat, the line Lod - Beer-Ya'akov - Rehovot - Rishon LeZion Harishonim, that through Yavne West to Ashdod and Ashkelon, the Negev line including Beer-Sheva, and northwards lines to Kfar-Sava, the coast line to Haifa, Nahariyya, Carmiel and the Valley Line; many passengers change trains here.)

As an integral part of preparation for the near future, and due to research carried out by the rail

ways, according to which 70% of rail commuters use Tel-Aviv stations which handle a high traffic volume particularly at rush hours, the Tel-Aviv HaHaganah station has been recently upgraded; the station team has been strengthened by shift managers, stewardesses, cashiers, etc. Due to the fact that many tourists use the station, special emphasis has been put on multi-lingual speaking teams.

Other works performed include: upgrading and replacement of the whole station lighting by a lighting designer; this was needed due to the station being in operation for 24 hours. 700 LED lamps have been installed in the halls and along the platforms, as well as installing 100m of LED strips on the escalators leading to the platforms.

The station front has been rebuilt and upgraded, a modern colourful waiting area with comfortable seats and sofas has been added; accessibility and toilets have been replaced and upgraded including sophisticated systems for saving energy and resources; guiding signs have been replaced and ticket selling points upgraded.

Platform 3 is currently being extended by 50m to receive longer trains; works are being performed despite the fact that the platform which serves dozens of thousands passengers/day remains active."

#### (xxvi). SABOTAGE!!

On 18.04.2018 a pile of large stones or lumps of concrete was placed on the track at km. 87.2 at Nevatim on the line to Dimona. Fortunately it was spotted in time.

#### (xxvii). ANOTHER CASUALTY.

On 24.04.2018 Aharon wrote. "As though the planned disruptions to passenger services to be caused by closing the Binyamina - Haifa Hof-HaCarmel section between Wednesday night 25.04.2018 at 00:01 and Sunday morning 29.04.2018 at 05:00 due to track upgrading works were not enough, then today at about 06:15

a person who crossed the track near HaHotrim loop (south of Haifa Hof-HaCarmel) at a forbidden point was hit by a train and caused temporary line closure; trains from Nahariyya, Carmiel and the Valley Line terminated at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel; trains from the south (Beer-Sheva and Tel-Aviv) terminated at Binyamina. Traffic started to resume gradually at 07:30 but punctuality by 08.45 was still around 82%."

#### (xxviii). STAND-UP COMEDY ON TRAINS.

From a press release of 24.04.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways continue to surprise passengers with a series of "Experiences on the Way", hand in hand with the efforts to improve services.

In February 2018 it was the so-called "Anemones Train" which took passengers to see fields full of anemones blossoming in high concentration in the south near Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim in the Negev; passengers enjoyed nature, balloons, actors and a unique market.

In March 2018 it was the culinary train called "Tasting on the Way" or the "Chef Train", in which the train between Haifa and Tel-Aviv became a restaurant with the Chef Shaul Ben-Aderet.

Now the railways are providing a "Stand-Up shows on the Way" train in which the train will become a temporary stand-up club with the participation of two of Israel's leading stand-up comedians, Shlomi Koryat and Ben Ben-Baruch; this train will depart on 01.05.2018 at 19:37 from Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central and arrive at Beer-Sheva Central at 20:55. Passengers wishing to participate have to be registered ahead; it will cost \$11.24 (NIS 40.00). Upon arrival at Beer-Sheva Central, passengers will receive a sweet refreshment."

#### (xxix). LAG BA'OMER AT MEIRON: TRAIN/BUS COORDINATION.

From a press release of 24.04.2018 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry: "Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz has responded positively to the request of the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community and approved operation of 220 special shuttle buses between the Carmiel railway station and Meiron (in the Upper Galilee near the city of Safed) for the first time ever.

At Meiron there is a tomb of a holy Rabbi, Shimon Bar-Yochai; each year almost 100,000 people go there to a festival involving many prayers and bonfires. The site is very small and despite the fact that thousands of buses have been mobilized for that purpose, the huge quantity of private cars has caused during the years huge chaos and severe bottlenecks.

This year, the police have forbidden private cars to reach the site.

Since Carmiel railhead is the nearest to Meiron, it is hoped that by using rail there will be some relief of stress on roads."

• Jerusalem Navon station takes shape, opposite the Central Bus Station and with the tramway running in front. (Photo: IR)



(xxx). TWO INCIDENTS.

In the first week of May a cable or wire (due to negligence) left free hanging from one of the catenary cantilevers on the line section between Ben-Gurion Airport and Modi'in Outskirts stations hit a passing train; Officially, nobody was hurt; however the driver was lightly injured by fragments of the broken window glass. The line was closed for about two hours and alternative bus services were arranged.

On 07.05.2018, around 19:00 it was reported that there was smoke under one of the coaches of a passenger train at Netanya, due to a locked brake. It was clarified that there was neither fire nor injury to passengers; the railway administration however sent a replacement train set and passengers changed trains with minimum delays.

(xxxi). MORE TRACKWORKS.

The railways have announced on their website that due to track upgrading works to take place between Binyamina and Hadera West, this section will be closed between Thursday 10.05.2018 at 00:01 and Friday 11.05.2018 at 18:00.

Consequently, trains from/to the north will start/terminate at Binyamina; trains from/to the south will start/terminate at Hadera West; night trains between the north and Ben-Gurion Airport will start/terminate at Binyamina; trains from/to the south will start/terminate at Hadera West; alternative bus services between the closed stations will be provided at 10 minute intervals; traffic will resume on Saturday night 12.05.2018.

(xxxii). NEW ELECTRIC DEPOT AT ASHKELON:

From a press release of 13.05.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

'The railways announced today that the winner of tender No. 21703, constructing the new operational depot at Ashkelon for electric trains, is the local infrastructures company Y. D. Ashush of Ashkelon. The company has performed several rail projects during recent years.

The depot will serve the 60 double-deck emus (300 cars) ['emu' = 'electrical multiple units'] ordered from Siemens, some of the 62 Bombardier TRAXX electric locomotives, and 300 Bombardier double-deck push/pull cars to be converted to electric traction.

The contract value is around \$28M (100M NIS) while building the whole site will reach \$140M (NIS 500M). The project will last 38 months and will include: 11 km of tracks, a 350m long platform for preparing the trains, and several buildings: engineering, electricity, water reservoir and pumps,

track workers' building, and the electrification infrastructure.

The emus' depot is to be built by Siemens as part of the tender for supply of emus which the company won. This project is the first stage of developing the railway site at Ashkelon; in the future it is planned to expand it in coordination with the designing of a futuristic urban quarter and a new railway station similar to the Beer-Sheva depot and the nearby University station; the Ashkelon depot will join those of Beer-Sheva (the biggest in the Middle East), Lod and Haifa; the last two being significantly extended."

(xxxiii). SHAVUOT FESTIVAL TIMETABLE.

From a press release of 16.05.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

On the Shavuot holiday the timetable will be as follows:

On Friday, 18.05.2018, services will be as on



• Computer simulations courtesy of Bar-Hanna Architects & D.E.L. Engineering (and IR Spokesman's office.)

regular Fridays; On Saturday night, 19.05.2018, there will be no services; On Sunday night, 20.05.2018, services will be as on regular Saturday nights; On Monday, 21.05.2018, services will be as on Sundays but with extras.

Additionally, a special train dedicated for I.D.F. soldiers will depart from Nahariya at 06:11 calling at all intermediate stations up to Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel, then directly to the Petakh-Tikva stations, then will pass through Rosh-HaAyin South directly to Lod, Ramla, Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim-Rahat and finally to Beer-Sheva stations.

This train will have a capacity of 750 to 1,000 seats and will bring soldiers to their bases in the south, and by running round the Greater Tel-Aviv Area it will not affect regular passenger services.

(xxxiv). GRUMBLES ABOUT THE ELECTRIFICATION WORKS.

This comes from 'Globes' 20.05.2018:

"Handing the electrification project to Spanish company SEMI in 2015 because its bid was the cheapest was disastrous.

At the entrance to Jerusalem, overlooking Ha'arazim Valley (Valley of Cedars), stands the highest bridge in Israel, which was built for the high-speed railway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In recent weeks, two years after the bridge was built, placement of electrical poles along the bridge finally began, but there are still no electrical wires. No degree in electrical engineering is needed in order to realize that without wires, there will be no electricity, and without electricity, there will be no railway, because only electrified trains can run in the long tunnels on the line.

Explain this to Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz, who announced a few months ago that no technical problem prevented operation of the new route before the Passover holiday and that only the security requirements of Israel Police and rescue agencies stand in the way of the line's operation. Katz is now citing the eve of the Sukkot holiday as the new official target date for inaugurating the line, but sources at Israel Railways are already admitting that 2019 is a more realistic target date. It is a little difficult to believe that this is the same country that snatched nuclear archives from under the Iranians' noses.

This, however, is only a small part of the botched job. Electrification of the high-speed railway to Jerusalem is only a first stage in a giant project of converting all Israel Railways' passenger trains in Israel (except for two) from diesel to electrical operation. The same defective practices that delayed the high-speed train to Jerusalem is already evident in the future lines. Actually, electrification of the other lines will not continue until the line to Jerusalem is electrified.

This is much more than just another embarrassment for the Minister of Transport. It means that Israel Railways will be unable to implement the work plan in the coming years, which means that it will be impossible to increase the frequency of trains on overloaded routes and that new routes cannot be added at the planned pace.

Diesel trains: Expensive, slow, noisy, and polluting

The transition from diesel trains to electrified trains is the biggest challenge facing Israel Railways in the coming years. It is also the key to increasing the proportion of people traveling on railways in Israel, which is currently one quarter of the OECD average. The original estimated cost of the conversion of the railways, the tracks, and all the auxiliary systems was NIS 12 billion. Electrification of the railways is a necessary step - passenger trains have been electrically powered in all of the world's developed countries for many years. Diesel is not only more expensive, more polluting, and noisier; diesel trains are slower and on certain lines, such as

the line to Jerusalem, cannot be used at all because of the lack of ventilation in the long tunnels.

The tender for supplying the trains (the mobile equipment, in professional jargon) was the relatively easy part. The winner was Siemens, which undertook to supply 330 railway carriages in 2019-2024 for NIS 3.8 billion.

The more difficult and challenging part was the tender for electrification of the tracks, and Israel Railways' management was well aware of it. This was the background for the disastrous decision to issue a tender for selecting a single contractor to undertake this entire prodigious project: building an elevated electrical system along 600 kilometers of double railway track, building a new command and control system, building 14 transformer stations to supply the electricity along the tracks, converting Israel Railways' maintenance and garage sites for handling electrified trains, and maintaining the electrified tracks for 23 years. The cost of the tender was estimated at NIS 3 billion.

On December 7, 2015, Israel Railways announced that it had selected the bid by Spanish company Sociedad Espanola de Montajes Industriales (SEMI). The Spanish company had never operated in Israel, but what tipped the scales in its favor was the fact that it offered to carry out the project for NIS 2 billion, NIS 1 billion less than the estimates.

The tender terms required SEMI to comply with technical requirements. SEMI's rating on the technical part of the tender was 70 - the minimum required to pass the technical stage.

Several weeks after winning the tender, a group composed of French company Alstom and Israeli company Afcon Control & Automation, which lost to SEMI in the tender, filed an administrative petition to the Tel Aviv District Court against Israel Railways alleging that an "invisible hand" had revised SEMI's technical rating from 66 to 70, thereby in effect enabling SEMI to win the tender.

Tel Aviv District Court Judge Dr. Michal Agmon-Gonnen was disturbed by the fact that the petitioners had used controversial investigative firm Black Cube to obtain evidence overseas and dismissed the petition. Alstom and Afcon appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court justices were impressed by the allegation that the tender results had been forged, and a compromise was reached after 18 months of litigation: Alstom and Afcon agreed to withdraw their petition in exchange for work in the project framework amounting to NIS 300 million and NIS 280 million. The state claimed that the compromise agreement was bad because it would increase the cost of the project by NIS 160 million and require splitting the work, but after Israel Railways turned the tender into a circus, the compromise had to be accepted.

During the entire legal proceeding lasting two years after the tender winner was selected, SEMI was unable to begin work on the project. In an extraordinary measure, however, it was decided with the petitioners' consent to allow SEMI to work on the high-speed train to Jerusalem because of its importance. SEMI worked freely on that line, on which it was to have finished the electrification work by July 2017, already a year behind schedule. The

work done by SEMI on the line to Jerusalem left very little room for hope concerning progress on the electrification project for the other lines, which was suspended until the beginning of this year because of the legal proceedings. Actually, Israel Railways is already explicitly saying that work on the other lines will not be begun before electrification of the line to Jerusalem is completed. In other words, nothing will start before 2020.

#### Target: 86 million railway journeys a year

The consequences of the expected delay in the timetable for electrification of all of Israel Railways' lines are unimaginable. During 2017, Israel Railways posted 64.6 million journeys, and demand for 86 million journeys by 2022 is projected under the operating plan. The electrification project, originally slated for completion by the end of 2021, was to have provided a solution for this increased demand.

The delay therefore means poorer service by Israel Railways, which already suffers from overload on its routes. Looking beyond this, switching to railway transportation by the public, which is supposed to relieve road congestion, will probably not happen in the next few years.

Another solution for increasing the number of trains in the absence of electrical infrastructure could have been considered, but this is impossible because the equipment ordered by Israel Railways in the coming years is equipment for electrified lines: carriages, locomotives, etc. Israel Railways asserts that since the new carriages can also be operated by diesel locomotives, it can use them to lengthen some of the existing trains to seven or eight carriages, thereby reducing the load on the existing lines. This, however, will not help increase the frequency of the trains or add new lines.

The emerging delay in the electrification project is more than two years - an order to begin work was issued only in January 2016. According to sources involved in the project, work on additional lines in the project has not yet begun. Israel Railways says that work on other lines will begin only after the high-speed line is completed up to Gllot, which experts say will be possible only in April 2019. Simultaneous work on some of the lines, which involves additional costs for the contractor, is apparently being ruled out, even though SEMI's original contract with Israel Railways was planned differently with simultaneous work on at least four lines.

#### "SEMI has yet to get a shekel from the project"

It could have been expected that as a result of the delay caused by almost two years of litigation, the performance contractor would work at full speed on the main Israel Railways project in order to make up the time by increasing its number of workers, but as of now, this has not happened.

The system of fines for delays in the project is not motivating the Spanish work contractor to step up the pace. As of now, Israel Railways is refusing to sue the contractor while the project is taking place out of concern that the contractor will be driven away. It turns out that the guarantees

deposited with the state by SEMI when the contract was signed were for electrification of up to 13 lines in the project, and since work is now proceeding only on the first 60-kilometer Tel Aviv-Jerusalem segment, payments for milestones in the projects are being made accordingly. As a result, according to a source familiar with the progress in the project, "SEMI has yet to get a shekel from the project."

The source adds, "The contractor has been working during this entire period and paying for salaries, equipment, and materials. Fines in cash are not usually exacted in such cases when milestones payments are being made; the contractor is notified that the state reserves the right to settle accounts at a suitable time in order to avoid further delays due to cash flow problems. Immediate payment is not demanded for the accumulated fines, and that is the situation of Israel Railways with SEMI."

Will the fines, which are already estimated in millions of shekels and which belong to the public, eventually be collected? In many infrastructure engineering projects, it is unusual to see the performance contractor paying fines, because at the end of the project period, the contractor also has complaints against the party that ordered the work; the usual result is a compromise between the parties.

The railway tracks electrification project: The state's failures in a major infrastructure project

\* Putting a single foreign contractor in charge of Israel Railways' largest, most sensitive, and most difficult engineering project to date.

\* Making the contractor responsible for all the coordination and approvals required in the course of the work, without being familiar with Israel and having offices and liaison personnel in the country.

\* Selecting the cheapest bid in the tender, despite its low rating in the technical stage and the fact that the contractor had never operated in Israel.

\* Retroactively improving the contractor's rating in the tender in order to make sure that the contractor would win the tender, thereby exposing Israel Railways to litigation that delayed the project by two years.

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To this Steve Sattler adds: "The Minister of transport, Mr Yisrael Katz has been trying for about 10 years to upgrade the transport services in Israel. He has had some successes and some failures. One of his bigger projects is to make train travel a normal 'fixture' of Israel. He is extending the rail lines, with new and better trains and their equipment, and above all, the famous new train up to Jerusalem. [And yes, the TLV metro]."

On 7th December 2015 his ministry signed a 2 Billion NIS contract with the Spanish company SEMI to electrify and maintain the electrification of rail services in Israel, including the new line to

Jerusalem. It was to be a 25 years Build and Maintain contract.

This SEMI company is unknown in Israel, but it was the cheapest! (By 1 billion Shekels). Every contract of this kind has heavy technical limitations, and some 'unknown' hand at the ministry changed the technical red-line [to allow this company to win] from 66 to 70 points. Alstrom, the other company in the tender; took the MOT to court [Jan 2016], claiming that 'this cheating' in the MOT gave the tender to the wrong [and unsuitable] company, and Alstrom should have won. Alstrom's bid was 3 billion shekels.

During 18th April 2016- 11th Jan 2018 : FOUR courts [incl. the High Court] found loopholes and finally 'suggested' a compromise that will cost the MOT [and Israel-Rail] an extra 280 + 300M NIS, to split the original tender into three parts.

Meanwhile: the MOT and IR are letting SEMI do their work - but they work very, very slowly!.... and they are well behind on their contract. So, there could not be any High Speed and thus electric train to Jerusalem till maybe mid-2019 [??], unless SEMI starts working faster - but there is no sign of this happening. Since the new high speed train service to Jerusalem is critical and now very urgent, a fresh solution must be found.

My solution:- 1. Give SEMI an ultimatum of 1 month to either speed up their work, and finish the King David line by October 2018, whereby they will not be sued for their delays. [The MOT has a contractual obligation to sue them for the delays - this is a lot of money];

or: 2. send them packing, sue them, and bring in Siemens and Alstrom as real contractors to work; split the work-load and finish the job.

It is obvious that in any case the SEMI/MOT argument will be in court for years - so it is best for now to bypass the courts and to have work happening on the ground as a priority..

This whole 'bad-planning' and 'bad decision-making' at the MOT is now a black-hole with a five-year 'light-at the end of the tunnel', so any short-cut whereby some real work is being done on the ground - rather than in court - is essential."

(xxv). OPENING FOR '53 I LINE' PREPARATIONS.

From a press release of 22.05.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways are working progressively on linking the Hod-HaSharon Sokolov station with the two new stations of Ra'anana South and Ra'anana West, both located in the median of highway No. 53 I (the line is called the HaSharon railway or line No. 53 I like the road).

As a result, the Hod-HaSharon Sokolov station will be closed for service between Saturday night 26.05.2018 and Friday 29.06.2018; both of the Ra'anana stations will be opened on Saturday night 30.06.2018.

From next week the railways will perform training test runs on and simulations of the new line; the area

residents will be invited to the simulations of the stations.

During the closure trains to/from Hod-HaSharon Sokolov station will start/terminate at Kfar-Sava Nordau station; a linking shuttle bus services between this station and the closed one will be provided free of charge.

The section of line between the two new stations runs in an 1.8km long tunnel; slab track is used.

Ra'anana South station was built 14m under the surface level of two important roads; highway 53 I (east-west) and highway 4 (north-south) and adjacent to a high-tech complex.

Ra'anana West station is located - as already mentioned - in the median of highway 53 I and has a pedestrian overhead bridge between the station hall and the platforms.

In the initial stage of operation after linking the new stations with Hod-HaSharon Sokolov and

Kfar-Sava Nordau stations, the service will run through Rosh-HaAyin North, stations of Petach-Tikva, B'nei-Brak, Tel-Aviv, Yavne West, Ashdod, Ashkelon, the West Negev stations and Beer-Sheva stations, as is currently but with the new stations.

The journey time between the Ra'anana stations and Tel-Aviv will be 40 minutes; quite long, but shorter than by any other mode of transport in rush hours.

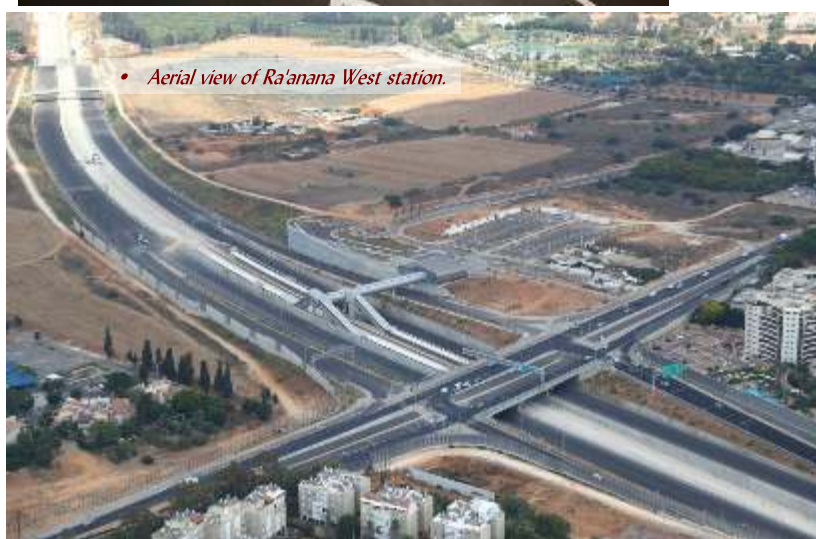
However, with the completion of the triangular junction near Shefayim (north of Herzliyya) and particularly the curve towards Herzliyya, journey time will be cut to just 20 minutes - very attractive - and the service will become like a circle."

Attached herewith are the following 3 pictures of the new stations provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich-Israel Railways Ltd. spokesman assistant:



Picture #IMG-20180522-WA0009.jpg (113 KB) shows the entrance to Ra'anana South station.

Picture #IMG-20180522-WA0010.jpg (177 KB) .



• Aerial view of Ra'anana West station.

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JERUSALEM  
O L D  
STATION TO  
R E M A I N  
O P E N  
O N  
S A B B A T H S .

From 'Times of Israel' 30.05.2018: "Jerusalem's First Station promenade will remain open for business on Saturdays, the District Planning and



• The entrance to Ra'anana South station.

Building Committee ruled on Thursday, overturning a non-binding motion by ultra-Orthodox city council members that sought to shutter the commerce hub on the Jewish day of rest.

Earlier this month, the Jerusalem municipal council voted 15-10 in favor of an appeal brought by ultra-Orthodox council members protesting the site being open for business on Shabbat. The appeal called for revoking permission given to the compound - a former 19th-

- Pictures of the new stations provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich - Israel Railways Ltd. assistant spokesman.
-

century train station that for the past five years has been home to restaurants and art displays, and offers live entertainment and cultural activities — to keep its doors open on the Jewish Sabbath.

But the final decision rested with the Finance Ministry's District Planning and Building Committee, which rejected the earlier vote.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat welcomed the decision. "The status quo in the city is that there are restaurants and entertainment centres open on Shabbat, and no commerce in the Jewish parts of the city," said the mayor. "This is exactly what is happening at the First Station and these are the rules in Jerusalem and always have been.

"The First Station greatly contributes to Jerusalem and offers a response on Shabbat to the various communities in the city — the secular public, the non-Jewish public and tourists," he continued. "We will continue to govern Jerusalem with the necessary balance so that everyone feels at home."

Barkat earlier this month said the vote by council members was not binding and could not force his hand. "There will be no change in the activities of the First Station promenade and it will continue just as it has been today," Barkat told local Jerusalem news site Kol Ha'Ir."

#### (xxvii). ON-LINE ENTERTAINMENT!!

From a press release of 31.05.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways continued their activity called "Experiences en route"; this time, about 100 passengers participated in a super sensual show of two successful sensual artists Nimrod Harel and Hezy Din, which took place entirely (and for the first time in the world) on a train specially fitted out for that purpose.

The train left Kiryat-Motzkim on Monday 28.05.2018 at 19:32 and terminated at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central at 21:03."

#### (xxviii). A SECOND LINE FROM EILAT TO ASHDOD??

Hardly believable but – at the end of May discussions were reported whereby a Japanese consortium was considering constructing a direct high-speed link from Eilat to Ashdod for container traffic between Asia and Europe, largely on viaduct. The idea would be to use this for container trains during the nights. Specifically (but unofficially) reported has been the following scheme:

1. 3.5 kms. south of the southern edge of Eilat - a new pier with 6 massive cranes, and double rail-tracks for unloading 30-100 containers per hour.

2. An elevated [concrete] High-Speed double-track line for the 192 kms to south of Tee'lim. Most of this elevated, or occasionally across the flat Negev landscape.

This new electrified line (with security and the usual electronics) would run an average of 4 kms EAST of the Egypt/Israel border. Speed would be between 100-160 kms/h.

3. From Tee'lim northwards [74 kms] to just west of Kiryat Malachi - all elevated, (probably-just a single track), a straight line. (Another alternative would be double tracks - one above the other).

4. Then the next 13 kms - an elevated straight line to the new private Ashdod port.

5. It is considered cheaper and more practical to build the whole system up on concrete pillars, about 30m high.

6. The Japanese would only use these tracks at night. Israel Railways would use these tracks during the day for normal commuter trains. A series of retirement and vacation villages will be built along this line. \*Israel is planning on building two underground nuclear stations to make electricity in the Negev; these would also supply the power."

One is left almost breathless by this idea – it would mean TWO lines, one built by the Chinese, the other by the Japanese, one serving Beer Sheva and Dimona and the Eilat Airport, the other direct along the border with all that that implies. The Editor feels like the proverbial passenger waiting patiently and seemingly endlessly for a bus – when at last two come at once.

121:05.

## ISRAEL RAILWAYS Ltd. TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. 11746: Building a Gym for the railways' employees, including planning, supply, installation and maintenance of the Gym equipment: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Guaranteed services: 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.04.2018.

(ii). Tender No. 1172: Providing transportation services for the railways:

The contract refers to operating various services: for the railway employees, for passengers in case of line closures due to works or disasters, to disabled, and for railway employees as part of travelling on organized weekends or other events.

The vehicles to be operated are:

- Buses with up to 60 seats.
- Minibuses with up to 15 seats.
- Smaller minibuses with up to 10 seats.
- Taxis.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.04.2018.

(iii). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 21728: Providing services of securing Statutory Planning: The work required includes: design statutory follow-up reports, design follow-up reports and/or selected follow-up reports through the SAP system including preparing a report of relevant damages caused to design statutory. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of Proposals: 12.04.2018.

(iv). Israel Railways Ltd. tender No.11720: Frame agreement for providing translation of technical and marketing material & transcription services from English to Hebrew and vice versa. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 16.04.2018.

(v). Tender No. 180302 & No. 180303: Operating taxi services to/from Herzliyya railway station and Beer-Sheva North University station respectively: The contract on each tender is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals for each tender: 09.04.2018.

(vi). Tender No. 1187: Providing renovation and repair services for compressors and EMD diesel motors of main line locomotives and Deutz motors for Bombardier IC3 Flexliner dmus: The contract is for 24 months with optional extending of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.05.2018.

(vii). Tender No. 21736: Providing Quality Assurance services for the railways' development projects: The contract is for 36 months with optional extending of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 26.04.2018.

(viii). R.F.I. Request for Information regarding the construction of a rail cargo terminal on the railways' real estate area: The contract is for 36 months with optional extending of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.04.2018.

(ix). Israel Railways Ltd. No.2182: Building a 5th platform and a railway bridge over Hebron road at Beer-Sheva Central station:

Works include: the 5th platform, a pedestrian subway, track infrastructure, supporting walls, and a railway bridge for the 5th track over Hebron road. Works are to last 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.05.2018.

(x). Tender No. 2181: Adding a second storey to the Training Centre building at Lod: Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.05.2018.

# LIGHT RAIL.

## A. TEL-AVIV LRV/METRO PROJECT.

(i) NTA Tender No. 141/2017: Providing detailed design services for the underground stations of the Green Line:

The services required are: detailed design as per the DB (Design & Build) tenders and quantities calculations, upper control of physical/geometrical design, traffic and traffic lights, LRV Track Design, building architecture, landscape architecture, construction design, soil consultant, wet infrastructures (water, sewage, and drainage), dry infrastructure (electricity, lighting, and communication), safety, agronomy, environmental planning, acoustics, accessibility, ventilation and air condition (including smoke cleaning), cathodic protection, etc.

The Green Line will link between Herzliya, Tel-Aviv, Holon and Rishon Le-Zion; it will be 40 km long of which 5km will be underground divided into 5 segments; there will be 4 underground stations including Carlebach station which is on the Red Line in progressive stage of construction and will be an interchange point of the 2 lines. The contract is for 24 months

(xi). Tender No. 180101: Permission to operate a digital advertising media at stations and on trains overall the network: The contract is for 72 months with optional extensions of up to additional 72 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 10.05.2018.

(xii). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 31801: Annual framework agreement for supply of Stationary and general Office Equipment: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 22.05.2018.

(xiii). 03.05.2018: R.F.I. - for bids regarding areas near Dimona station for the purpose of maintenance and repair of rolling stock: Latest date for submission of proposals: 17.05.2018.

(xiv). Tender No. 11780: Performing NDT - Non-Destructive Tests of rail welding, rails, turnouts including all components, and cracks on rolling stock: The tests need to follow EN-473 and/or SNT-TC-1A of ASNT standards. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 31.05.2018.

(xv). Tender No. 21730: Performing maintenance works near the tracks in the south: Works include: track sections, sites, stations, landscape rehabilitation, vegetation pest control, etc. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.06.2018.

(xvi). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 11762: Providing financial management & operation services as well as services for tickets selling and nearby services: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.06.2018.

(xvii). Tender No. 11812: Delivery, installation operation, and maintenance services for a P.O.C (Push to Talk Over Cellular) wireless based communication system: The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.07.2018.

for design + 84 months construction and engineering services. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.04.2018.

(ii). METRO RED LINE : NEW ADDITIONAL STATION AT PETACH TIKVA.

The Transport Ministry has responded positively to a proposition sent by a local organization called "The Israeli Users of Public Transport Services" according to which an underground LRV station is to be built under the Friendship Square which is at the centre of Mother of Colonies neighborhood, currently the extreme north neighborhood of Petakh-Tikva.

The area is one of city's most densely populated and rapidly growing areas and its residents are suffering from ever growing daily severe bottle necks.

According to the proposition, the station will be linked with the depot at Kiryat-Arie from which Red

Line northern branch starts, thus providing the residents with a direct link to the Red Line, avoiding the inadequate need to use slow buses to reach the Red Line central bus/LRV station of Petakh-Tikva.

The organization's members claim that the proposed branch of about 2km long and the station will cost about \$173 Million (NIS 600M, but it will serve about 5,000 families which live in access of just few hundred metres from the station.

Dr. Irit Shperber, a Senior Manager for Transportation Design in the Transport Ministry, she explained that the proposition will be discussed in the crystallizing of the Greater Tel-Aviv Area Transportation Plan for 2030.

(iii). NTA Tender No. 024/2018: Design, Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Heat, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Systems and Tunnel Ventilation Systems for the Red Line. Maintenance services shall be supplied for a period of ten years following the take-over of the systems. Bids by 31. May 2018.

(iv). NTA Tender No. 030/2018: Performing Tracing, Verification, Surveying, Exposing, Measuring, and Mapping of Underground Infrastructures: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 22.04.2018.

(v). NTA Tender No. 031-2018: (19.04.2018): Providing guarding and follow-up services for procedures of land expropriation for NTA LRV/BRT lines. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 20.05.2018.

(vi). NTA tender No.105/2017: Providing services of placing employees at NTA: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 17.05.2018.



• View southwards towards B'nei Beraq and the future Em-HaMoshavot station (in tunnel); to Left the Petach Tikva high-tech area. Behind the photographer will be the depot at Kiryat Arie, Petach Tikva. (Photo: Aharon Gazit on 27.04.2018.)

(vii). NTA Tender No.027/2018: Performing small sub-contractual works:

The works to be carried out include: demolishing structures and buildings (including walls), building walls, sidewalks pavement, asphalt laying,

gardening and landscape developing. The intention is to select up to 5 bidders. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.06.2018.

(viii). NTA Tender No. 15/2018: Providing consulting services regarding the implementation of SOX-404: The winner will provide assessments regarding the effectiveness of internal auditors. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.06.2018.

## B. JERUSALEM.

### (i) FARES – CASH NO MORE.

Sybil writes: "Starting Thursday March 8 there will be no more cash fares on Jerusalem buses. One will need a pre-loaded Rav-Kav card to be able to travel on buses within the city. Also, the cards need to have a smartcard chip (a gold square on the back). Any old cards without the chip can be exchanged free of charge.

There will be a Rav-Kav service centre at Ben-Gurion Airport where one can get cards and load them. Other service centres are in the Jerusalem Central Bus Station next to platform 22 (at the far end, through the doors) and at the CityPass service centre at 97 Jaffa Road, next to Ha-Davidka light rail station, and a few others around Jerusalem.

One will be able to load cards using credit card or cash at branches of Cofix coffee shop in Jerusalem and also branches of Maayan 2000 supermarket, as well as a long list of neighbourhood grocery shops. There are also loading points (machines) scattered around the city.

For now, this applies only to Jerusalem city buses. Eventually the disease will spread to Tel Aviv, other cities in Gush Dan and the Haifa metropolitan area. No date yet for any of that."

### (ii). CRASH WITH CAR.

On 18.03.2018 a collision occurred between an LRV train and a private car in the neighbourhood of Pisgat-Ze'ev (northern end of the Red Line). As a result the front car was damaged, as was the private car, and the train also derailed; the car driver was lightly injured. It caused temporary traffic disruption for train traffic.

The Red Line was closed between the evening of 22.03.2018 and the following morning south of Pisgat Ze'ev due to the need to replace a catenary pole damaged by the collision.



### (iii). GREEN LINE TENDERS.

From a press release of 27.03.2018 by the Inter-Ministerial Tenders Committee of the Finance Ministry, Transport Ministry, and the Jerusalem Municipality:

"One year after the Finance Ministry published the international tender for the Jerusalem LRV Green Line, and further to the report of 20.12.2017 regarding the eight groups participating in the tender's Pre-Qualifying stage, the committee headed by the Finance Ministry's Deputy Accountant General Mr. Nehemia Kind, announced today that the following seven groups have passed the PQ stage:

1. Shapir Engineering and CAF.



2. Shikun u Binuy, Egged Holdings (part of Egged bus operator), and Meridam Infrastructure.
3. Ashtrom, Keren Infrastructures for Israel, and Harel.
4. Ansaldo-Hitachi, Minrav, and the Meir Group.
5. GEK, Pangea Israel, IDT Corporation, and Terna.
6. Electra and Dan bus operator.
7. Bombardier, Oron Group, Lesico Ltd., Macquarie, and MetroLine bus operator.

• A computer image of the Green Line shows a tram near Teddy Stadium and the Malkha mall

The rolling stock manufacturers participating are: Alstom, Bombardier, CAF, Siemens, CRRC, Ansaldo-Hitachi, and Skoda.

The Israeli group which did not pass the PQ consisted of Keren Noy and Hachsharat Hayishuv.

Mr. Kind said that such a high number of international participants proves their trust in the Israeli Government projects.

On April 2018, the tender's documents aimed for the groups that have passed the PQ will be published.

The Moriya company which is responsible for developing the Jerusalem transportation, announced on 26.02.2018, that the Green Line basic infrastructure works are underway.

The winners of the first tenders for basic infrastructure works are the Israeli firms The Vordarian Brothers - earthworks contractors, and Zalman Barashi & Brothers - earthworks and building contractors.

The cost of the two tenders' works is around \$63 Million (NIS 220M). The Green Line will be the second one of the Jerusalem LRV system, with an unofficial opening date sometime in 2024. It will be 19km long linking the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in northern Jerusalem with the Gilo neighbourhood in southern Jerusalem. The \$2.9 Billion (NIS 10 Bn) project (including the trains) will include 36 stations.

The Vordarian Brothers section is 1 km long, located mainly at Patt Junction (one of the city's busiest) leading to Gilo; works there will last 40 months during which the contractor will build a grade separation with the LRV to pass on the upper level and cars on the lower level.

The Zalman Barashi & Brothers section is 3 km long, located at the area of Mount Scopus road tunnel and the French Hill; works will last for 33 months during which the contractor will prepare the basic track infrastructure and renew the surrounding streets.

Moriya's General Manager Advocate Doron Neuwirth said: "The beginning of works on the Green Line are a positive sign to solving the ever growing traffic congestion of the city; together with the additional line to be built in the future - the Blue Line - the citizens will hopefully at last be freed of the nightmare caused by being stuck in the crowded roads to and from the city centre".

#### (iv). YOM HAATZMA'UT.

Due to the many activities and guests at Jerusalem on Independence Day, LRV services (as well as night bus feeder lines) will be strengthened and operated until 03:00.

#### (v). THE JERUSALEM CABLE CAR PROJECT.

Several months after the government first announced the project and budgeted \$4.2M (NIS 15M) for preliminary design, the Minister of Tourism Mr. Yariv Levin and Finance Minister Mr. Moshe Kachlon announced on Sunday 13.05.2018 (Jerusalem Day) provision of almost \$56M (NIS 200M) for completing the project.

The line will be 1.4km long, will be served by 40 cars moving at the same time and will be able to carry up to 3,000 passengers/hour. It will start adjacent to the historical railway station (today an entertainment area with several preserved rail vehicles), with stops at Mount Zion, the Kedem visitors centre at David City (archeological site) and finally at the Dung Gate.



All senior officials involved state that the cable car will provide a much better access to the Old City and particularly to the Western Wall for the Jewish population as well as for Christian pilgrims to the various churches and Moslems coming out of the city wishing to pray at the El-Aksa mosque. Currently, only the Old City residents can reach the area with their own cars; all others need to use buses which are slow and overcrowded.

The project will serve also many tourists who will see many nice sites from the altitude.

More photos on page 18

## C. HAIFA.

### (i). PUBIC TRANSPORT PLANS.

From a press release of 13.03.2018 by the Haifa municipality:

"Haifa is joining the "Forum of 15"; it refers to a forum of 15 Israeli cities calling themselves independent due to their own initiatives to improve life quality.

Haifa municipality's emphasis is on reducing air pollution, introducing renewable energies and reducing the use of private cars in favour of public transportation; attached herewith are pictures provided by Gil Meller the municipality's spokesman, with credit for the pictures for Yefe-Nof, referring to the public transport subject.



While the pictures of the cable car project are known already, the picture of the Lev HaMifratz transportation centre is in a much better resolution than before: The two dark roofs are of the new Lev HaMifratz central bus station (there is another one at Hof HaCarmel adjacent to the railway station of that name), the two overhead pedestrian bridges are of Lev HaMifratz railway station leading to large parking facilities, while just left of the bus parking area is the elevated railway station of the Valley Line coming from Haifa; This will be a changing point for passengers from the Valley Line en-route to Haifa and the south or to the Krayot, Acre (Akko), Carmiel and Nahariya in the north, as well as for people from the latter wishing to reach the Valley Line cities."

- Loading the Carmelit cars in Switzerland. (Photo: CWA Construction SA, Mattias Jeker, courtesy of Mr. Gill Meller, assistant of the Haifa Municipality Spokesman's Office.)

### (ii). NEW CARMELIT STOCK ON THE WAY.

On 03.06.18 the first two new cars = 1 train of the Haifa underground - the 'Carmelit' - were loaded onto a barge in the Rhein river in Switzerland to be conveyed to Antwerp port in Belgium; they are expected at the port of





Haifa on 26.06.2018; 2 additional cars will join them two weeks later.

At the beginning of July 2018 they will be put into the 1.8 km long tunnel to be tested with a view to reopening the service at the beginning of September 2018.

The two funicular trains have been manufactured by the Swiss consortium Garawwanta-Doppelmeyer at a cost of \$14M (NIS 50M); each train has 48 seats + 216 standees; 2 trains will be capable of carrying 528 passengers at the same time; the trains will run at 28 km/h and cover the line within 10 minutes including intermediate stations (the historical trains of 1959 which served until 1987 did it in 6 minutes!).

## D. NEW PROPOSED LRV LINE TO ARIEL.

Although first published on 15.03.2018, it is only in the first week of June that this project is being pushed ahead by Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz. It has been fully approved for detailed design. The line was originally included in the Railways' master plan for the 21st century published in 1997 and was to be built for heavy rail. However, 21 years have passed since then and only after changing the concept to LRV and the involvement of Minister Katz has it started moving ahead.

The line is to be built between Rosh-HaAyin and Petakh-Tikva in the centre of Israel, and the city of Ariel located eastward in the heart of Samaria. The city of Ariel, located 22km east of Kessem Interchange (east of Rosh-HaAyin) was founded back in 1978 and declared a city in 1998.

Its forecast for 2030 is for 25,000 citizens; the city has a university where currently 16,000 students are learning; the forecast for 2030 is for 21,600 students, many of whom would live at several points along the proposed alignment.

The city has to its west the 1,300 sq.m. Barkan Industrial Zone built back in 1982 with 140 factories and additional service providers; currently 7,000 are employed here (many of them Palestinians from the nearby villages), to grow soon to 9,000; about 77% of Ariel's citizens work at several points along the alignment.

The reason for the decision to build the line is the fact that, despite Ariel being linked with the centre through Highway No. 5 and served daily by 160 buses, of which 40 running at rush hours, all other transport modes suffer increasing congestion and delay on the highway as they approach Tel-Aviv wasting 277 Million hours annually at a cost of around \$786 Million (NIS 2.8 Billion) caused by bottle-necks at Tel-Aviv alone.

NTA was the first body to be requested by the ministry to design the line due to their experience with the Tel-Aviv Red Line, but they rejected the idea. The ministry has therefore decided to put the mission on the shoulders of Israel Roads Ltd. who gained experience with railway lines designing the Jezreel Valley Line and the Acre – Carmiel line.

The line will run on one of the following three alternative alignments; the maximum gradient will be 3% and minimal curve of 400m:

Alternative alignment "A". Direct link between Ariel and Rosh-HaAyin North railway station to run along Highway 5:

The main centres along the alignment include the Ariel University and several urban stations, the Barkan Industrial Zone, the semi-urban settlement of Elkana, the northern industrial zone of Rosh-HaAyin and the nearby Arab village of Kafr-Kassem, and the Rosh-HaAyin North railway station.

With the exception of Jerusalem Ave. in Ariel, the rest of the alignment runs through the interurban zone under responsibility of Israel Roads Ltd. and an area belonging to Israel Railways Ltd. at Rosh-HaAyin North railway station.

This alignment is the shortest: 29 km long.



Alternative alignment "B" - Ariel and Rosh-Ha-Ayin East Interchange - Segula Petakh-Tikva and Kiryat-Arie Petakh-Tikva:

This alignment of this alternative is identical to that of alternative A as far as Ariel-Rosh-Ha-Ayin North; it will run on future along a planned alignment of the south-eastern part of area Kafr-Kassem planned industrial zone, cross over toll highway #6 and Israel Railways Ltd. Rosh-Ha-Ayin-Kfar-Sava line on grade separations; it will then run westwards parallel to Israel Railways Ltd. Rosh-Ha-Ayin-Petakh-Tikva Segula and Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie stations; it will end at Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie Red Line depot to which it will link.

This 35.5 km alternative alignment will run through several local authorities: Ariel, Rosh-Ha-Ayin, Kafr-Kassem, Southern Sharon, and Petakh-Tikva.



Alternative alignment "C"-Ariel - Rosh-HaAyin East Interchange - Sirkin neighborhood - Petakh-Tikva Central Bus Station:

This alternative will link Ariel with Rosh-HaAyin East interchange and will continue southwards along the streets Ben-Gurion and Kibbutz Galuyot of Rosh-HaAyin, then to road No.444, will run through a grade separation over Highway 6 and the Israel Railways Ltd. Rosh-HaAyin - Kfar-Sava line, through the Sirkin neighbourhood or along road 483 from Ganim Junction.

The line will then run on the level of several streets of Petakh-Tikva, terminating at the city's Central Bus Station where the Red Line will also terminate.

This 34 km alternative alignment will run through several local authorities: Ariel, Rosh-HaAyin, Southern Sharon and Petakh-Tikva; it consists of 3 main sections.

The last word has not yet been said; the issue of expropriation of lands belonging to the Palestinian people living along the alignments has not yet been settled; in international law, much of the alignments run through occupied territory; and finally, many criticize the idea to build the line for light rail rather than heavy, which means that freight which could have been hauled by rail to/from the Barkan Industrial Zone, and thus relieve congestion particularly on Highway 5, will continue to be hauled by road with no relief.

Attached herewith are 2 maps of the alternative alignments:

The continuous thick blue line shows alternative alignment "A".

The thick dotted blue line shows alternative alignment "B".

The densely dotted lines shows alternative alignment "C".

On the extreme right (in black Hebrew letters) is the city of Ariel; on the left (above the densely dotted lines and in black Hebrew letters) is the city of Rosh-Ha-Ayin; left of it, in a thick continues black is Israel Railways Ltd. eastern line running to Kfar-Sava northwards (upwards) and to Lod southwards (downwards); in between is the triangle where the east/west transverse line Tel-Aviv University-Bnei-Brak-Petakh-Tikva stations line merges with the eastern line; the 2 green squares are Rosh-Ha-Ayin North (upper part) and Rosh-Ha-Ayin South (lower part-currently not operated).

As can be seen, sections #1 & #2 are to be used by all alternative alignments; section #3 is unique to "A" only.

Section #4 belongs to "B" only; sections #5 belong to "C" only.

Sections #5a to #5e run in several optional alignments either running to Rosh-Ha-Ayin South and then using the same alignment as that of "B" section #4b, or running through the streets of Petakh-Tikva (sections #5a to 5e) terminating at Petakh-Tikva Central Bus station to be reached also by the Red Line.

The information and maps have been provided by courtesy of the Transport Ministry's spokesman Mr. Avner Ovadya.

The jpg (121 KB) show the 3 alternative alignments in the Western part:

Sections #4a #4b of alternative alignment "B" run parallel to Israel Railways Ltd. Tel-Aviv University-Bnei-Brak-Petakh-Tikva-Rosh-Ha-Ayin ending at the Red Line depot at Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie adjacent to the railway station of the same name.

**More pictures of the proposed Jerusalem Cable Car project. See 121:06 Bi**



# THE FIRST STEPS OF THE PASSENGER RAIL REVOLUTION IN ISRAEL: THE END OF THE 1980's AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990's.

By HAREL EVEN. (All photos by Harel Even).

Rail passenger traffic in Israel increased steadily since the establishment of the state of Israel and reached a peak of 5.2 Million passengers per year by 1962. Lack of Investment led to a continuous decline thereafter for the next three decades: 4.2M passengers in 1970, 3.3M passengers in 1980 and a low point of 2.475M passengers in 1990.

The number of daily services dropped steadily, mainly on services south of Tel Aviv. The closure of Tel Aviv Darom (South) station near Bet Hadar at the city centre and the opening of the new Tel Aviv Darom station near Kibbutz Galuyot Road outside the city in 1970 was the last nail in the coffin.

The practice of publishing yearly Summer and Winter timetables with a fixed period of operation came to an end with the new timetable published on 3.9.1978 and until further notice.

The Tel Aviv Darom – Beer Sheva – Dimona service ceased operation on 1.2.1980. This was a result of a sharp decrease in demand caused by the unattractive location of the station in Tel Aviv combined with an uncompetitive travel time of about 2 hours to Beer Sheva due to severe speed restrictions between Naan and Qiryat Gat. Freight came first in the list of priorities: the demand for phosphate and potash haulage was increasing and in order to cope with limited line capacity two of the daily northbound freight trains to Ashdod Port were double-headed hauling 4,000 gross tons between Dimona and Naan, where a helper engine was coupled on to climb the 1.2% gradient on the way to Lod. At Lod these were divided into two trains for the rest of the journey to Ashdod. These trains used to get higher priority than the passenger trains and it was not seldom that

passenger train no. 813 (16h30 Tel Aviv Darom – Dimona service) had been held for a long time for a crossing on its way southbound.



• *Picture 1: The daily morning crossing at Lod between train no 11 (06h54 Haifa Merkaz – Jerusalem) hauled by EMD G12 no 126 and train no. 512 (07h30 Jerusalem – Tel Aviv Darom) hauled by SAFB G12 no. 102 in the summer of 1980.*

The Tel Aviv Darom – Jerusalem service survived six more years, when train no. 6511 left Tel Aviv Darom platform 3 on Friday 4.4.1986 at 11h30 for the last time, made up of two coaches nos. 616 and 603 and hauled by EMD G12 no. 120. Only 4 passengers (including myself) boarded together with two railway employees and the conductor. Another passenger got on board at Kfar Habad halt. The two railwaymen got off at Lod and two others got on board for Ramla. A young boy got on board the short train as well. No one joined the train at Ramla and Naan. A father and his young daughter boarded at Bet Shemesh where a crossing was made with train no. 6012 (11h30 Jerusalem to Haifa) and the conductors of the two trains replaced each other. At 13h15, 5 minutes ahead of schedule the train arrived at Jerusalem station and the rail service between Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Jerusalem came to a standstill more than 93 years after its first inauguration as a narrow-gauge line.

The following 6.4.1986 timetable presented a new low point with only 28 daily services: 13 daily pairs of trains (14 on Sundays) on the Tel Aviv Merkaz (Central) – Haifa (- Nahariyya) service and one pair on the Haifa – Jerusalem service.

After deleting the last Esslingen ex-DMU coaches from ISR rolling stock list, the coaching stock consisted of only 73 coaches:

- 8 Orenstein & Koppel standard class (1955) no. 51 – 58
- 12 Carel Fouche standard class (1961) no. 71 – 82
- 2 Carel Fouche buffet (1961) no. 83 – 84
- 37 Metalka (Boris Kidri?) standard class (1964/5/6, 1970/2) no. 601-612, 616-630, 634-643
- 6 Metalka (Boris Kidri?) buffet (1964/6) no. 613-615, 631-633
- 8 BREL Ex BR Mk2c Special (1969/70) no. 681-688



• *Picture 2: The last Tel Aviv Darom – Jerusalem train no. 6511 hauled by EMD G12 no. 120 before departure 4.4.1986*

The main-line trains were usually made up of five coaches hauled by an EMD G12, of which the north end coach was an ex BR Mk2c. Seats on this coach were reserved. Unlike the 2+3 sofa seating arrangement on all other ISR coaches the Mk2c coach had 2+2 seats with a table. Travelling on these coaches was smooth and quiet due to their double-glazed windows. The middle coach was usually a buffet car. On Sundays and Fridays trains



• *Picture 3: train no. 35 (14h35 Nahariyya – Tel Aviv Merkaz) hauled by ex-ESR EMD G16 no. 162 ready to depart Haifa Bat-Galim 17.8.1987. This locomotive has been scrapped recently.*

were made up of 8 or 9 coaches in order to cope with the higher demand and that was the case throughout the summer season and the Sukkot and Passover holidays as well. Direct trains on Sunday morning were sometimes hauled by G26CW locomotives.



• *Picture 4: train no. 22 (08h00 Tel Aviv Merkaz – Nahariyya Sunday service) hauled by the brand-new EMD G26CW-2 no. 611 ready to depart Haifa Bat-Galim in the autumn of 1982*

The Haifa – Jerusalem trains were usually made up of three coaches with no buffet car. During the early 1980s a refurbished Metalka (Boris Kidri?) coach – first no. 640 and later also no. 641 - was used as a 'reserved seat' coach with a 2+2 seating arrangement at the northern end of the train. One



• *Picture 5: train no. 24 (09h00 Tel Aviv Merkaz – Haifa Merkaz) hauled by ex-ESR EMD G12 no. 127 ready to depart Haifa Bat-Galim on 17.8.1987. This loco was rarely used to haul passenger trains. Note the first coach is a refurbished Metalka (Boris Kidri?) coach used as a reserved seat coach replacing a Mk2c.*

of them was used as a reserved seat coach on the daily Haifa – Jerusalem service while the other was (later) used as a second 'reserved seat' coach (together with an ex Mk2c) on the 06h30 Nahariyya – Haifa – Tel Aviv service. After an experiment to convert no. 638 to face-to-back seating failed it was also refurbished to a

reserved seat coach with a 2+2 seating arrangement.

#### First signs of Change

The rail connection between Tel Aviv Merkaz and Darom stations had been planned for a long time but the first stage was only implemented by

southbound lane. The new lane was to cross the alignment of the Tel Baruch – Tel Aviv Merkaz section. Therefore a new alignment had to be built in order to connect the main line to a new two-island platform station lying between the Ayalon

the end of 1987. The trigger was the need to build Netivey Ayalon (a cross-city highway)

the morning of 31.12.1987. EMD G12 no. 120 pushed a nine-coach experimental train from the old platforms back north to the temporary junction with the old line and then hauled the train into the new platform no. 4. The aim was to make sure the manual doors were able to open along the new high platforms.

The new platforms were opened to traffic soon before the new station was completed. During February 1988 passengers had to walk between the new platforms and the old terminal in the rain on muddy boards. Tel Aviv Merkaz signal box had to be removed as well. Apart from the station tracks operated by an old SEL Drl-2 relay interlocking, it remotely controlled Tel Baruch and Herzliyya SEL Drl-2 relay interlockings as well. Therefore a new signal box was built below the escalators leading to the new platforms 1-2 and a new SEL SpDrl 72 relay interlocking was installed.

For some time between the initial operation of the new interlocking at the new station and until the replacement of the interlocking at Tel Baruch took place a manual block system was arranged. A special dispatcher was sent daily from Haifa to confirm "line clear" orders, but this procedure caused delays of 5 to 10 minutes to each train – as southbound trains had to stop at Tel Baruch and some northbound train departures were delayed due to the late arrivals from the north. The new station was eventually inaugurated on 3.5.1988.



• *Picture 6: The test train at the new platforms while in the background train no. 26 (10h30 service to Haifa) was departing from the old platforms hauled by EMD G26CW no. 602 31.12.1987.*

canal and the southbound highway lane. The new platforms were connected to the station building by a new concrete footbridge. The first passenger stock arrived at the new station on

During the second half of the 1980's Israel Railways were busy organizing haulage of coal from Ashdod Port to a new coal-fired power station south of Ashkelon named Rutenberg. That included building a new siding connecting Tsomet Pleshet (Pleshet Junction) with Ashdod Pecham - a new coal loading terminal (located north of the port and connected by a conveyer belt to the port dock 9) as well as a new siding from Tsomet Shikma to the new power plant in a Merry-Go-Round shape. New dedicated rolling stock was purchased, including a single EMD GT26CW-2 3,300 hp locomotive and 69 60-ton coal hopper wagons. Before starting the



• *Picture 7: Train no. 23 (06h30 Nahariyya to Tel Aviv Merkaz) hauled by EMD G12 no. 124 was waiting at Tel Baruch for a "Line Clear" order. Note the old and new signals. 8.2.1988*



• *Picture 8: EMD GT26CW-2 no. 701 with an 11-coach train no. 418 (14h35 Nahariyya – Haifa Bat Galim) entering Akko 15.4.1990*

was planned to operate main-line passenger and freight services.

One of the first steps was the timetable change of 2.7.1989 which still comprised 28 daily services but included the following improvements:

- Daily Haifa – Jerusalem service calling at Tel Aviv Merkaz.

- Special coach no. 1 - Conversion of an Orenstein & Koppel standard class coach to a power car. A diesel generator was installed inside one half of the coach in order to power air-conditioning and lighting of the other half as well as of three more coaches. The other half of the coach was renovated with 2+2 upholstered seating with a table and air-condition.

- Special coach no. 2 - Air-conditioning of a Mk2c coach
- Special coach no. 3 - Air-conditioning of a



• *Picture 9: Brand-new Kalmar T44 no. 131 on its first day of commercial operation with train no. 24 (09h00 Tel Aviv Merkaz – Haifa Merkaz) at Haifa Bat-Galim station 9.4.1989.*

This service originated from Akko at 06h05 and arrived Tel Aviv Merkaz at 08h02. A second engine was then coupled to the rear of the train and hauled it back to Tel Baruch where it was uncoupled and from which the original engine continued to Jerusalem

(arrival 10h40). The same arrangement was done on the return trip (16h10 Jerusalem – Haifa Merkaz; 17h10 on Fridays).

- Air-conditioning of a Buffet coach and refurbishment of the buffet, seats and tables.

coal transportation during June 1990 this loco was also used from time to time to haul passenger trains along the coastal main line.

A week later the "Israel Ports and Rail Authority" law was approved by the Knesset – the Israeli parliament. That was the major factor to influence the revival of rail passenger services in Israel in the years to come. The merging of Israel Railways (until then a civil service department of the Ministry of Transport) into the Ports Authority (a statutory authority) was chosen from other options considered by the state including merging into the Egged bus cooperative or Israel Chemicals LTD. A masterplan for the development of Israel Railways was ordered from SOFRETU (a French company for the design and construction of urban transport) with a focus on developing the passenger sector. The financial sources were to come from the PRA own funds. A somewhat awkward motive power acquisition of a Kalmar T44 Bo-Bo centre-cab diesel electric locomotive was implemented in 1989. No. 131, powered by a 1,650 hp EMD 645-12 engine

(arrival 10h40). The same arrangement was done on the return trip (16h10 Jerusalem – Haifa Merkaz; 17h10 on Fridays).

- As a consequence of the above a higher morning peak frequency of 4 departures (instead of 3) from Haifa to Tel Aviv between 06h00 and 07h30 and a higher return evening peak frequency of 4 departures (instead of 3) between 16h00 and 18h30 were offered.

- 7 daily southbound services departing from Nahariyya (instead of 6) and 7 daily northbound services arriving at Nahariyya (instead of 5). This was made possible by planning passenger train crossings at Akko station through the use of a second traffic employee for the local (hand) operation of the mechanical interlocked main points.

At Kishon works the upgrading of the first set of coaches was taking place. Each set included four coaches:

Each set was combined with regular non-air-conditioned coaches. Seats in the special coaches were reservable for a 2 NIS supplement. A new colour scheme made of blue and pale-blue stripes was adopted instead of the brown and white livery presented in 1986. The first set, made up of coaches nos. 615, 637, 687, 51 made its inaugural run as empty stock on 23.10.1989 behind EMD GT26CW-2 no. 701 from Haifa Mizrah (East) to Tel Aviv Merkaz to form a special 09h40 train no. 8024 for the inauguration of the



• *Picture 10: The first air-conditioned train at Herzliyya's refurbished station 23.10.1989*

upgraded Herzliyya station. The upgrading here actually meant a new single main line platform and car parking.

The timetable was slightly amended on 16.9.1990 with an extra pair of daily trains between Haifa Merkaz and Tel Aviv Merkaz increasing the daily offering to 30 services:

- A 07h54 southbound service was added to offer an average morning peak frequency of 30 minutes between 06h00 and 08h30.
- A 16h36 northbound service was added to offer an average evening peak frequency of 40 minutes between 16h00 and 18h35
- The Haifa Merkaz – Jerusalem schedule was cut by 8 minutes southbound and 5 minutes northbound by cancelling the stop at Naan and shortening dwell times at Tel Aviv Merkaz and Tel Baruch
- On the Nahariyya line, Bustan HaGalil and Nahariyya Halt were closed as from 2.12.1990

After years of a declining passenger rail service, it was now clear that a new wind of change was in the air. That included both actual investments in infrastructure and rolling stock:

- Upgrading Binyamina, Hadera Maarav and Netanya stations
- Doubling the Haifa Bat Galim – Kiryat Motzkin line
- Doubling some sections of line between Haifa and Tel Aviv. After long discussions with the Ministry of Finance it was later agreed to double the line from Haifa through to Tel Aviv.
- A new double line connecting Tel Aviv Merkaz and Tel Aviv Darom (known as the Ayalon Corridor) - work began on 18.1.1990.
- Purchase of 10 ABB Scandia IC3 diesel multiple units

These measures were supported by positive results for the year 1991 ending with 2.874M passengers – 16% up on the 1990 figures.

During January 1991 Major-General (retired) Moshe Bar Kochva (nicknamed "Bril") was appointed IR's new General Manager. During this period Operation Desert Storm (known locally as Bay War) took place, during which rail patronage grew substantially when many people evacuated Tel Aviv every afternoon by train to come back the next morning. Bril learned of the new master plan made by the PRA but was eager to attract new passengers by quick and low-cost investments.

The first outcome came up very quickly with a new timetable as from 31.3.1991 which included 38 daily services and the following major changes:

- More fast services between Tel Aviv Merkaz and Haifa (4 instead of 2 on the account of stopping services)

- 4 new daily suburban services between Netanya and Tel Aviv Merkaz and v.v. All the southbound intercity services were now to call at Netanya to support the new suburban service.

- A revival of Tel Aviv Darom station after five years with the introduction of two daily return services to Jerusalem. The Haifa – Jerusalem through service was no longer running.

Next was the opening of a second suburban service – Tel Aviv Darom to Ramla calling at Kfar Habad and Lod. As Ramla used to be merely a halt, trains had to continue to Na'an to reverse. The service commenced on 14.7.1991 and was included in a new timetable.

With no major changes in the north the new timetable offered 52 daily services network-wide.

A third return service was added between Tel Aviv Darom and Jerusalem and four daily return services operated on the new suburban line.

This timetable lasted for only 3 months, to be replaced by a new one as from 15.10.1991. Bril continued analyzing the experience learned and looking for new ideas. The new timetable included 60 daily services (61 on Sundays only) with the following main changes:

- 6 daily direct return services with a record 55 minutes travel time between Haifa Bat Galim and Tel Aviv Merkaz (an average speed of 98 kph).
- More services on the Haifa – Nahariyya line of which 7 daily return suburban services and only 3 daily return through services to and from Tel Aviv. A new halt was built at Attar Yasaf to serve the nearby temporary settlement for new immigrants. Kishon halt, Bustan HaGalil halt and Nahariyya Halt were reopened.

- The need for additional motive power brought back to passenger service older SAFB locomotives to run the suburban services.

- The Netanya – Tel Aviv Merkaz service had been limited to only two daily return services (one of them from and to Binyamina).

- The Tel Aviv Darom – Na'an suburban service ceased operation and an alternative Tel Aviv Darom – Rehovot service was introduced calling at Kfar Habad, Lod, and new halts at Ramla Ma'arav and Beer Ya'acov.

- The Tel Aviv Darom – Jerusalem service was cut back to two daily return services.

As from 21.2.1992 another timetable was published. The cover of the pocket booklet was already illustrating an IC3 DMU. It contained 60 daily services and some lessons learned created the following main changes:

- The number of through Nahariyya – Haifa – Tel Aviv Merkaz services grew substantially at the expense of the suburban service.
- 18 southbound and 17 northbound daily services were offered between Haifa Merkaz and Tel Aviv Merkaz – a record number even in comparison to the 1962/3 timetable!
- The number of direct services between Haifa Bat Galim and Tel Aviv Merkaz was cut back to 5 return services per weekday with some of them exceeding 55 minutes (to 60 and even 65 minutes)

Bril continued looking for ways to revive existing freight-only infrastructures for passenger use. That also included a plan to operate a Zrifin (for Rishon Le-Zion) to Tel Aviv Darom service as well as a Petach-Tiqva to Tel-Aviv Merkaz service. An experimental run for the latter took place on 23.4.1992 when a special train hauled by EMD G12 no. 110, ex-BR Mk2c coach no. 682 and SAFB G12 no. 103 at the rear departed Tel Aviv Merkaz northbound to Tel Baruch. No. 103 then took the lead eastbound to Olamit Junction (km 9 of the Tel Baruch – Rosh-Ha Ayin line)

where it was uncoupled from the train. The short train was then hauled to Petach Tiqva station by no. 110. The intention was to build a triangle at Olamit Junction and to rebuild the derelict triangle at Tel Baruch, but the first was found by the engineering department not feasible and the plan was buried.



• *Picture 11: Heavy snowfall in Jerusalem drove an enhanced timetable on Friday 3.1.1992: EMD G12 no. 112 with special train no. 8504 and G12 no. 104 with train no. 6504 are seen here ready to depart Jerusalem station to Tel Aviv Darom*



• *Picture 12: EMD G12 no. 110 with BREL coach no. 682 as a special train are seen here at Petach Tikva station.*

Nevertheless, two months later saw the reopening of Ashdod Darom (South) station, renamed Ashdod Ad-Halom, to passenger service when a ceremony took place on 16.6.1992 there to inaugurate a new service to Tel Aviv Darom calling at new halts at B'nei Darom (km 133) and Yavne (km 127), Rehovot, Lod (Ramla Ma'arav was cancelled) and Kfar Habad. The new 48-minute-long service started operation on 17.6.1992 and was rescheduled on 29.6.1992 with 3 daily return services plus 2 daily Rehovot – Tel Aviv return services.



• *Picture 13: EMD G12 no. 107 with a special train is seen here ready to depart Ashdod Ad-Halom station to Tel Aviv Darom during the inaugural ceremony on 16.6.1992.*

The new services and growing demand made for strong pressure on the limited rolling stock. As the new IC3 DMUs were to start operation by early 1993 Brill was also looking for short-term initiatives to enlarge seating capacity as well. When told about the existence of some derelict Esslingen intermediate coaches he ordered six of them to be upgraded to become IR nos. 111 to 117. The first re-entered service by mid-December 1992.

Meanwhile Transportation Minister Moshe Katsav was pressuring the PRA GM to make efforts to bring the first IC3 set to Israel before the 1992 elections. The Danish supplier agreed to supply the first DMU earlier for an extra 300,000 US\$ and to finish part of the acceptance tests in Israel. Eventually the inauguration run took place

on 21.6.1992, two days before the elections to the 13th Knesset. The high-ranking guests were invited to travel from Tel Aviv Merkaz to Haifa Bat Galim with the 13h00 direct service which was hauled by EMD G26CW-2 no. 611. Unfortunately, northbound freight no. 314 was halted between Netanya and Kfar Vitkin due to a technical failure and the express train was delayed at Netanya station until the freight train could clear the line into Kfar Vitkin passing loop. After a ceremony held at platform 2 the ABB Scandia IC3 DMU set no. 1 (7403+7203+7



• *Picture 14: The first IC3 DMU at Jerusalem station in the summer of 1992. This was a test run with IR executives on board. GM 'Bril' is seen with his back to the camera. When the train arrived at Jerusalem the southern region union declared a sudden strike and special arrangements had to be taken by the Traffic Department officials on board to allow the DMU to travel to Tel Baruch ("Northern Region Union land"... ) on its way back to Haifa*

003) made its inaugural run from Haifa Bat Galim to Tel Aviv Merkaz and a new era began for Israel Railways Passenger sector. The brand-new stylish Nordic DMU, originally designed to fit Danish ferries, brought a silent high-quality air-conditioned fast (up to 160 KPH) ride with new characteristics never seen here before:

- Automatic internal and external doors
- Passenger Information System (electronic signs announcing next station and public address)
- Refreshment trolley and a kitchen compartment
- Vacuum toilet system

. A special train made of five IC3 sets carried the many guests to the 100 Years Centennial ceremony at Jerusalem station on 21.10.1992 calling at Haifa Merkaz, Haifa Bat Galim, Binyamina, Hadera Ma'arav, Netanya and Tel-Aviv Merkaz. The commercial IC3 service was due to commence on Monday, 23.11.1992. Four days earlier Brill died suddenly of a heart attack. At first three daily return direct services between Haifa and Tel-Aviv were offered (One return stopping service on Fridays only).

The commercial opening of the Ayalon Corridor as a single line took place with a new timetable on 31.1.1993. That marked the end of Tel Aviv Darom as a passenger station, as the new line ran parallel to it, by-passing the platforms.

The new relay interlocking at Tel-Aviv Darom had not been commissioned yet so trains were operated between Tel-Aviv Merkaz and Lod (North cabin) by a temporary electric token block system.

A single through IC3 service crossing Ayalon was operated daily from Haifa to Ashdod Ad-Halom. Connections were now available at Tel-Aviv Merkaz between northern and southern lines. For the first time ever, the fastest travel duration between Haifa (Bat Galim) and Jerusalem was shorter than 3 hours.

IC3 services were marked in the public timetable including:

- Six daily return (one on Fridays) Haifa Merkaz – Tel-Aviv Merkaz services (Express and Semi Express services). IC3s had now replaced the special refurbished loco-hauled rakes marked by a red strip.
- One return service Haifa Merkaz – Tel-Aviv Merkaz on Saturdays – That was the first Saturday service since 26.8.1978.
- One daily return suburban Tel-Aviv Merkaz – Netanya service.
- Two daily services (two daily return on Fridays) Ashdod Ad-Halom – Tel-Aviv Merkaz.
- One daily service (Haifa Merkaz -) Tel-Aviv Merkaz – Ashdod Darom.

The growing demand for the rail service from Rehovot in contrast to the relatively-limited

demand from Ashdod and the shortage of rolling stock led to the closure of the service south of Rehovot in favour of a shorter turnaround and higher frequency on the Rehovot – Tel-Aviv service: With the new Summer 1993 timetable as from 19.6.1993 and until 10.9.1993 (actually until 17.12.1993) five southbound and six northbound daily services were offered – most of them operated by IC3 trains.

Meanwhile doubling works had been progressing along the coastal line between Kiryat Mozkin and Haifa and between Binyamina and Tel-Aviv Darom. The following sections were opened to traffic before the end of 1995:

1. 13.4.1993: Netanya – Bet Yehoshua:
2. 15.7.1993: Bet Yehoshua – Shefayim
3. 28.11.1993: Herzliyya – Tel Baruch
4. 12.12.1993: Haifa Mizrah – Tsomet Zvulun
5. 16.12.1993: Tel-Aviv Merkaz – Tel-Aviv Darom & Shefayim - Herzliyya
6. 22.2.1994: Tsomet Zvulun – Kishon
7. 14.2.1995: Kfar Vitkin – Netanya
8. 7.3.1995: Hadera Ma'arav – Kfar Vitkin
9. 30.5.1995: Binyamina – Hadera Ma'arav

It is worthy of mention that works demanded disturbance to normal traffic during many weekends in order to cut the old line and connect the new tracks and points as well as replacing the old SEL Drl-2 relay interlockings (from Haifa Mizrah southbound) or mechanical interlockings (from Haifa Mizrah northbound) with new SpDrl 72-2 relay interlockings. Taking into operation of a new section was also dependent on the opening of a pedestrian subway and a second platform at passenger stations along that section. Maximum line speed was raised in stages from 105 KPH to 120 KPH and later on to 130, 140 and eventually 150 KPH.

The operation of a continuous double track between Tel

Baruch and Netanya by 16.12.1993 allowed the introduction two days later of a new Winter 1993/94 timetable offering two new services:

- Suburban Netanya – Tel-Aviv Merkaz service throughout the day with 15 northbound and 13 southbound daily services (a few of which to / from Rehovot).
- Northbound Express services from Tel-Aviv Merkaz until 23h00 (instead of 20h00).

Minor changes were introduced in a new 1994/95 timetable as of 1.10.1994. After the temporary cancellation of stopping at Herzliyya a new stopping pattern there was introduced as of 28.2.1995. The Rehovot service was upgraded from a peak-hour-only service to a service operated throughout the day with the introduction of the Summer 1995 timetable as of 1.4.1995.

In order to allow the refurbishment of the complete loco-hauled rolling stock at Ha'argaz works at Zrifin (Sarafand) it was decided that Ha'argaz would purchase eight second-hand ex-SNCF Carel Fouché coaches (built 1958/65) and upgrade them mainly by installing air-conditioning. These coaches were unloaded at Kishon Port on 15.12.1994 and brought into service by September 1995, allowing eight IR coaches to be taken out of service at any given time for an upgrade at Zrifin. The ex-SNCF coaches were numbered 91 – 98 and always operated together with a power coach in a seven- to nine-coach formation.

#### Summary

IR had come a long way between its lowest point in 1990 through to 1995.

Passenger numbers increased by 70% to 4.845 Million passengers per year. Throughput increased by 57% from 170,000 passenger-km to 267,000 passenger-km. The introduction of suburban services and increased use by commuters brought the average trip distance down from 67 km to 55 km.

These modest first good figures after many years of deterioration would be very important later on to convince decision-makers in Israel to invest heavily in the passenger railway sector in Israel in the years to come.

11.5.2018



- *Picture 15: EMD G12 no. 116 was accelerating on 8.7.1992 with train no. 10 (the direct 15h00 Tel-Aviv Merkaz to Haifa Merkaz service) made up of refurbished coaching stock specially marked by red stripes noting it as a direct service. IC3 DMU no. 1 waiting at Tel Baruch on a test run and would soon be replacing red-marked loco-hauled trains on this route. Double-tracking works are well seen. Note how Tel Baruch station has changed in less than five years compared with picture 7.*



# OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

## A. QATAR.

### DOHA TRAMS.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 06.03.2018:

"A 2km circular tramway is under construction in Doha's Msheireb Downtown area with opening planned for September.

The tramway will serve a 'smart city' which is being developed at a cost of US\$5.5Bn by the Qatar Foundation's Msheireb Properties business with the aim of reviving Doha's old commercial centre. The developer appointed US company TIG/m to design, build, operate and maintain the tramway, which is intended to reduce car usage by providing a convenient travel option including a connection with the future metro network.

Trams will run anti-clockwise around the single-track loop, which will have nine stops and a 400m 'hop-on, hop-off' zone. Services will run every 6 min. between 06.00 and 01.00 from Sunday to Thursday, and between 13.00 and 01.00 on Fridays and Saturdays. Trams will have priority at junctions, there will be real-time passenger information, and no fares will be charged.

TIG/m's factory in California has produced three single-section 1,435mm gauge trams for the line. These are powered by onboard batteries and incorporate regenerative braking. Ancillary power is provided by an LNG generator.

'This is a very exciting project for us,' said TIG/m President Brad Read. 'This project is creating green jobs for our community in California and it furthers our mission of providing sustainable, ecologically friendly transit systems around the world.'

## B. TURKEY.

### (i). PRIVATE ORE SERVICES.

From 'Op de Rails' December 2017, thanks to Marc Stegeman; translation from Dutch by Editor:

"The first private operator has commenced operations in Turkey. This is Omsan Lojistik, part of the Oyak investment group. The first contract involves the movement of iron ore from the Erdemir Madencilik mine which also belongs to the Oyak Group, between Demirdag and the steel industry in Payas in the south of the country, not far from the Syrian border. This comprises 2 million tons annually, 8% of the entire freight traffic on Turkish rails. The trains run 550km in each direction. Fifteen electric locos of series E43000 have been leased; They come from a series of 45 which were built at the end of the 1980's by Tülomsas/Toshiba. The Bo-Bo-Bo locos have a power of 3180kW. In addition 350 wagons have been hired from TCDD Tasimacilik."

### (ii). TURKEY - GEORGIA LINK.

From the same source as above: "On 30 October 2017 the first celebrations took place in Alat, a port city near the Azerbaijani capital Baku, regarding a rail link to Kars and in Turkey. This will run via Tbilisi in Georgia, is 846km long and will fulfil an important function as part of a through route for freight traffic between China, the Middle East and Europe around the Mediterranean. During the ceremony a central event was the arrival of a goods train from Köksetav, (Kazakhstan) which had crossed the Caspian Sea by means of a train ferry. After the festivities the train, which was carrying 600 tons of grain in containers, continued by the new route. Four days later the cargo arrived at the Turkish city of Mersin some 2000km away. The containers did have to change their trains along the way; in Akhalkalaki in the West of Georgia is the transfer from 1520mm to standard gauge.

Much of the new corridor involved the modernisation of existing infrastructure. In Georgia the 153km line between Marabda and Akhalkalaki had to be reactivated and between Akhalkalaki and Kars 109km of new track has been laid, 79km of this on Turkish territory. The Turkish – Georgian border is passed near Kartsakhi with a 4.4km long tunnel.

Some six and a half million tons of traffic is expected in the first year, rising to 17M tons by 2034 then possibly growing to 50M tons. In order to increase track capacity the Turkish government has already announced it will double the line between Kars and the Georgian border."

### (iii). ESKISEHIR TRAMS.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 08.03.2018: "Škoda Transportation has delivered the first of 14 ForCity Classic trams that it is supplying to Eskişehir.

The metre-gauge tram is to undergo 2,000 to 3,000km of dynamic testing in Eskişehir, with some of the fleet also being tested on the Bratislava network.

Škoda was selected in 2016 for the €26m contract to supply trams equipped with batteries to allow off-wire operation. This would be used on a planned 1km section that will have no catenary. The unidirectional low-floor trams are 30m long with capacity for 276 passengers. They have four double doors and two single doors, as well as air-conditioning."

### (iv). IZMIR: SECOND TRAM LINE OPENS.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 27.03.2018: "The Konak tram line in Izmir opened to passengers at 10.00 on March 24. Travel is free for the first 45 days.

The 12.8km route runs from Fahrettin Altay metro station in the west to Halkapınar metro and Izban station in the east via Konak metro station and Alsancak railway station. Grassed track is used along Mustafa Kemal Coastal Boulevard, and the line serves 19 stops.

Gülermak was the contractor on the TL450m project. Services initially run every 15 min from 06.00 to midnight, although 3 min peak headways are planned. The line has a design capacity 11,400 passengers/h per direction.

The Konak Line uses a fleet of 21 Hyundai Rotem trams ordered in 2014 under an 8.7bn won contract that also includes 17 trams for the 8.8km Karşıyaka Line, which opened in April 2017. The five-section low-floor trams are 32m long and have capacity for 285 passengers, including 48 seated. They were assembled at Eurotem's factory in Adapazarı and contain 85% local content."

### (v). HAYDARPASA TO BE REOPENED?

From 'Fahrplancenter News' 58 p.18. "According to several reports in the Turkish media from February 2018 the project to transform the historic station at Haydarpasa, the Asiatic section of Istanbul, into a purely commercial centre have been abandoned. Instead it will serve once again as a terminus for both long-distance and local trains. In 2010 the roof of the building was badly damaged by fire and in 2013 all rail traffic ceased. Since then the tracks in the platform serve only for stabling damaged rolling stock, including many electric multiple units of the 'S-Bahn' urban network, but also long-distance carriages. Already in 2012, when the State Railways announced their plans to sell the station, this was placed on the list of "Threatened Cultural treasures of the World", for the station, over a hundred years old, was the starting point for the famous Bagdadbahn. Local architectural associations put pressure on the TCDD and the relevant ministries and at last it was decided to give up on the project. According to the latest plans of the TCDD the work

for the restoration of the station should begin in Spring 2018 and around a year and a half later (i.e. in autumn 2019) the first trains should arrive here again.

It is envisaged that as well as the YHT high-speed trains also other long-distance trains and the 'S-Bahn' local trains should work from and to Haydarpasa. It will take some time still until all the trains can serve the station again, but for the TCDD this will also be an advantage, for especially the long-distance traffic suffers from the need to work only from and to Pendik, and the connecting services from there have proved to be inadequate and unreliable."

#### (vi). TEN MORE SIEMENS VELARO SETS.

From 'R.G.I.' "National operator TCDD Ta??mac?l?k has formally signed a contract for preferred bidder Siemens to supply a further 10 Velaro high-speed trainsets. The contract announced on April 13 is worth around €340m, including three years of maintenance, repair and cleaning.

The latest order will take TCDD's Velaro fleet to 17 trainsets. The first was procured in May 2013, when a Velaro D high-speed trainset was taken from Siemens' production line and refitted for operation in Turkey. TCDD then awarded Siemens a contract to supply a further six eight-car trainsets, which operate between Ankara, Konya and Eski?ehir. Tenders for an additional 10 eight-car trainsets were called in 2014, but a contract has only now been signed.

'Our Velaro family is continuing to grow and write new chapters in its unique success story', said CEO of Siemens' Mobility Division Sabrina Soussan when the contract signing was announced on April 13. 'With its capacity and comfort, the Velaro remains a benchmark for high speed trains. In Turkey, the train can fully utilise all its strengths and is already proving this in daily operation.'"

#### (vii). DURMAZLAR TRAMS WITHOUT CATENARY.

From 'R.G.I.' 05.04.2018: Durmazlar trams to run off-wire. "Alstom announced on April 5 that it is to supply its APS ground-level power supply technology for tram route T5, which is under construction in Istanbul. Alstom will also provide staff training and a two-year warranty.

APS uses an embedded third rail to supply power to trams, removing the need for overhead wires. The conductive segments are activated only when a tram is passing over them.

Bursa-based manufacturer Durmazlar signed a contract on January 19 to supply 30 trams for the 10km line being built along the southern edge of the Golden Horn from Eminönü to Alibeyköy Cep Otogari. Construction began on March 20 2017 and is being undertaken by Do?u? ?n?aat under a €153m contract signed in October 2016.

Due to open in May 2019, the 14-stop route has a design capacity of 120,000 passengers per day."

#### (viii). ANKARA SUBURBAN LINE REOPENS.

From: 'R.G.I.' 13.05.2018.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Binali Yildirim attended a ceremony on April 12 to mark the reopening of the Ba?kentray suburban line in Ankara following its upgrade.

The 37km route between Kaya in the east and Sincan in the west, operated with a fleet of 32 three-car Hyundai Rotem electric multiple-units, has been remodelled to segregate services. There are now five tracks between Sincan and Behiçbey: two for Balkentray trains, two for high speed services and one for conventional long-distance trains. This increases to six tracks between Behiçbey and Ankara, with an extra track available for conventional services. Between Ankara and Kayas there are two suburban tracks, with high speed and conventional long-distance services having one each.

All 24 level crossings on the route have been removed and all 23 stations have been rebuilt to improve accessibility. Electrification equipment has been renewed and signalling upgraded. The signalling supplied by Thales enables 2½ min headways, although 5 min peak headways are planned; services are initially running at 15 min intervals.

The end-to-end journey time for suburban services has been reduced from 59 min to 49 min, with high speed trains now travelling between Ankara and Sincan in 11 min rather than 17 min. Ridership on Ba?kentray is estimated to grow to 520,000 passengers a day.

Work on the TL1·23bn project started on July 11 2016 and was undertaken by a Gülermak-Kolin consortium. Test running started on February 28."

#### (ix). ISTANBUL METRO LINE M1 CAPACITY INCREASE.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 30.04.2018: "Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality expects to call tenders on May 15 to increase capacity on metro Line M1. The municipality expects the work on the 21km route to take 2½ years.

All station platforms are to be lengthened to accommodate five-car trainsets instead of four-car maximum now, and all the stations apart from the five most recently opened are to be rebuilt. An additional platform will be built at Kocatepe. Signalling, electrification and tunnel ventilation systems are to be renewed.

Istanbul's oldest metro line carries 400,000 passengers a day, making it the second-busiest in the city. Since it opened in 1989, the city's population has more than doubled."

#### (x). DURMAZLAR TRAMS EXPORT ORDER TO POLAND.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 17.05.2018: "Sole bidder Durmazlar has been selected to supply up to 24 trams to Olsztyn, the city announced on May 16.

The base order covers 12 trams for 107·9M z?oty. This would rise to 206·2M z?oty if all options were to be exercised.

The first two trams are to be delivered in 21 months from contract signing, with deliveries of the

base order to be completed five months later. The additional rolling stock is needed for a planned 6km extension to Pieczewo district, which would add to the 11km starter line which opened in 2015.

The trams will be 2.500mm wide with capacity for 210 passengers, including 40 seated. With a noise output of 73·6dB, they would be quieter than Olsztyn's current fleet of 15 Solaris Tramino vehicles. The trams would have four sets of double doors and two single doors."

## C. DUBAI.

**METRO RED LINE EXTENSION.** From: 'Metro Report Intl.' 23.03.2018:

"UAE: Financial close for Phase 2 of the Route 2020 project to extend the Dubai Metro's Red Line by 15km from Nakheel Harbour & Tower to the Expo 2020 site was achieved on March 20.

Banco Santander, First Abu Dhabi Bank, HSBC Bank Middle East, Intesa Sanpaolo and Standard Chartered Bank acted as mandated lead arrangers and facility providers.

The Phase 1 conventional financing of US\$1·1Bn was completed in September 2017, comprising a 10-year facility of 4bn dirham amortising over six years from 2022.

Phase 2 of the financing comprises a 17-year 5·2Bn dirham loan supported by guarantees from French export credit agency Bpifrance Assurance Export and Spanish export credit agency CESCE, amortising over 14 years from 2020.

Squire Patton Boggs acted on behalf of the government of Dubai in closing the 'complex', transaction, which it said was one of the largest infrastructure financing deals in the Middle East.

Director General of Dubai's Department of Finance, Abdulrahman Saleh Al Saleh, said the 'encouraging response' to the financing illustrated 'the strong confidence of international banks in Dubai's economy'. He said the government 'continues to examine ways to optimise its funding strategy', and export credit agency financing had helped to 'achieve long-term financing at competitive rates while at the same time allowing us to manage our budget proactively and in a fiscally responsible manner'.

The metro extension is being built by the Expolink consortium of Alstom and civil works contractors Acciona of Spain and Gülermak of Turkey under a design and build contract awarded by Dubai's Roads & Transport Authority in 2016. Thales is providing signalling systems. Construction got underway at the end of 2016, and services are scheduled to start on May 20 2020, five months before the opening of the Dubai Expo."

## D. IRAN.

### (i). LINK WITH AZERBAIJAN OPENED.

From 'Railway Gazette International' 29.03.2018:

"The rail link between Astara in Azerbaijan and similarly-named town on the Iranian side of the

border was officially opened with a ceremony on March 29. Presidents Hassan Rouhanid of Iran and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan participated via a video link from the Azerbaijan – Iran Business Forum which they were attending in Baku.

Around 7,600 tonnes of freight has already been carried on the route since the operation of the first freight train on February 8.

The 10km extension of Azerbaijan's 1,524mm gauge rail network runs for around 8.5 km in Azerbaijan and 1.5km in Iran, including a 82.5m long, 8.0m high and 11.8m wide bridge over the River Astarachay which forms the border. It was built at cost of around US\$60M, financed by Azerbaijan, including a 35 ha freight transshipment facility which will be operated by Azerbaijan's national railway ADY under a 25-year BOT agreement with Iran's national railway RAI.

The new line forms part of the North–South International Transport Corridor which is being developed to link northern Europe with the Indian Ocean. Azerbaijan is investing US\$500m in the construction of a 167km standard gauge line to link the Astara terminal with the Iranian rail network in Rasht.

'The North-South transit route which the two countries are currently participating in as part of the implementation of the Rasht – Astara Railway project means a more convenient, cheaper and shorter route for the two countries, the countries of the region, and even for Asia, Europe and Africa, indicating that our co-operation is in the interest of the peoples of the region and the world', said President Rouhani.

President Aliyev said the Astara – Rasht railway would be 'built in a short span of time, opening new opportunities for the entire Eurasian region.'

#### (ii). MASHHAD METRO LINES LINKED.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 10.05.2018: "The two hitherto isolated metro lines in Mashhad were connected on May 7 when President Hassan Rouhani opened an extension of Line 2.

The 2km extension runs southwest from Shohada to Shariati, where interchange is provided with Line 1. The first phase of Line 2 opened in 2017. Tunnelling on a third line is currently underway, and a fourth line has been approved."

#### (iii). LINK IRAN – UZBEKISTAN – AFGHANISTAN:

From 'R.G.I.' 18.04.2018: "Uzbekistan has pledged to provide US\$500m to part-fund the construction of a 657 km railway from Mazar-i-Sharif to Herat, Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance said following an international conference on Afghanistan held in Tashkent on March 26-27.

The proposed line would be an extension of the existing 75km route from the Uzbek border to Mazar-i-Sharif. It would connect in Herat with a railway which is currently under construction from Iran, and thus provide a transit route from Central Asia, and potentially China, to Iran and Europe.

The Afghanistan Railway Authority estimates that the new line would cost US\$1.8bn. The government is seeking additional funding from other countries, and has held talks with Iran and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, while China has also expressed interest in the project.

A contractor could be selected in the near future, according to AfRA, and construction would take two years. AfRA estimates that Afghanistan would earn about US\$40m/year from the line."

#### (iv). TRADE RESTRICTIONS PROBLEMS FOR METRO CAR DELIVERIES:

"A deal for Stadler Rail to supply rolling stock for two of the country's metro networks is expected to collapse as a result of US President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the 2015 nuclear limitation agreement and reimpose sanctions.

At the end of February, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported that Stadler had signed an agreement with the Iranian Organization for Industrial Development & Renovation to deliver 960 metro cars with an estimated value of around SFr1.3bn. This covered 728 vehicles for Tehran and 232 for Karaj, with deliveries expected to start in 2020. The company subsequently clarified that it held an exclusive letter of intent, but emphasised that the final contract remained to be negotiated, although it had received an export licence and risk insurance from the Swiss government.

Stadler's Deputy CEO and Head of Marketing & Sales Peter Jenelten told local media on May 26 that the Swiss manufacturer had 'put the project on hold' in the light of the US sanctions. With the deal expected to collapse as a result, he anticipated that the order would now go to Chinese suppliers, who had previously manufactured metro and suburban trainsets for Tehran.

'The Iranians cannot wait forever', he said. 'That's why the Chinese are likely to take the metro car order away from us.' As current President of the Swissrail industry association, Jenelten said it was particularly 'frustrating that all these efforts have now been for nothing'."

News from 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 58 Dec. 2017-April 2018.

We begin by wishing the editor of this one-man operation, Samel Rachdi in Winterthur, all the best as he is facing tremendous health problems which show no sign of abating but is facing them all with great courage and determination. He gathers information somehow from obscure parts of the world of which most people have not even heard, and can bring updates on the construction or planning or demolition of railways in deepest Africa or the most remote parts of South America... and he is happy to let this information be shared.

## E. SYRIA: REBIRTH OUT OF THE RUINS.

From p.17: "Bit by bit, Syrian railwaymen are managing to get their railway working again. After it had already been reported that passenger traffic between Aleppo and Jibrin had been resumed at the beginning of 2017, further details have emerged, but the state railway CFS still faces many enormous problems.

Already at the beginning of the war the Assad regime had had the main workshops at Jibrin evacuated and also many vehicles were brought to the city of Tartous and other places along the coast, areas still controlled by the regime. This explains why the local train Aleppo – Jibrin, which still shuttles twice a day, comprises indeed one of the modern Korean 5-car diesel railcar sets, but must be hauled by a locomotive of Soviet origin, for the spare parts for the multiple unit are still in Tartous. This is proving an obstacle to the railway being able to introduce further trains from Aleppo.

On the coast, the situation looks better. Goods traffic on the 96km line Latakia – Jableh – Banyas – Tartous has established itself firmly. Almost everything that has to be transported between these places goes by rail! Since there is sufficient rolling-stock here, is this not a problem. The government of President Assad refers frequently to the "highly satisfactory transport results." For some time now individual passenger trains had also worked over this section, but from August 2017 (exact date unknown) two daily passenger train pairs work between the four towns. One pair (Trains 21 & 22) is formed of a Korean multiple unit set, the other (Trains 282/281) is worked with a conventional set comprising a loco and passenger coaches built in the DDR. Unfortunately the new home page of the railway does not give exact timetable information, but the trains run in each direction in the morning and the afternoons and together with the intermediate halts the total journey time is only a little over one hour, which implies that the infrastructure has been repaired.

In September 2017 the CFS began, with Russian assistance, to repair the line from Homs to Tartous, whereby it must be stated the destruction was especially extensive in the area of the city of Homs. The initial aim is to repair the line running south of Homs and to the south-east, since the mining of phosphates in the mines of Khunayfis and As-Sawwanah-ash-Sharqiyah (ca. 40-50km south-west of Palmyra) is to be resumed fully during 2018.

Since the area around Palmyra was under IS control for a period, parts of the mining equipment have also been damaged or destroyed and Syrian mine workers began repair work here in September 2017. The State railways are therefore concentrating their strength on the reconstruction of this ca. 300km corridor. The Russian investors are calculating on an annual transport demand of ca. 650,000 tons of raw phosphates for export via the port at Tartous, and as soon as the processing of phosphates in the works at Homs can be resumed approximately the same amount should be extracted here too and will need transporting. In order to attract railway workers to the ruined region round Palmyra and animate them to work here, they receive salaries of ca. 75,000 Syrian Pounds per month (ca. €300.00), which is almost 100% more than current railwaymen's pay elsewhere, according to the local press."

## F. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i). From 'Fahrplancenter News' 58, p.18: "The official opening of the high-speed Haramain line between the holy cities of Mekka and Medina took place on 31.12.2017. [Though see below!] The first timetabled services, still without any official tariff, began on 12.01.2018 with one train pair on Fridays and Saturdays. From around mid-March 2018 there should be two or three daily train pairs; only from mid-2018 will the service take on its final form, since until then the intermediate stations at Jeddah and at King Abdul Aziz Airport must be completed. The final timetable will show (according to season – there will be differences between the pilgrimage season and other times) up to 35 train pairs. The Talgo trains will work at up to 300km/h (technically they can reach 350km/h) and should be able to cover the entire 450km line with the intermediate halts in around two hours, which will form a great improvement against the buses which normally require six hours. Construction of the line and the trains has, it is officially reported, cost ca. €6.7 Billion. The aim of the Saudi government however lay in transferring the majority of the annual pilgrim traffic, as well as regular traffic, onto rail, which will save a large amount of fuel and also have a positive effect on the environment."

### (ii). MARKET STUDY FOR THE HARAMAIN LINE.

We confess this seems to be rather a late point to be carrying out such a study! But 'R.G.I.' for 18.04.2018 reports: "Haramain High Speed Rail project concessionaire Al-Shoula Consortium has appointed Royal HaskoningDHV to carry out a detailed market study for the line. This is intended to help Saudi Railways Organization predict passenger numbers and needs, and support the development of targeted operations strategies to offer the most suitable and efficient services.

Surveys are to be carried out at strategic locations including road check points, bus and taxi interchanges in Makkah and Jeddah, the terminals at King Abdulaziz International Airport and onboard the trains once the service starts. The surveys will examine current travel patterns to help predict the

profile of potential passengers, including their economic characteristics and expectations.

Following the surveys, a comprehensive technical analysis will be carried out to examine future travel demand and produce passenger forecasts. This will include considering the needs of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

'Royal HaskoningDHV has been working in the Middle East for over 50 years and our local knowledge of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, combined with our international expertise in railways and transport planning, makes us well placed to undertake this important market study', said Royal HaskoningDHV's Director of Transport & Planning Dr Marwan Al-Azzawi on April 17.

On April 17 Saudi Railway Co CEO Dr Bashar Al Malek told the SmartRail conference in Amsterdam that Haramain High Speed Rail services would 'commence within the next few weeks.'

### (iii). HARAMAIN LINE TO OPEN IN AUGUST?

It is clear that some things are not going well with this scheme. This is from 'R.G.I.' 02.05.2018:

"August 31 has been suggested as the new target date for the start of commercial services on the 'Haramain' high speed line between Makkah and Madinah. Opening had previously been expected in mid-March, but it became clear in February that delays to the completion of five of the line's three stations would force postponement.

Negotiations have continued between authorities in Saudi Arabia and the Al-Shoula Consortium responsible for the €6-7bn railway systems contract to try and agree when the 450km railway would be ready to start commercial operations. SAR Chief Executive Dr Bashar AlMalik told 'Railway Gazette' in April that he was hopeful that services could begin 'within the next few weeks'. This leaves open the possibility of commercial operations commencing before this year's Hajj pilgrimage starting on August 19.

Spanish media have reported that the Saudi authorities may be willing to accept a further delay on the firm understanding that the railway is up and running no later than the end of this year. The August 31 date was leaked to 'El Independiente' but has not been officially confirmed. The digital publication also reported that the Al-Shoula consortium may be dissolved and replaced by a new entity responsible for operations and maintenance that would include Spanish national operator RENFE and infrastructure manager ADIF."

### (iv). TEST RUNNING ON RIYADH METRO BEGINS:

From 'R.G.I.' 05.04.2018. "Trials began on the Riyadh Metro on April 4 using an Alstom Metropolis trainset. The six-line network is due to open next year. Work is being undertaken in three packages.

Lines 1 and 2 are being designed and built by the BACS consortium led by Bechtel and including Almbani General Contractors, Consolidated Contractors Company and Siemens under a US\$9.45bn contract. Siemens is supplying 45 four-car trainsets for Line 1 and 29 two-car sets for Line 2 from its Wien plant in Austria.

ArRiyadh New Mobility is designing and building Line 3 under a US\$5.21bn contract. The consortium comprises two groups: the Electrical Work Group comprising Ansaldo STS and Bombardier Transportation, and the Civil Work Group of Salini-Impregilo, Larsen & Toubro and Nesma. Bombardier Transportation is supplying 47 two-car sets from its Sahagún plant in Mexico.

The FAST consortium led by FCC and including Samsung C&T, Alstom, Strukton, Freyssinet Saudi Arabia, Typsa and Setec is to build lines 4, 5 and 6 for US\$7.82bn. Alstom is supplying 69 two-car driverless trainsets from its Katowice factory in Poland.

Project promoter Arriyadh Development Authority expects to award naming rights contracts for 15 stations in the next few months."

## G. EGYPT.

### THALES GETS SIGNALLING CONTRACT CAIRO – BENHA.

From 'R.G.I.' 19.04.2018: "Egyptian National Railways has awarded Thales a contract to modernise signalling and safety equipment on the 48km Cairo – Benha section of the main line from Cairo to Alexandria. This builds on ongoing work on the Benha – Alexandria section of the corridor, and will enable the traffic control centre to manage the whole route.

The aim is to raise the maximum speed from 120km/h to 160km/h, and support a predicted doubling in passenger and freight traffic volumes on the route, which current carries more than 25 million passengers per year.

Announcing the latest contract on April 19, Thales said it would supply nine electronic interlockings, 11 sets of level crossing equipment, and also provide interfaces to existing assets, overhaul the associated power supply systems, refurbish technical buildings and construct new structures in different locations.

In 2017 ENR award Thales a three-year contract to modernise signalling and telecoms on the 180km Asyut – Nagaa Hammadi section of the Cairo – Aswan corridor. Thales entered the Egyptian signalling market in 2013, when it won an initial contract on the Alexandria – Cairo route."

## H. EGYPT – PALESTINE – ISRAEL.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' 58 p.13:

"The history of this line reflects the fateful situation of the region. A railway first linked Egypt to... Palestine at the time of the First World War; but the bridge over the Suez Canal was considered an obstruction to shipping and therefore was dismantled afterwards. In the second world war the line was rebuilt and even linked with the Turkish railway network through Lebanon. But in 1947 a ship collided with the bridge in the Canal and the line was closed again as a through route. In 1954 traffic was resumed over a new swing bridge, but the Sinai War of 1956 interrupted the line again. In 1963 there was a reopening but the Six Day War of 1967 once more interrupted the line and this time

also much track material was taken and used for fortifications. After 2001 Egypt began once more with the rebuilding of the line, but soon afterwards construction of the second Suez Canal led to the section becoming isolated from the main network of the country and this situation exists further today.

Now Egypt is planning two tunnels under the Canal (near Ismailia and Port Said) and it would suit Israel's long-term political strategy to resume rail traffic. However, this depends largely upon the future of Palestine, whether the line should once again run via Gaza. Israel's preference is for a line from Egypt via Israel, Lebanon and Syria to Turkey and thereby once more to link with Europe and Asia; but only the future will show whether this line linking three continents will ever become reality again."

## I. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

### ETIHAD RAIL AWARDS CONSULTANCY CONTRACT.

From 'R.G.I.' 24.05.2018: "UAE: Etihad Rail has selected Egis to provide project management consultancy services for the ongoing development of the country's rail network and connections to neighbouring GCC states.

Under the contract announced on May 23, Egis will assist Etihad Rail with the development of stages 2 and 3, which are now scheduled for completion by 2024. The project promoter had begun work on Stage 2 in 2015, but the tendering process was suspended in January 2016 pending a review of the overall timescale for the GCC railway programme.

Etihad Rail's 264km Stage 1 is now in operation for freight traffic, connecting the Shah and Habshan gas fields in southern Abu Dhabi with the Gulf port of Ruwais. Stage 2 would add a western extension from Ruwais to the Saudi border at Ghweifat and an eastern line from Tarif to Al Ain on the border with Oman, which would form part of the main GCC rail corridor, plus lines heading north to Au Dhabi city and the port of Jebel Ali near Dubai, totalling around 600km.

Stage 3 would serve the northern emirates, reaching Dubai central, Port Saqr and Khor Fakkan, adding a further 250 route-km. Once completed, the network of more than 1,000 route-km would serve around 40 freight terminals and passenger stations, along with stabling and maintenance depots.

Egis says its PMC team will work 'in close co-operation with Etihad Rail', bringing international project management experience and technical expertise. The 'project ownership team' will supervise various aspects of the project, including the engineering consultant responsible for preliminary design and construction supervision, the future design-and-build contractors, and any third parties.

Egis is currently providing project management for the Red Line metro extension in Qatar and design, engineering and construction services for a 'scalable-capacity' autonomous shuttle network in Dubai."

## J. ARABIAN PENINSULA : RUSSIAN INTEREST IN NETWORK CONSTRUCTION.

From 'RT' ('Russia Today') website 06.06.2018:

"Russian Railways is interested in an opportunity to construct the Trans-Arabian Railway, a gigantic project that seeks to connect Gulf countries with a 2,100km of track.

"Saudi Arabia approved a program of infrastructure development until 2030. It contains a railway component and the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Saudi Arabia is currently preparing a tender for implementation of this project. A consultant has been selected; we received a request for our proposals concerning performance of the company and terms," First Deputy CEO of the Russian railway operator Aleksandr Misharin told TASS news agency.

One of the projects under consideration is the Trans-Arabian Railway, which will be built through Saudi Arabia. The ambitious project of the Gulf countries, known as the GCC Rail Network, is seeking to connect Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar with a 2,100km railroad by 2021.

UAE Infrastructure Minister Abdullah Belhaif al-Nuaimi said in October that the project could become operational by 2021 despite a regional rift that divided some of the countries involved. The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain cut ties with Qatar, including transport links, after accusing their neighbor of backing terrorism. Kuwait and Oman have remained neutral in the conflict.

"That is still the date. It's going forward. We still have small hiccups here and there but the project, hopefully, is going forward," al-Nuaimi said. The UAE suspended the project in 2016, while Oman said it would concentrate on a domestic rail network. Al-Nuaimi did not specify whether construction has resumed."

121:10



• TCCD loco (a G10?) on display at Izmir. (Photo: Daniel Peiser)

## ROD 2-8-0's FOR EGYPT IN 1952.

In 'Black Eight' issue 140 (Autumn 2017), the magazine of the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society, is an article (pp.57-59) by George Moon on a relatively-unknown issue.

"Just as the Stanier 8F was adopted as the initial standard heavy freight locomotive of the Second World War, its predecessor in the Great War was the Robinson Class 8K [2-8-0] machine with minimal modifications for service in western Europe. This was a tried and tested design dating from 1912, built like the proverbial tank and extremely rugged. No less than 521 were constructed to government order in addition to 127 built for the GCR [Great Central Railway] itself. [These were therefore referred to as 'ROD's' from 'Railway Operating Division'.]

During World War 2 92 locomotives, now part of LNER Class 04, were taken over by the War Department for service mostly in Egypt and Syria. 51 were old soldiers which had served in the earlier conflict. On the cessation of hostilities the ninety survivors (two having been lost at sea) were sold to the Egyptian and Iraqi State Railways and none ever returned to the UK.

Thus when heavy repairs beyond the capacity of the Royal Engineers Workshops were needed on five 8F's in the Canal Zone there were no suitable local replacements available. There was no option but to ship them home and replace them with machines from the UK, and the O4's were chosen, possibly as many of the RE personnel may have worked with or on them previously or possibly because BR was repared to release engines thirty years or more old rather than newer locomotives. Five O4's were purchased and taken into Gorton Works for overhaul, fitted with new boilers, equipped for oil firing, painted plain black and numbered 040-044 in the 1952 WD duplicate list (001 – 099 for obsolete and non-standard locomotives still in stock) before embarking from Southampton on the Christian-Smith line vessel Belpareil. The Bel ships were equipped with cranes capable of lifting locomotives and had been employed to bring back the 39 8F's purchased by BR in 1948. The five were unloaded at Adabiya in May 1952. After arrival in the Canal Zone they received names redolent of home, though whether painted on or carried on nameplates for which the Quartermaster would no doubt have had to 'find' sufficient scrap brass is not recorded. The names of 041 & 042 are known and those shown against the others are believed to be in correct order. Fortunately Mr. N.R. Knight photographed at least two of them at Gorton ...

On withdrawal of the British from Egypt these five engines together with the remaining Stanier 8F's there, and a vast quantity of stores, were sold to the Egyptian Government for 5 Million Pounds. The O4's became ESR 9794 – 9798 in order of their WD numbers, following

the post-war purchases which were numbered between 9700 and 9790. It is thought that some remained in service until 1961.

WD	Built as	Date	Builders No.	LNER No.	Later LNER No.	BR No.	Notes
040	GCR 1222	10/1912	NBL 19878	6222	3669	63809	1
041	ROD 2048	6/1919	NBL 22141	6615	6615	63845	
042	GCR 1215	9/1917	NBL 29871	6218	3562	63778	1
043	GCR 69	12/1911	Gorton	5069	3502	63850	1
044	GCR 5	1919	Gorton	5005	3627	63627	2

Notes: 1: In 1947 several LNER locos were renumbered yet again to clear the number block 3500-3567 for LMS-type 8F's which were classified as O6 by the LNER; these had been 3100-3167 in turn had been displaced by the purchase of 200 Riddles WD 2-8-0's which became numbered 3000-3199. However the O6's were later transferred to the LMS or LMR and received new numbers in the 48XXX series.

2. GCR Nos. 1, 5 and 8 were built in 1919 as part of an order of 25 for ROD stock but were taken straight into GCR stock and never regarded as ROD property.

Names allocated were: 040 LISS FOREST; 041 WEAVERSDOWN; 042 LONGMOOR; 043 WHITEHILL; 044 BORDON. These are of course all locations on the Longmoor Military Railway.

### 8F'S ARRIVING IN EGYPT.

The same issue of 'Black Eight' pp. 17-20 has an article with many photographs showing 8F 2-8-0's being unloaded at Port Said. Actual details are a little sparse. The photos were taken by Fred Charles Houghton who was a Sergeant in the Royal Engineers and who served in the Middle East from 11th. Oct. 1946 to 30th. May 1949. He and his squad, aided by some locals, had the job of re-attaching the parts removed for the voyage and making sure the locos were operational before they were put to use. The ship in the pictures is the Norwegian vessel M/S 'Belnor', built by Armstrong Whitworth in 1926 and specially designed for the transport of locomotives and rolling stock. It seems likely that these locos were being transferred from Iran at this date, though interestingly by sea and not overland. Presumably this was the only way now that the HBT line had been cut by the establishment of Lebanon! Earlier transfers from Iran to Egypt had been in 1944, by rail. Very few of these locos were eventually returned to the UK and registered as LMS stock.

During the war the 'Belnor' had plied the route from the Clyde to the Indian Ocean via Gibraltar and the Suez Canal (most convoys travelled the less risky route via the Cape) and occasionally visited Bandar Abbas in Iran. It is known it was undergoing engine repairs in Bombay in January 1946 and arrived in Port Said in April 1946 but then records cease.

The photos show that the ship stood in open water with cables for stabilisation on the port side while the on-board crane unloaded locos over the starboard side onto flat barges. During this process the ship heeled over to starboard quite a few degrees! Two locomotives (without tenders) could be fitted line ahead on the barge which was then perhaps winched to the quay where a large land-based crane unloaded them onto the quayside tracks. Locos were held at the cab and front buffer beam end by chains from a large beam.

One photo shows WD 70313 with 70320 in the background. This latter was later returned to the UK and became BR 48774.



• 63601 is a Great Central Robinson Class 8K 2-8-0, later LNER Class 04. The design was introduced in 1911 for coal haulage to the new docks at Immingham.

## SECOND CLASS TO EL FAYUM.

*The following article by Anke Röhl appeared in 'Überseische Bahnen' No. 5, 1987, p.22f. Translation by the Editor.*

'The legendary night train with comfortable sleeping cars of the 'Pharaohs Express' along the Nile line from Cairo to Luxor and Aswan is certainly something many railway enthusiasts have heard of. What is it like however on the local trains in Egypt? For someone from Central Europe accustomed to general punctuality a simple ride in a regional train is already something special. For example, to travel in the 2nd. Class in the morning train on the 123km long line Cairo – El Fayoum (Line 2666 in the Thomas Cooks Overseas timetable.)

Oriental smells and Arab busy-ness fill the great station hall at 'Cairo Main Station' on this sunny morning. It is shortly after 8am and while I look out for timetables, the 08.00 multiple unit train to Alexandria is just departing the station hall. Timetables are hard to find. And when any are to be discovered they are only in Arabic. The numbers (departure time, platform number) one can somehow decipher, but the name of the destination?

After I get only a shrug of the shoulders from a tea-slurping employee I head off to look for the rather well-hidden ticket counter. I find it and buy a ticket second class to El Fayoum, costs DM 1.40 = 45 Piastres. But here also I can get no information about the departure platform and am left to explore Cairo Main station on my own.

In front of the station near the Ramses statue there is a bazaar with many busy dealers, and along the departure and arrival tracks of the station it looks very similar. Egyptians wander around the tracks as unconcernedly as though they were in a pedestrian zone.

One has a good view of the activities from a bridge that spans the tracks. A loco can only clear a way for itself with repeated use of its horn.

Back at the station building I find at last an Egyptian woman who also wishes to travel to El Fayoum. She is waiting at platform 8 "because the train always departs from here." It will come some time, surely, and so I have a lot of time to observe the activities on the platform and the track; giant baskets with fowl destined for market and big silver bowls are carried calmly on heads along the track. Only a very few use the crumbling subway. An Egyptian walks in wide steps along the opposite platform, a green carpet rolled up under his arm.

According to the 'Thomas Cook Overseas Timetable' the train should depart at 9.10 – which means that by now we should long ago have departed Cairo.

For the Egyptians, delays are an everyday event, and they wait patiently for the train. Suddenly, an announcement in Arabic. Pieces of baggage are gathered together and the mass storms across the track and to the opposite platform. Shortly afterwards a train does indeed enter it and as the passengers depart from it in lengthy queues those who are waiting push their way into the carriages. When all have made themselves more or less comfortable, a railwayman informs us that not this train, but the one on the other (original) track is actually the one for El Fayoum. So, everyone storms back again. The Second Class is pretty well filled, the floor is covered with a deposit several

next stop in a small station – I seek in vain for the name.

On the way to 'El Wasta' the train stops on the open line for what must be three quarters of an hour; we have to let a train in the opposite direction cross ours.

In 'El Wasta' we diverge from the line along the Nile and head westward, in the direction of the Libyan Desert. The train leaves the fertile Nile Valley and crosses a small strip of desert and then reaches the oasis of El Fayoum. The line runs on an embankment through sugar cane plantations; as the train comes to a stand at a signal young boys run alongside and hold sugar cane through the windows

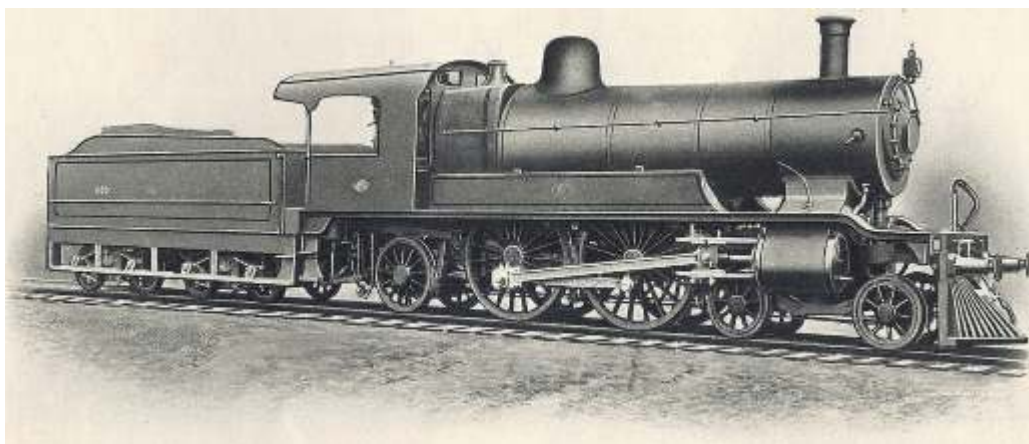
into the carriages. As a reward a few piastres are thrown from the window, which are then picked up by the lads with practised fingers. Almost everyone now chews on a sugar cane stick, the remains are spat onto the floor where they find themselves in good company.

The train reaches the town of El Fayoum. As we roll into the station a large crowd of people is already waiting on the platform, wanting to take this train back to Cairo. Before the train has even come to a halt they are climbing into the carriages through the doors and windows – where it is now frighteningly full. There seems to be no alternative but to fight one's way also to a window in order to clamber out of it in a not very elegant manner.

centimetres thick, formed mainly of fruit peel. Most of the windows can be neither fully opened nor closed and it is dusty everywhere.

At last the train, with over an hour's delay, sets off. First we go past run-down and ruinous houses of the Bulaq Quarter of the city and over the Nile westwards, before the rails make a wide curve left and head south. The air is warm and sticky. Especially the many dust and dirt particles provide an 'Egyptian flair' to the atmosphere. Like all local train carriages it is of the older type, whose axles squeal and groan at the curves. The door bangs continuously against the side as we travel, it does not let itself be closed, although three passengers have already tried kicking it shut.

In the meantime we have left the station 'Giza' behind us and have reached the green Nile Valley. Now we go past palm trees, clay houses, water buffaloes, fields, fellachin, children, villages.... always along the Nile. To the right a view of the Step Pyramids of Saqqara, a few moments later the



El Fayoum has been reached – with over two hours delay over 123km. But a railway experience of a very special kind."

- *IR Class G26 CW2 No. 614 double-heading southwards with NGT 26 n°719 T near Ashdod, 14.02.2018 (Photo by Gilles Lefranc) photo 2*



- *Israel Railways JT 42 CW No. 706 on a phosphate train heading south near Ashdod, 14.02.2018. (Photo: Gilles Lefranc.)*
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