



**137:01 Modiin curve, viewed from west, to the left Paatei Modi'in station,**



**137:01a. A phosphate train in the Negev. (Photo Aharon Gazit)**



Since the last issue the Editor and others have taken part in a successful 'PTG' raitour of Israel – with a few niggles along the way but nevertheless on the whole very rewarding and hopefully setting a precedent by convincing Management that such tours are possible in the future. Chen Melling and Harel Even and others were involved in hectic negotiations until the last moment as the line south of Mamshit is technically in 'suspended animation' without signalling and with poor radio reception; it proved impossible for the special train actually to enter Oron or Har Tzin but only – like Moses with the Promised Land – see from a distance and the third leg of the Mamshit triangle was not traversed, to the chagrin of those who collect every centimetre of track! The first day – planned to use scheduled passenger services – was badly affected by the chaos described inside, when a signalling cable at Lod was cut by accident and services were cancelled throughout the south of the country. Nevertheless visits were paid to Dimona diesel depot, Haifa Locomotive Depot, Qishon Workshops, all passenger lines apart from the short section closed for civil engineering works near Raanana; a special train also traversed the lines to Ashdod Port, the Heletz Line, to Ramat Hovav and to Kishon Port and the Museum at Haifa. Incidentally the special employed Alstom coaches which had just been withdrawn from active stock and are now available for disposal, and a variety of diesel power. Use of scheduled services included the brand-new Modi'in Curve.

The Editor returned with many images, many notes – and a dose of Corona which laid him low for a couple of weeks and has delayed working through all the impressions. But more will filter into future issues. In the meantime the world continues with conflict in Ukraine leading to many disruptions in international trade, tensions in the Gulf, and in Israel every week sees some changes somewhere as electrification works and planning and construction of light rail or metro lines continues. It is never boring!

Enjoy. The Editor.

• *137:03 Saudi Arabia Haramain Train*



### (i). JERUSALEM MARATHON

This sporting event was held on 25. March. IR announcements stated: "IR is preparing for increased train service for Jerusalem Marathon participants. As part of the special preparations to transport thousands of passengers to the Jerusalem Marathon on Friday, March 25, 2002, IR will increase train services in order to allow race participants to reach the race safely and comfortably and return. As part of the deployment, the Herzliya / Navon line will operate, with a frequency of 2 trains per hour in each direction, from 05.00 to 14.00. Trains will call at stations: Navon, all TLV & Herzliya.

Staff at stations around the country, with an emphasis on the Jerusalem Yitzhak Navon station, will be strengthened with stewards, cashiers, security guards and managers at the service of the runners. For the trip, passengers are advised to purchase a 'Flexible Daily' ticket which allows round-trip travel and allows a significant discount on the price."

### (ii). MODI'IN LINK WORKS

From an IR press release, 16.03: "Temporary changes in train traffic in the Modi'in area: Israel Railways is preparing to operate the high-speed and electric service from Modi'in stations to Jerusalem Yitzhak Navon station, and the latest work is currently underway to complete the section of the Modi'in curve that connects the AI line and Modi'in stations.

In preparation for the operation of the passenger service, which is expected to commence later this year, IR will perform essential work at the Modi'in stations to improve the service and reduce the boarding distance from the platform.

- Trains on the Nahariya - Modi'in Merkaz line will end and begin their journey at the outskirts of Modi'in Outskirts (Pa'atei Modi'in) station and will not stop at Modi'in Merkaz.

- During all hours of operation, Israel Railways will operate a free system of transportation, between Modi'in Merkaz & Pa'atei Modi'in stations, which will depart every half hour. Train traffic will return to normal on Thursday 24.3.22." (And see below).

### (iii). CHAOS!!!!

From an announcement of 27.03.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Today, Sunday, 27.03.2022 an engineering vehicle of one of the railways' subcontractors, who was working at Lod station, hit at around 10:47 some communication cables and caused a signalling failure in the whole southern area, and the following stations have been closed: Netivot, Sderot, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Yavne East, Rehovot, Be'er-Ya'kov and Lod.

Alternative bus services have been provided to a selected number of stations.

The railways teams have started intensive works immediately to overcome the problem."

Aharon wrote: "At 15:58 the railways announced that the teams continue work and that at 17:00 traffic would resume at the stations of Ashkelon and Ashdod, and at 17:30 at Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim - as indeed really happened.

As of 05:20 on 28.03.2022 the stations of: Yavne East, Rehovot, Be'er-Ya'kov, Kfar-Habad, Lod, Ramla, Lod Ganei-Aviv, Beit-Shemesh, Mazkeret-Batya and Kiryat-Malachi were still closed, with some hopefully reopening at noon.

Although such failures may happen, this one fell on a Sunday, one of the busiest weekdays with many soldiers and civilians returning from the weekend badly needing the rail services; the anger was and still is accordingly great, many blaming the railways' authorities of insufficient control on subcontractors. To be updated later on...."

And then: "Israel Railways Ltd. have announced on their website that all the stations which were disconnected due to

the damage to communication wires at Lod are now re-connected, including Beit-Shemesh which enjoyed service as from 17:30."

#### (iv). THE MODI'IN 'KESHET' OPENS.

From a press release of 28.03.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Good news for the rail passengers at the Jerusalem and Modi'in areas:

From Thursday 31.03.2022 the service between Modi'in Central and Jerusalem Navon stations will start. Services will be provided during all hours of operation during the whole week (including Friday and Saturday night), initially at a frequency of one train/hour each direction and at a later stage 2 trains/hour each direction; traveling time between Modi'in Central and Jerusalem Navon stations will be 29 minutes; between Modi'in Outskirts and Jerusalem Navon stations - 22 minutes.

The start of the new service is enabled thanks to completion of the Modi'in Curve, a 5.2 km of double-track electrified link between Modi'in Outskirts - and eventually Modi'in Central with Jerusalem through the A1 fast link; it has 3 bridges and a tunnel with an overall length of 650 m.

The project included also: upgrading and enlarging the Modi'in Outskirts station with two new platforms, enlarging and improving of the underground pedestrian passage between the platforms, replacement of the whole station flooring, upgrading the lighting system with LED, a new southern parking area for 700 cars adjacent to Einav shopping centre, and a 165m overhead pedestrian bridge including two elevators leading to the parking and the shopping centre.

Thanks to the completion of the project, the railways are improving the service between Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Herzliya and from Friday 01.04.2022 the A1 will operate on Friday too at a service frequency of one train/hour each direction.

But improvements do not stop here and thanks to the imminent completion of electrification between Tel-Aviv - Modi'in passengers from Modi'in to Tel-Aviv and the north will enjoy extended services until about midnight as well as services on Friday and on Saturday night not provided so far.

Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mrs. Merav Michaeli said: "The new service is a step up in the public transport and the aim is to continue developing the railways which are now the transportation backbone".

#### THE MODI'IN CURVE

Here is the next press release of 31.03.2022, by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"An historic date; Today the vital rail link called the Modi'in Curve between Modi'in Outskirts (and eventually of course Modi'in Central station) has been opened.

Participants in the ceremony travelled on a Siemens Desiro DDEMU from Jerusalem Navon and the two Modi'in stations, and included: Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mrs. Merav Michaeli, Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry's General Manager Mrs. Michal Frank, Chairman of Israel Railways' Ltd. Directorate Mr. Moshe Shimoni, Israel Railways' Ltd. General Manager Mr. Michael (Micha) Maiksner, the mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Moshe Leon, the mayor of Modi'in (who is also the Chairman of the Union of Local Authorities) Mr. Haim Bivas, etc.

All the participants mentioned the importance of the city of Modi'in, located at a strategic point between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem and as a rapidly-growing city of which many citizens work both in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, in addition to the city's own rapidly-developing high-tech and business zones; they also mentioned the efforts of the railways to complete both the new line and

electrification also of the remained un-electrified section from the A1 from Tel-Aviv to Modi'in Outskirts, so now all the lines between Modi'in, Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem are electrified, which mean cleaner and faster services."

It should be mentioned that the population of Modi'in grew from about 10,000 in 1999 to more than 100,000 today!

P.S.: On 14.04.22 the railway's spokesman apologized for providing wrong information on 31.03.2022 regarding the opening of the Modi'in curve; The press release had stated the Modi'in - Tel-Aviv line is served by electric trains, but it is in fact still diesel operated because the short section between Modi'in Outskirts station and the A1 line is still in process of electrification. The curve itself was of course opened with full electric operation.



- *aerial views of the Modi'in Curve*
- *(provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich from the railways' spokesman office)*
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#### (v). SERVICE RESUMPTION AND IMPROVEMENTS

From a press release of 07.04.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"From the Eve of Passover, Friday 15.04.2022 onwards, the following stations on the Sharon Loop line will be reopened and traffic will fully resume: Kfar-Sava Nordau, Hod HaSharon-Sokolov and Ra'anana South. Thanks to intensive efforts the railways managed to shorten significantly the time needed for the necessary engineering repairs to be performed in these stations.

Service frequency at all Sharon Circle line stations will be 3-4 trains/hour in each direction during most of the rush hours (between 07:00 and 09:00 and between 15:00 and 17:00); off-peak frequency will be 2 trains/hour in each direction.

Services are also extended on Fridays and will end at 15:00 instead of currently 14.00 on the following lines: Herzliya - Jerusalem Navon, Modi'in - Jerusalem Navon, Beer-Sheva - Ofakim - Netivot - Sderot - Ashkelon, Ashkelon - Rishon LeZion-Moshe Dayan - Tel-Aviv - Herzliya, and Nahariya - Haifa Hof-HaCarmel."

Services on the recently opened line Modi'in - Jerusalem Navon will also be improved: From Sunday 17.04.2022 the travel time between the two cities will be shortened by 3 minutes; between Jerusalem Navon and Modi'in Outskirts stations it will be 17 minutes (currently 20 mins) and to Modi'in Central 25 minutes (currently 28 mins.); however, from Modi'in stations to Jerusalem Navon it will remain unchanged: 29 minutes from Modi'in Central and 22 minutes from Modi'in Outskirts; the reason given is that from Jerusalem Navon it is downhill while in the opposite direction uphill!



## (vi). MORE TRAXX

In 'I.R.J.' 12/2021 p.17 is a note that IR is to receive 36 new 6MW 25kV/50Hz Traxx locos between April 2023 and October 2024 as part of the framework agreement signed with Bombardier in 2015.

## (vii). NEW TAMARA QUARRY SPUR.

From 'I.R.J.' 01.04.22: "Israel's Southern District for Planning and Building Commission has approved Israel Railway's (IR) plan to construct a new 7km line from the Tamar Quarry to the national railway network at Tzefa station in the Negev desert. Israel's government is seeking to increase aggregate production ahead of an expected shortage from 2025, when the new railway is expected to open. IR is expected eventually to carry 10 million tonnes of aggregates per year from the site.

The new line will feature a freight terminal and sidings at the mine as well as three grade separations. IR is also planning to build two aggregate terminals for customers at Kedma, south of Tel Aviv, and Malachi/Yoav, north of Tel Aviv, for last-mile transport by truck. The exact locations are yet to be determined."

A further report, expanding slightly: \*The Ministry of Transportation & the IR are promoting the Viper - Tamar track\*

The M/ T & IR continue to promote the strategic plan to increase the volume of freight transport by rail, with the aim of reducing road congestion, reducing air pollution, reducing road accidents and increasing the safety of all road users, since each freight train carries an amount of cargo equal to about 60-70 trucks.

The District Committee for the Planning & Construction of the Southern District has approved a detailed plan initiated by IR for the construction of a new railway that will connect the Tamar Quarry (west of Sodom) to the national railway network at Viper Station (Mishor Rotem).

Transporting aggregates (gravel) by train from the Tamar Quarry is one of the policy steps defined by the Director of Planning in the National Outline Plan for Mining & Quarrying. In response to the expected shortage of aggregates in the centre of the country from 2025 onwards.

Aggregates are an essential raw material for the housing and paving industries. The new track will allow the transport of aggregates to the centre of the country in a volume that is expected to gradually reach about 10M tons per year. This volume of transport is equivalent to about 1,250 heavy trucks daily.

The length of the new track is about 7 km. It will be for freight trains.

Along with the Viper - Tamar track, IR continues to turn the Eastern Negev region into a national railway activity centre, with the construction of a new railway extension to the Haifa Negev Technologies plant in Mishor Rotem this year."

## (viii). MORE TRACKWORKS

From a press release of 22.03.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As an integral part of the annual tracks maintenance programme to improve service and safety levels, upgrading infrastructure works will take place on the Western Negev line on the section between Ashkelon and Sderot stations. As a result, from Wednesday 30.03.2022 at 22:00 and Saturday night 02.04.2022 at 22:00 the following changes to traffic will take place:

On Wednesday 30.03.2022 from 22:00 and on Thursday 31.03.2022 during operating hours:

\*Trains on the Be'er-Sheva – Ofakim – Netivot – Sderot - Ashkelon line will operate between Be'er-Sheva and Ofakim only.

\*Trains on the Be'er-Sheva – Ashkelon – Netanya/Binyamina line will operate between Ashkelon, Netanya and Binyamina only.

On Friday 01.04.2022 during operating hours and on Saturday night 02.04.2022 from 21:00 until 22:00:

\*Trains on the Be'er-Sheva – Ofakim – Netivot – Sderot - Ashkelon line will operate between Be'er-Sheva and Netivot only.

\* Trains on the Be'er-Sheva - Herzliya line will operate between Ashkelon and Herzliya only.

The railways will provide alternative bus services between Ashkelon, Sderot and Netivot in both directions. Traffic will resume on Saturday night 02.04.2022 at 22:00.

Since the introduction of summer time on Friday 26.03.2022 trains on Saturday night will start at 21:00 instead of 20:00 and will end at 22:00 instead of 21:00.

From a press release of 24.04.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Due to track maintenance works to be performed between Tel-Aviv HaHagana and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central the section between these stations, with Tel-Aviv HaShalom station, will be closed from Friday 29.04.2022 at about 13:00 and on Saturday night 30.04.2022, during all working hours. As a result, the following changes to traffic will take place:

\*Trains regularly operating between Jerusalem Navon, all Tel-Aviv stations and Herzliya will instead operate between Jerusalem Navon and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations only and will not call at Tel-Aviv HaShalom, Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central, Tel-Aviv University and Herzliya.

\*Trains regularly operating between Be'er-Sheva and Herzliya will instead operate between Be'er-Sheva and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations only and will not call at Tel-Aviv Hashalom, Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central, Tel-Aviv University and Herzliya.

\*Trains regularly operating between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations will instead operate between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations



• *Gravel Train in the Negev*

only and will not call at Tel-Aviv HaShalom and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations.

\* Trains regularly operating between Ashkelon, Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan, all Tel-Aviv stations and Herzliya, will instead operate in split service: between Herzliya and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations, and between Ashkelon,

Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan and Tel-Aviv-HaHagana stations only, and will not call at Tel-Aviv HaShalom.

Traffic will resume on Sunday 01.05.2022 at about 05:00."

### (ix). PESACH 2022.

"From a press release of 11.04.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

During the Passover holidays the railways will be operated according to a dedicated schedule, including reinforcement of train services and operating dedicated lines on Friday (the eve of the first Passover day) 15.04.2022, and on the second Passover holiday and Saturday evening 21.04.2022, due to an initiated break of electrification works in order to enable the traffic during these days to flow.

During the Passover Intermediate days (17-20.04.2021) passengers will enjoy - with emphasis on families with their children - from a unique cooperation of the railways and "Magic Moments" of the media group Hop! and the Bernard Van Leer foundation, which has set a goal for turning the time spent by parents and children into a time of enrichment, getting closer, and of fun, by creative tools developed by the best Early Childhood specialists.

At dozens of selected stations special offers for activities have been prepared in order to encourage families to create magic moments all the time and everywhere with emphasis on the railway values: caution at railway stations and platforms, keeping safety instructions, politeness to railway employees, etc.

At the stations, QR CODE signs have been placed; by scanning them, passengers can reach additional activities suitable for waiting time to the train and for travel time.

The following changes to schedule will take place on Friday (the eve of the first Passover day), 15.04.2022 and on Passover 2nd holiday and Saturday evening 21.04.2022:

\*Trains will operate between 06:00 and 15:00 based on a regular Friday, with additional services on the Nahariya – Haifa - Ben-Gurion airport - Modi'in, and Carmiel – Haifa – Tel-Aviv – Be'er-Sheva lines.

\*On the Tel-Aviv-Haifa line the service frequency will be 2 trains/hour each direction.

\*Additionally, the following regular services will operate:

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya; Jerusalem Navon - Modi'in Central, the West Negev line between Be'er Sheva and Ashkelon, Herzliya – Tel-Aviv - Rishon-LeZion-Moshe Dayan, and Beit-She'an - Haifa Hof-HaCarmel.

On Saturday night, 16.04.2022 and on Saturday night, 23.04.2022:

\*Trains will operate between 21:00 and 24:00 based on regular Saturdays, with additional services on the Nahariya – Haifa - Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in and Carmiel – Haifa – Tel-Aviv – Be'er-Sheva lines.

\*On the Tel-Aviv - Haifa line the service frequency will be 2 trains/hour in each direction.

\*Additionally, the following regular services will operate:

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya; Jerusalem Navon - Modi'in, the West Negev line between Be'er Sheva and Ashkelon, Herzliya – Tel-Aviv - Rishon LeZion-Moshe Dayan, and Beit-She'an - Haifa Hof-HaCarmel.

During the Passover intermediate days (17-20.04.2021) trains will operate as on normal weekdays with the following additional trains:

\*A train will depart from Be'er Sheva Central at 09:42 and will terminate at

Haifa Central the 8 at 12:23 calling at: Be'er Sheva University, Lehavim/Rahat, Kiryat-Gat, Kiryat-Malachi/Yoav, Mazkeret-Batya, Ramla, Lod, all Tel-Aviv stations, Herzliya, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel, and Haifa Bat-Galim.

\*In the opposite direction an additional train will depart from Haifa Central the 8 at 14:03 and terminate at Be'er Sheva Central at 16:50 calling at: Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Hof-HaCarmel, Herzliya, all Tel-Aviv stations, Lod, Ramla, Mazkeret-Batya, Kiryat-Malachi/Yoav, Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim/Rahat and Be'er Sheva University."

### (x). CABLE THEFT

Israel Railways Ltd. announced on their website on 19.04.22 at 01:13 that due to a theft of communication cables near Lehavim/Rahat (north of Be'er-Sheva) services had been suspended between Be'er-Sheva, Lehavim/Rahat and Kiryat-Gat, and passengers from/to Be'er-Sheva were advised to use instead the Western Negev line through Ashkelon. At 09:14 the railways announced traffic resumed gradually.

### (xi). PLANS FOR TEL AVIV SAVIDOR

"This is what the Tel Aviv Savidor Central station will look like in about two years' time:

The old Tel Aviv Savidor station is currently changing its face in anticipation of the increase in the number of journey on the Israel Railways, which is expected to take off in the coming decades, and in preparation for the operation of the light rail lines. As part of the process of upgrading and expanding the station, which was first opened in 1954 and which carries about 50,000 passengers every day, many projects are currently being carried out in and around it, at a cost of about 20M NIS. This is in anticipation of the expected increase in the number of passengers at the station, which is expected to be over 75,000.

The existing passenger hall will be expanded by an additional 750 sq. m. to a total area of over 13,000 sq. m. including a diverse commercial area that will provide service to train passengers and an island station, using the central train station. This is in line with the model that has proven itself in many countries, where train stations serve as lively leisure and commercial centres, serving not only as a transit station for passengers but as active centres in the heart of the urban fabric, accessible by train service throughout the day.

The entire passenger hall complex will be designed and adapted to the standard and modern design language of the new train stations. The renovation will include the expansion of the main services complex and the construction of a new accessible services complex, replacement of flooring, infrastructure and roofs. Next to the bridge leading to the station, a large protected space has been built that will be added to the old protected space at the station, and



Enlarged Savidor Station)





Enlarged Savidor Station)

the front of the nostalgic station entrance will also receive a unique design that will incorporate classic cladding.

The station ticket offices have been upgraded and adapted for accessibility for passengers with disabilities. The entrance complex was separated from the exit complex at the station, and expanded for pastoral seating areas to serve as a new dining area built on the site; to the exits were added carousels accessible to passengers with wheelchairs and baby strollers. The current project comes after another project inaugurated at the station about 2½ years ago, in which a new passenger hall north of the old passenger hall was added, which significantly improves access to it from the northern neighbourhoods of Tel Aviv and from the northern part of the Stock Exchange complex."

## (xii), SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

From 'Times of Israel' 29.04.22: "Police on Friday announced the arrests of two minors from the Bedouin city of Rahat in southern Israel suspected of blocking train tracks near Beersheba during (at times) violent protests over afforestation work in the area.

On January 11 large rocks were placed on the train tracks, forcing one train to make an emergency stop after the engine driver noticed the blockage. The incident caused extensive damage to the train and endangered its passengers. Police said at the time they would launch a joint investigation together with the Shin Bet security agency to track down the culprits. In a statement Friday announcing that they solved the case, police said they arrested two 15-year-old suspects from Rahat on April 19. The suspects are due to appear before the Beersheba District Court on Friday. They face charges of endangering human lives and conspiracy to commit a crime.

"This is a serious incident that was investigated together with the Shin Bet," said Yossi Doron, police commander of the Negev Central Unit, which was put in charge of investigating the incident.

"The incident could have led the train to derail, which would have ended in a massive disaster," he added.

The incident took place during mass Bedouin protests in the country's south against a controversial tree-planting project led by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). Protests quickly turned violent, however, as Bedouin rioters confronted police officers in multiple locations in the northern Negev and others set fire to tires, blocked roads and hurled stones at civilian cars.

In January, following several days of violent incidents, prosecutors filed indictments against 16 Bedouin residents of southern Israel. Three cases were probed as potential "terror incidents" with a nationalistic motive: an attack on a security guard in Tel Sheva, the burning of a journalist's car in Segev Shalom,

and the placing of rocks on the train tracks leading to Beersheba. Negev Bedouin have a contentious relationship with the state. For decades the government has sought to move them into recognized, planned cities, but many still live in a constellation of illegal hamlets that sprawl across Israel's southern desert. Bedouins accuse the JNF of seeking to displace them, but the organization says it is merely fulfilling a request by other government bodies on public land. JNF works across Israel on nature and conservation projects, but some charge the organization has a political agenda."

## (xiii). MEMORIAL DAY TIMETABLE

A special timetable for Memorial Day (for Israel's fallen) - Wednesday 04.05.2022 and the Independence Day, Thursday 05.05.2022:

On these dates the railways will operate a dedicated strengthened timetable and will thus delay the electrification works currently performed each evening on the coast line, in order to provide rail service between Haifa and Tel-Aviv at the Eve of Independence Day too. Between the stations of Haifa and Tel-Aviv, and between Jerusalem Navon and Tel-Aviv, trains will operate through the whole night between the eve of the Independence Day (Wednesday) and the Independence Day (Thursday) at 2-hourly intervals.

On Wednesday 04.05.2022 trains will operate until about 15:00 as on a regular Wednesday. As in recent years, from 15:00 and until about midnight the service frequency on most lines will be reduced to 1 train/hour each direction.

In order to provide service on the coast line until late into the night for passengers going to/from the various events, services will be extended until about 01:00; This refers to the Nahariya - Haifa - Tel-Aviv - Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in line where trains will call at almost all intermediate stations.

There will be some minor timetable changes on the lines Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya and between Haifa and Beit-She'an (Valley Line).

As on every year, Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Michael (Micha) Maiksner has instructed a reduction of 50% of ticket prices for members of bereaved families in order for them to go to/from cemeteries at half price.

During Independence Day (Thursday) trains will operate at 1 train/hour frequency with the exception of the following lines, which will have 2 trains/hour at certain hours:

Nahariya - Haifa - Tel-Aviv - Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in line between 18:00 and 21:00.

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya line between 09:00 and 15:00.





Photos of Nahal Soreq Station, from Haaretz Article

#### (xiv). WHAT HOPES FOR THE OLD JERUSALEM LINE?

This appeared in 'Haaretz' 02.05.2022: By Moshe Gilad. "Two parallel metal tracks wind along the scenic bends of the Sorek and Refaim small rivers, sketching shapes into the landscape. Total quiet prevails along the path of the old railroad to Jerusalem. The last train came through here two years ago.

Most of the route, which is now 130 years old, is far removed from any highways. The wadis – river beds that have water only part of the year – are still green. Occasionally, you can see red and yellow wildflowers by the tracks. The thickets of plant growth make it difficult to see very far. The silence is wonderful, only countered by the stench from the water. Waste water from Jerusalem is treated at a purification plant, but the smell hangs in the air and it's difficult to ignore.

On the two stretches that I hiked this week along the railroad tracks, south and north of the Refaim bridge off Route 386, the strongest sensation was of being cut off. The knowledge that no train was about to pass in the foreseeable future – if ever – made a difference. But walking was more relaxed. Nothing was going to happen.



Bar Giyora station building from Haaretz Article

On a monotonous walk on a hot day, it's easy to get absorbed in memories. As a boy and as an adult, I have travelled on the train to Jerusalem. The landscape was spectacular. The twists of the track and the energy of the locomotive on its ascent to Jerusalem gave the trip a flavor of adventure.

The most prominent feeling that I remember is a sense of disorientation. The train made sharp turns to the right and left and then again to the right as if it were in a maze. Unlike the main highway to Jerusalem, where every turn is well-known and laden with history and memories and people and places, the trip by train was like a voyage in a foreign country, green and nearly empty.





It felt like an unfamiliar space existing between the highways. Here and there, houses were visible among the vegetation. For a moment, we passed an abandoned train station, and then we were in Jerusalem. It was a wonderful journey. The train was never considered the fastest route to the capital. But it was always the beautiful route.

When I spoke this week with an Israel Railways employee, he called the old train route to Jerusalem “one of the most beautiful in the world.” I nodded. Nostalgia makes us exaggerate.

## Six hours to Jerusalem

The work involved in building the old railway line, at the initiative of notable Jerusalemite Yosef Navon, began in March of 1890. The line was dedicated two and a half years later. The route went from Jaffa on the coast, to what is now Harakevet Street in Tel Aviv and then followed the Ayalon River to Lod and Ramle.

From there, it turned east along the Sorek, through the Sorek and Bar Giora stations, where the water in the steam engines of the locomotive was replenished. It then continued to the Jerusalem station, near today’s Khan Theatre. The two ends of the route – in Jaffa and Jerusalem – have in recent years been converted into urban parks where in some short stretches visitors can walk along the route of the old track.

All told, the train trip from Jaffa to Jerusalem traversed 87 kilometres (54 miles) of track over 176 bridges and dozens of twists and turns. By contrast, the current rail line between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is 57 kilometres long, which includes nine bridges of a combined length of 3 kilometres and five tunnels of a combined 19 kilometres. And the trip now takes 28 minutes.

The old winding route along the small Sorek river made it possible for the old train to ascend from sea level to the Jerusalem Hills at a moderate pace. When the train was inaugurated, the trip took between four and six hours. In the years before the route was abandoned, it took about an hour and a half. The train operated almost continuously until 1998. Then, due to numerous technical malfunctions, the decision was made to shut it down.

Five years after it ceased operations, in a move that today appears bizarre, the old track was renovated at a monumental cost of half a billion shekels (\$152 Million at current exchange rates). The eastern portion of the route – the 36 kilometres between Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem – was returned to service. Bar Giora became an operations centre, and two new stations were built in southern Jerusalem.

The old train route runs along nature reserves near the Sorek. In the course of the work on the tracks 20 years ago, trees in the natural scrub brush were uprooted, the stream beds were damaged and historic structures such as the train stations at Beit Shemesh and Battir and 100-year-old bridges were demolished.

Train travel along the eastern stretch was resumed in 2003, but the long travel time meant that it wasn’t used by the wider public. In March 2020 the Beit Shemesh - Jerusalem service was halted due to COVID-19 restrictions and never resumed. Four years ago, when the new rail line between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem was inaugurated, I wrote about possible uses of the old track.

The Beit Shemesh - Jerusalem service was still operating at the time. The well-being of the residents of the two cities was justifiably the priority, but things have changed entirely. Over the past two years, there has been no service on the old track. It’s maintained but totally unused, and that appears to be how it will remain.

Israel Railways issued a statement this week that it doesn’t plan to make commercial use of the track. The Transportation Ministry issued a similar response to a request for comment. When the two entities were asked about future plans, they replied: “We are considering several options, including the tourism-related option.”

And they made it clear that Israel Railways continues to maintain the track. That means investing in cleaning, as well as maintaining signaling on the track and safety on the inactive route. In practice, that also means that they are leaving open the option of reactivating it.



## **No chance service will resume**

What should be future of the rail track be? And more generally, what use should be put to the strip of territory that it has created? Initially, a decision must be made on whether it should be used for train traffic or be turned over for other purposes, such as a hiking area or a bicycle path.

From conversations with current and past officials, one comes to the conclusion that the rail company won't give up on this legacy from the past and permit another entity to convert the route to other uses. So to the extent that it's up to Israel Railways, the route will remain in its possession and continue to be maintained by it at considerable expense.

Most of the officials who spoke to Haaretz and asked not to be mentioned by name agreed that there is no chance that regular passenger train service would resume on the line between Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem – even though roughly 120,000 people live in Beit Shemesh and another 100,000 in the area around it. The situation on the ground, equipment issues and the low frequency of trains and low passenger demand when the line was in operation will prevent a resumption of regular service, the sources said.

The Beit Shemesh Municipality said it is in favour of any means of transportation that would link its residents to the Jerusalem area or to Tel Aviv. The mayor, Aliza Bloch, has previously sought to determine the feasibility of reviving the line, but was told that there was insufficient tourism potential to do so, the municipality said.

To revive the train it's necessary to try to figure out what a "tourist line" would mean. Seven years ago, when development of the new track was moving forward, Israel Railways prepared for the situation it faces now. A detailed plan was prepared by railway employees that contained several proposals.

One of them suggested turning the old line to Jerusalem into an "experience." During the trip, passengers would become acquainted with the landscapes and the area's cultural and environmental aspects.

The planned "experiential line" would have been the diametric opposite of the modern line. The latter is fast; the former would be slow. The latter rarely stops; the former would stop frequently. The latter is meant for people who want to reach their destination; the former is for enjoyment. And the experiential train was slated to travel even when the regular trains don't run. The goal was to get passengers to feel like pilgrims to Jerusalem on an exciting trip that would be etched in their memories. The experiential train would make many stops in addition to the actual stations. Aside from enjoying the views and activities on the train, passengers would get off to continue their experiences at stations and nearby tourist spots.

The experiences while onboard would include lectures on local history as well as cars set aside for entertainment, food and drinks. There would also be special cars able to accommodate bicycles. During the trip, passengers would become acquainted with the Nahal Sorek Nature Reserve as well as the stories of the pilgrims and warriors who travelled this route in the past. Proposals also included extreme sports, hospitality and horseback riding.

One idea was that bed-and-breakfast facilities could be built along the track. There would also be tourism and heritage sites, vineyards, dairies and riding competitions. The proposal included both daytime and nighttime trips, including on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. It also allowed for private parties on board or at destinations along the route. The hub would be the Bar Giora station, midway between Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem.

Nothing has yet come of these plans. But 10 years are a mere blink of an eye. The Bar Giora station appeared intact this week, though badly neglected. Tall weeds conceal it. The Sorek station west of Beit Shemesh, between Moshav Yesodot and Moshav Tal Shazar, looks even worse.

Isaac Shweky, the Jerusalem region director of the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites, stresses the importance of preserving the Bar Giora and Sorek stations and noted that the last repairs, done in 2003, actually damaged them. Both buildings have been slated for preservation, he says, and the council has asked the rail company to preserve them. But so far, nothing has happened.

The track itself isn't slated for preservation site, he adds. The Beit Shemesh station was completely demolished when the new station was built, and the old station in Battir, near the border of the West Bank and very close to the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem, also no longer exists.

Asked about future uses for stations that are restored, Shweky says, "It makes no difference to me what the building is used for. For us, what's important is the very fact of conservation that's faithful to the place's history.

"The Nahal Sorek train station is in terrible shape," he says. "The railroad company is supposed to preserve it, but I requested conservation funding from the council to speed things up and save the building, which is at real risk. Bar Giora is in better physical condition."

The documentation files he sent me include full details about the stations' condition and the possible ways they could be used after they are preserved. Comprehensive, thorough work has been done, but it still hasn't led to the conservation of these historic buildings.

## **A weekend in the country**

A few years ago I visited the village of Salers, south of the city of Clermont-Ferrand in France. To the west of it, in a tiny village called Drugeac, I saw a wonderful example of how the old railroad route to Jerusalem could be used. The train track to Salers was abandoned in 1994 after a century of activity. The villagers, on their own initiative, began operating a tourist attraction, which then won the approval and blessing of the French Transportation Ministry. They created 25 simple train cars made of metal that are operated by bicycle pedals and put them on the track. Visitors can pedal down the tracks over 11 kilometres. It's pure fun. Over the course of an hour and a half we roared through dark tunnels, whooped with excitement over tall bridges and were in heaven. We rode from Salers to Mauriac. We pedalled as fast as we could, stopping several times to take in the view, and continuing on ahead when the train car behind us approached. This delightful trip costs €22 for a car of four people and was worth every cent.

Why not take the most beautiful stretch of the track to Jerusalem, say from Bar Giora to the Biblical Zoo – which is about 14 kilometres – make a small investment and install some similar pedal-cars there? That would preserve the "train" use of the railroad track without operating an actual train there. Anyone who has seen the long lines on Saturday morning at the nearby Kitzuba amusement park would be ready to bet that a business giving families a chance to pedal along a track that winds between green mountains in the heart of a nature reserve could be a huge hit in Israel, too. Riders could choose whether to travel uphill or downhill.

In a number of places in the world, particularly the U.K., local associations of train aficionados have sprung up to renew the operation of old lines that are no longer in commercial use. Often, these are used on weekends and run by volunteers for nostalgic rides on old steam engines. One appealing example may be seen in a town in the Canterbury region of New Zealand, where a group of volunteers, most of them senior citizens, came together in 2018 to get the Pleasant Point Railroad rolling again. Nearly 100 years after it stopped operating, the line is now back and serving local and foreign tourists. There is no financial aspect to it, but it involves plenty of local pride.

In Mokra Gora, Serbia, a few years ago we rode on a tourist train like this that had been restored to run on a winding track in the mountains. The local tourism association operates the line for tourist purposes only and the trip is very pleasant. You pass by several of the sites where Emir Kusturica filmed "Life is a Miracle," which is set entirely alongside a railroad track.

There is no line like this in Israel yet. Issues of Shabbat observance and the many other activities of the governmental railroad company have apparently prevented it from establishing one. No other entity aside from Israel Railways is entitled to operate local trains. The British tradition did not strike deep enough roots for that.

## **Who really needs a railroad track?**

If there are no trains running on the tracks, the other possibility is to convert them into hiking or riding paths by flattening them out. A glance at other countries shows that this is the clear trend in many places. More than a thousand old train tracks around the world have been converted to hiking and riding paths in recent years. These paths generally feature a moderate incline and a lengthy route that passes through historic sites.

In Germany, 700 train tracks have been converted into 5,000 kilometres of walking and riding paths. Most of these are in the Rhine Valley region. One main example is the Hunsrück line, which extends for 55 kilometres. A 38-kilometre portion of the line south of the town of Emmelshausen was converted into a bike path.

In Britain, 150 train tracks have been turned into walking paths, and paths for bikes or horseback riding. Over the past 50 years, 12,000 kilometres of train tracks have been closed in the country. To date, 7,000 kilometres of track have been transformed into walking paths."

### (xv). SIGNALLING UPGRADE.

From a press release of 18.05.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Due to upgrading works on the signalling system, which cannot be performed while trains operate, services over the whole network will terminate on Thursday 26.05.2022 at around 23:00 instead of around midnight. Additionally, on Friday 27.05.2022 the Friday Only train departing at 04:48 from Ashkelon and terminating at Herzliya at 06:42 will not operate."

### (xvi). FOOTBALL SPECIALS

From a press release of 19.05.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.: "On Tuesday 24.05.2022 there will be the State Cup football final game at Teddy Stadium of Jerusalem. Due to high demand there will be two special trains at the end of the game from Jerusalem Navon, directly to Tel-Aviv HaHagana station where special trains will take passengers up to Haifa Bat-Galim in the north and Be'er-Sheva Central in the south.

The departure times from Jerusalem are estimated at 23:50 and 00:05 respectively while those of the trains from Tel-Aviv depend on the arrivals from Jerusalem. There will be bus shuttle services free of charge between Jerusalem Navon station and Teddy Stadium."



- *Work continues on doubling the line to Rehovot. (Photo Jeremy Topaz)*

### (xvii). AI COMMUNICATIONS CHECK

From a press release of 18.05.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Due to routine checking activity to be taken by the Israeli Police on Friday 27.05.2022 on the communication systems along the AI line, it and Jerusalem Navon station will be closed to traffic the whole day; traffic will resume on Saturday night at about 21:00."

### (xviii). SHAVUOT FESTIVAL TIMETABLE.

From a press release of 25.05.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"For the Shavuot (Pentecost) Jewish holiday the railways will operate services according to a dedicated schedule which includes strengthening of trains and dedicated lines on Friday 03.06.2022 (a day before the Shavuot holiday) and on Sunday night 05.06.2022 - the end of Shavuot holiday.

This has been enabled thanks to pause in the electrification works in order to provide passengers with the best available services.

The changes are as follows:

On Friday, 03.06.2022:

\*Strengthened trains will operate between 06:00 and 15:00 based on Friday schedule with additional trains between Nahariya, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Ben-Gurion Airport and Modi'in, as well as between Carmiel, Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Be'er-Sheva Central. These trains will call at all intermediate stations on these lines.

\*Between Haifa and Tel-Aviv service frequency will be 2 trains/hour each direction.

\*Additionally the following services will be provided as on each Friday:

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya, Jerusalem Navon - Modi'in, Be'er-Sheva – Ofakim – Netivot - Sderot-Ashkelon, Herzliya - Tel-Aviv, Rishon LeZion Moshe Dayan - Ashkelon, Beit-She'an - Haifa Hof- HaCarmel, and Dimona - Be'er-Sheva North/University.

On Saturday night - the eve of Shavuot holiday - trains will not operate.

\*Additionally the following services will be provided as on each Friday:

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya, Jerusalem Navon - Modi'in, Be'er-Sheva – Ofakim – Netivot – Sderot - Ashkelon, Herzliya - Tel-Aviv, Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan - Ashkelon, Beit-She'an - Haifa Hof- HaCarmel, and Dimona - Be'er-Sheva North/University.

On Sunday night (the end of Shavuot holiday) 05.06.2022:

\*Trains will operate between 21:00 and 24:00 in strengthened form based on Saturday night schedule with additional trains between Nahariya, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Ben-Gurion Airport and Modi'in, as well as between Carmiel, Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Be'er-Sheva Central.

\*Between Haifa and Tel-Aviv service frequency will be 2 trains/hour each direction.

\*Additionally the following services will be provided as on each Saturday night:

Jerusalem Navon - Herzliya, Be'er-Sheva – Ofakim – Netivot - Sderot - Ashkelon, Herzliya - Tel-Aviv, Rishon LeZion Moshe Dayan - Ashkelon, Beit-She'an - Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Dimona - Be'er-Sheva North/University."

From a press release of 26.05.2022 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As an integral part of the annual maintenance programme, infrastructure works will be performed at Be'er-Sheva Central station, including upgrading and tracks replacement; as a result, the station will be closed between Saturday night 11.06.2022 at 22:00 until Sunday 12.06.2022 at 05:00.

Trains will start/terminate at Be'er-Sheva North/University at these times.

Traffic will resume on Sunday, 12.06.2022 at 05:00. There will be bus shuttle services free of charge between Be'er-Sheva Central and Be'er-Sheva North/University stations."

### (xix) DIMONA TRACKWORKS

"As part of the annual maintenance plan, infrastructure works will be carried out for the maintenance, upgrade and replacement of the track in the Dimona area. Dimona station will be closed for service from Friday 10.6.22 until Thursday 16.6.22 (inclusive). Train traffic in the area will return to normal on Friday 17.6.22. Israel Railways will operate a transportation system between Dimona and Beer Sheva North stations in accordance with train times."



# TENDERS

## A.

(i). Tender No. 22173: Building a grade separation No. 10 at Atlit (19 km south of Haifa and just north of the railway station with the same name): Works include: a temporary overhead steel bridge, dipping and foundation piles, a concrete road bridge of 240m length and 15m width, supporting walls, pavement, and landscape restoration. Expected implementation time: 25 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 14.04.2022.

(ii). Tender No. 12070: Providing services of Purchasing Ads in the Israeli press and advertising in foreign press and professional sites: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.04.2022.

(iii). Tender No. 12057: Providing Maintenance services for the railways' Fire-Extinguishing equipment: The contract is divided into 2 operational areas, north and south; the intension is to select one winning bidder for each area. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.04.2022.

(iv). Tender No. 22163: Providing services of wiring, planning programmatic guidelines for design of passenger stations, public transport sites, buildings, sites, lines, and railway terminals: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 02.05.2022.

(v). Tender No. 222103: Performing Sub-Contractual works of Construction, Infrastructures and Upgrading at no more than \$4.7 Million (NIS 15M): Latest date for submission of proposals: 17.05.2022.

(vi). Tender No. 12053: Providing supply of Cellular Services of cellular phones, modems, routers, etc. to the railways' employees, their families and railways' retired persons: The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 16.05.2022.

(vii). Tender No. 122153: Providing solutions for Renewable Energy: Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.05.2022.

(viii). Tender No. 122154: Providing Mapping Solutions for both above-ground and underground infrastructures by remote-controlled Sensors and including integration with the existing railway knowledge: Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.05.2022.

(ix). Tender No. 121101: Providing services of GPR-Ground Penetration Radar on railway lines: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to 36 additional months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 25.05.2022. Attached herewith are technical specifications: (to be installed and integrated on Israel Railways Railbound Vehicle. The System shall be a computer controlled and include at least the following sub-systems, and equipment:

a. Driver View Video System (DVS)

b. Odometer – with accuracy of up to 0.1 [m] for every kilometre

c. Onboard Database Computer Server

d. Laptop Computers

e. A3 color Printer

f. Synchronization Unit

g. Uninterruptable Power Supply

h. Software

i. DGPS System

3. The GPR shall be designed to measure Israeli designed track structure and layers especially focus on the ballast and its types and failures modes. The condition of the track subsurface on all its

layers. The System shall record the measured data continuously on loaded conditions and produce consistent results.

4. The GPR system shall be designed to operate with the same efficiency near high voltage electrical wire line, on electrified track with 25k VAC and on

non-electrified track with CWR and jointed track with electric system and electronic signalling.

5. The GPR system shall has at least the capabilities to ition of ISR.to identify different substructure layers and their conditions as defined in UIC719 and by definition of ISR.

6. The System installation position shall enable efficient and safe travelling and operation on single and double track/s as well as between station platforms and in tunnels, in reference to ISR loading

gauge ...."

(x). Tender No. 12059: Providing services of Consulting and Development of traditional and digital Training and instruction: The railways intend to select up to 5 winning competitors. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 09.06.2022.

(xi). Call No. 2-62144 for donation of used computers and peripheral equipment by the railways' employees and families in favor of poor families and their children: The equipment is to be donated at Haifa and Lod stations until 31.12.2022.

(xii). Israel Railways Ltd. Challenge Tender No. 422163: Solutions for advanced traveling services (transparent journey): Requested: better controlling systems for ticketing, better identification and validation systems. Latest date for submission of proposals: 20.06.2022.

(xiii). Tender No. 220401: Running a 48sq,m ice cream shop at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central railway station: The contract includes: An adjustment period of up to 4 months; A permission period of 60 months; An additional permission period of up to 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.06.2022.

(xiv). Tender No. 222104: Lod station site stage 2: Performing works to promote availability: Works include: enlarging the existing site, stabling facilities, earthworks, walls, pause pool, concrete fence, etc. Estimated completion time: 15 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.06.2022.

(xv). Tender No. 121106: Provided developing, delivery, management and maintenance services of Safety and Environmental Systems: The contract is for 60 months with optional extensions of up to additional 72 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 14.07.2022.

(xvi). Tender No. 22194: Providing Maintenance Services in the vicinity of railway lines in the Northern, Central and Southern Regions:

The Northern railway region extends from Nahariya in the north to Shefayim in the centre (north of Herzliya), and includes the west-east Valley Line and the line to Carmiel.

The Central railway region extends from Shefayim to Pleshet junction (north of Ashdod), and includes the Sharon circle line, the line to Modi'in, the A1 Jerusalem Navon, and the old line to Jerusalem Malcha.

The Southern railway region extends from Pleshet Junction up to Be'er-Sheva including the Ashkelon - Kiryat-Gat freight-only line, and from Be'er-Sheva to Zin phosphate ores mines, to Tzefa, the Arad terminal and the Hazardous Materials terminal at Har Hovav.

The intention is to select up to three winning bidders, one for each region.

Works consist of two types:

An overall monthly maintenance for tracks nearby, railway sites and stations, and landscape restoration;

One-time maintenance such as: tree care and pruning, disposal of waste, cleaning, etc.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.06.2022.

## B. TENDERS AWARDED

Israel Railways Ltd. have announced on their website that Gil'ad-Lobbing Co. II. won Tender No. 11725 for providing lobbying and consulting services for strategic thinking and planning regarding contacts with government offices; Impact L.O.B. remain a waiting bidder.

# LIGHT RAIL.

## A. TEL AVIV

### (i) NTA PRE-QUALIFICATION

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 14.03.3033: "NTA has announced that 12 consortia have expressed interest at the pre-qualification stage for contracts to design and oversee construction of the Tel Aviv Metro, a planned €40Bn three-line network totalling 150 km and 109 stations.

The consortia are:

Poram Shrem, Karni Engineering, Hason-Yerushalmi Engineering, with Delhi Metro Rail Corp and RITES;

Eitam Engineering and Project Management, Ami Matom Engineering, with TYPASA;

Massad Oz Management & Engineering, iSTERN Project Management, with SENER;

CPM, Safdie Architects, with TPF;

Spivak Engineering, Yinnon Planning and Research, with Atkins;

Groisman Engineering, Kolker Kolker Epstein architects, with Setec;

A Epstein & Sons, Tedem Civil Engineering, with IDOM;

David Akerstein, Decker Building & Engineering, with WSP;

Dana Engineering, Levy Shtark Zilberstein Consulting Engineers, with Metropolitana Milanese;

Waxman Govrin Geva Engineering, DEL Engineering, with Systra;

Baran Israel Engineering, Groner DEL Engineering, and Deutsche Bahn;

Inproject Davelman Perzlina, Mahod Engineering, with Artelia.

A detailed invitation to tender will be issued later this year, after which three consortia will be chosen to plan and complete detailed design, manage the civil works contractors and inform the operating parameters for each of the heavy metro lines."

### (ii). RED LINE READY TO OPEN IN NOVEMBER.

From 'I.R.J.' 16.03.2022: "Tel Aviv Metropolitan Mass Transit System (NTA) is on track to open the city's first light rail line, the 25km at-grade and underground Red Line, in November of this year after Covid-19 related issues caused the delay of the original October 2021 opening date.

During a visit to Tel Aviv on March 15, IRJ was told that the project was now expected to meet the updated delivery schedule, with three months of trial running due to begin in July.

The project was on-time in February 2019, but a year later the pandemic forced a four-month closure of CRRC's factories in China where manufacturing of the 90 five-car LRVs for the line was taking place. Many sub-suppliers were also affected, further adding to delays. There were also issues transporting the vehicles, which were shipped as two and three section units, which also increased costs.

The project also endured pandemic-related construction delays. However, the testing is now underway, with around half of the 90 LRVs for the line, which will operate in multiple, having passed the two-week certification and testing process.

The 10km dual-bore tunnels run from a branch to the line's depot at Kiryat Arye and from Geha Interchange, west of Shenkar station in the northwest to Manshiyya/Neve Tzedek east of Ben Zvi station. From here the line continues at-grade for 10km, serving 13 stations before reaching the terminus at Bat Yam. An additional 5km at-grade section with six stations runs east from Shenkar to Petrach Tikva Central Bus Station.

Driver training has been underway since November, initially using a simulator supplied by Australian-based Oktal Sydac under contract from CRRC, and now on the line.

The line is equipped with CBTC, allowing LRVs to operate at Grade of Automation 2 (GoA2) in the underground sections, with the driver responsible for closing the doors and supervising the system. Drivers control the LRVs on at-grade sections with the assistance of the train protection system. The train control system can also be monitored from the Operational Control Centre at the depot, which is able to remotely stop the train in the event that the driver is incapacitated.

Due to the security situation in Israel, the train is equipped with a number of security features. These include impact-proof glass and an additional cover to protect the traction equipment located in the roof of the vehicle in the event of a Molotov cocktail attack, with the increasing the weight of each vehicle to 50 tonnes. Digital systems such as CCTV and Wi-Fi are also designed with improved cyber security, while the OCC is located underground and surrounded by strengthened concrete to allow it to continue operating in the event of an attack.

CRRC is responsible for the maintenance of the LRVs for 16 years but is also training Israeli staff to ensure knowledge transfer. Two maintenance facilities have been built at the depot beside Kiryat Arye station, including a light maintenance facility to allow minor regular maintenance, and a heavy maintenance workshop which includes two train jacks, a bogie cleaning facility and bogie jack.

The depot has 23 tracks totalling 1.7km, three times the size of the depot for the Jerusalem light rail network.

Contracts for Tel Aviv's Purple and Green lines were awarded in February, with preliminary work now underway across the city which is experiencing chronic congestion and high car dependency. Alstom, bus operator Dan Transportation and Israeli infrastructure company Electra were awarded a contract to design, construct, maintain and finance the 39km Green Line, while a consortium of CAF and construction firm Shapir have been awarded a €1.015Bn contract to construct and equip the 27km Purple Line, both of which are expected to be fully operational by 2027. Both lines will connect with the Red Line.

Egis, France, was awarded a contract to lead the development of a €40Bn underground



metro system in Tel Aviv, which will have three lines totalling 150 km, serving 109 stations."



Well, as we know not everything runs to plan and on 01.04 came this in 'Times of Israel' (alas no April Fool joke): "Meanwhile, delays plaguing









- *Tel Aviv Metro Allenby station almost complete (photo from Tol 2.6.2022)*

Southern parts of metro line M1, which branches from Rishon LeZion to Beer Yaakov, Ramla and Lod, and through Ness Ziona to Rehovot are less problematic and ready for government approval.

There is no update on the two lines which make up the rest of the network and deliver connections to Kiryat Ono, Givat Shmuel, Petach Tikva, Or Yehuda, Bat Yam, and Ben Gurion Airport. Delays on delivery of Tel Aviv's new light rail system have already been announced, and are estimated to be costing the country's economy NIS 1.5 Bn (\$450M) each year."

On this - On 10.05.2022 Aharon reported: Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO project:

comprise extended-buses on rubber wheels and no rails - on a selected and dedicated trail, painted orange. Each trail will be 3 metres wide. Their main argument is that to put in rails require extra work, costs and time - that a bus route doesn't need.

The line should start service over 2027. By June 2022; the various transport authorities will make their decision, one way or the other. 'Globes' had a full page review of this issue on 13th April." (Jeremy adds: The roads in Rehovot are too narrow to incorporate also a tramline.)

#### (v). METRO DELAYS

In 'Times of Israel' 04.05.2022: "Plans for a Metro system to provide underground connections between Tel Aviv and other key commuting areas in central Israel are set to be severely delayed, according to reports in Hebrew-language media.

The Ministry of Transportation has asked permission from the National Infrastructure Committee to prioritize certain sections of the plans, delaying until 2040 the connections to Modi'in, Ra'anana, Kfar Saba, and Hod Hasharon, eight years later than originally forecast, according to 'The Marker'.

Instead of delivering the whole ambitious project with 109 stations and 150 kilometres (93 miles) of new track, by 2032, there will only be lines through Tel Aviv, stretching from Holon in the south up to Gilot Darom in Ramat Hasharon in the north. The M1 line has always been the most complex of the three lines planned, running for 85 kilometres (53 miles) with 62 stations, and forecast once operational to carry 1 million passengers each day.

These new subway lines were intended to extend public transport in Tel Aviv, alongside the light rail currently under construction and the regular train and bus networks in the city. But more significantly, the network was intended to connect the city to many residential areas from which people commute, where existing bus and train connections are insufficient, leading to road congestion.

Having first approved plans in 2015, the government's National Infrastructure Committee gave its seal of approval to the proposed network in 2019. But there has been consistent questioning of the ability to deliver on the complex network, and an independent assessment concluded that there was room for improvement.

While the municipalities involved recognize the value of the potential subway network for their residents, there have been objections from Ra'annana about the proposed route, which it says cuts across neighborhoods in the city. 'Globes' reported that Hod Hasharon and Kfar Saba have also voiced objections about similar issues, leading the Ministry of Transportation to propose splitting up the project to move some parts forward while taking time to deal with the objections arising.

"NTA has recently reported that the M1 Metro line originally planned to link the Tel-Aviv Greater Area with the cities of Herzliya, Ramat-HaSharon and Ra'anana (south and east of Herzliya respectively) will instead terminate at Gelilot Junction, due to the opposition of the cities' mayors; they claim that due to very high level of car ownership, the use of the line will be minimal and thus building of it will be a waste of money. (!!!) [Ed. One wonders what decade or even century these mayors are living in...]

NTA has admitted that the Red Line will start operating on October/November 2022, but trains will not call at Carlebach station in the middle of Tel-Aviv yet because the station will not be ready by then.

#### (vi). GREEN LINE CONTRACT.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 18.05.22:

"Tel Aviv urban transport project promoter NTA Metropolitan Mass Transit Systems has formally awarded the Tel Aviv Metropolitan Tramway consortium a €2.6Bn contract to design, finance and build the Green Line light rail route and provide 25 years of operations and maintenance.

The consortium of Alstom, local infrastructure contractor Electra and bus operator Dan Transportation had been named preferred bidder in February.

Alstom's €858M share of the contract announced on May 17 includes track, electrification, power supplies including its Hesop energy saving system, signalling, communications and 98 Citadis X05 trams. Electra will manage design and construction of the civil works. Maintenance will be performed by a joint venture of the three consortium members.

#### Green Line

The north-south Green Line will be 39 km long with 62 stops, including a 4-5 km underground section with four stops. The two southern branches will start at Agricultural Center and at Moshe Dayan in the city of Rishon-LeZion, which is expected to be a major source of traffic, and join at HaNesi'im in Holon to run north through central Tel Aviv as far as Einstein Street, where the line will divide into branches terminating at Herzliya and Neve Sharet.

The opening is planned for 2027 and ridership is predicted to reach 76 million passengers in 2030, with the low-floor trams operating in pairs.

The Citadis X05 trams will be designed and manufactured at Alstom's La Rochelle plant in France, with bogies from Le Creusot, motors from Ornans and passenger information systems from Villeurbanne. Alstom's factory at Fez in Morocco will provide harnesses and electrical cabinets, and the site at Charleroi in Belgium will provide power electronics including a new 175 kV integrated traction and auxiliary converter and the Hesop energy saving system.

'Alstom and our partners Dan Transportation and Electra Ltd believe this project will contribute to the growth of the rail ecosystem in the country and support the creation of hundreds of new jobs', said Eran Cohen, Managing Director of Alstom Israel.



Tel Aviv's Red Line is currently being built by China Railway Construction Co subsidiary CECC, while NTA has selected CAF and Shapir to build the east-west Purple Line."

(vii). NTA Tender No. 195/2022: Providing Measurement Services to assure quality of NTA Projects: NTA intends to select up to 5 winning bidders. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.06.2022.

(viii). NTA Tender No.224/2022: Providing services of Financial Advice: The services include: initiation processes, economic feasibility analysis for projects, financial accompaniment in the formulation of tenders, assistance in examination and analysis of financial parts of quotations, etc. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.07.2022.

#### (ix). A CRITICAL LOOK AT METRO PLANS

*From 'Times of Israel'*

Plans for a metro rail system in central Israel have been moving forward steadily, with about half of the proposed network already approved. According to the plan, some 45 kilometers (28 miles) of track and 31 stations will connect Tel Aviv, Rehovot, Ness Ziona, Lod, Be'er Yaakov, Rishon Lezion, Holon, and Ramat Hasharon, for a line called the M1 South. Another line, M3, will deliver 39 kilometers of track with 25 stations, connecting Bat Yam, Holon, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Petah Tikva and Or Yehuda. There is no expectation passengers will be able to travel on these lines until 2032 at the earliest.

The metro project is Israel's most ambitious public transportation project, aiming to connect Tel Aviv's commuter zones to materially reduce traffic. But as it runs largely through areas that are already densely built, it is potentially one of the most complex global engineering projects. Other subway systems have been built ahead of urban areas rather than after.

No country has built a metro system like this before, going through areas that are already highly developed," international public transportation adviser Amiram Strolov told The Times of Israel, "and it's actually not clear that it is possible to do."

Strolov has advised municipalities around the world on public transportation systems, including in the US and Israel. He called Israel's metro project an example of "megalomania" and "a fantasy" that will likely fail to materialize or deliver on its promises.

The answer to Israel's transportation challenges, he said, is much simpler: investing in existing public transportation networks to run faster and carry more people.

"Extending roads to use the shoulders costs around NIS 20 million, and by doing that or creating some other kind of dedicated public transportation lane you can increase the number of passengers and the speed," Strolov said. "And then we have the existing national train system put in by the British, and yet our extension of it is very slow."

The Times of Israel previously reported that the northern section of the M1 line is back on the drawing board amid strong objections to the plans, delaying the connections between Tel Aviv and Modiin, Ra'anana, Kfar Saba, and Hod Hasharon.

Tal Kedmi, who is campaigning against the metro project as a whole and plans for the Ra'anana section specifically, said, "Our main objections have been to proposals to tunnel under existing houses and kindergartens, and the failure to deliver a station suitable for those with disabilities adjacent to Bet Levenstein, the country's largest rehabilitation facility." In addition, Kedmi is not convinced the project will solve traffic congestion and he remains critical of the government's responsiveness.

"Up until now, there has been no dialogue," he said. Also, there is "no evidence that the metro will actually alleviate traffic, and I believe the connections to the north have been scrapped for financial reasons on what is already a hugely expensive project."

So far the 2022 national budget has allocated NIS 6 Billion (\$1.8 Billion). But municipalities are expected to begin contributing funds towards the costs of the project starting next year, and property owners near the lines are expected to pay high taxes.

Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked has promised that she will bring additional metro lines forward for approval, although there is no time frame for doing so. The next step will include issuing building tenders and the start of requisitioning and clearing land.

Meanwhile, the first section of Tel Aviv's light rail network, the Red Line, could open before the end of the year, although substantial checks are still required. The line will run from Bat Yam through Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan to Petah Tikva, with a predicted overall journey time of just over an hour. It will have 34 stations total, including 10 underground. Alongside the big projects in Tel Aviv, the Transportation Ministry said it will invest around NIS 1 billion over the next five years in public and sustainable transportation, working with municipalities to improve their networks. Transportation Minister Merav Michaeli and Netanya Mayor Miriam Feierberg-Icher signed an agreement to move forward with such a project in Netanya in May. But details are unclear and a similar project in Ashdod that started in 2011 was considered a failure.

The agreement with Netanya aims to extend public transportation networks to connect the entire urban area within the city. Additional bus routes and cycle routes will be added to the city center and its outlying neighborhoods, increasing existing networks by 50% with priority on the roads given to public transportation and bicycles rather than private cars. Additional shading will also be introduced on sidewalks to encourage walking.

Michaeli suggested this approach represents a major policy shift in seeking to join up all elements of urban transportation, and has urged other municipalities to partner in similar schemes. Feierberg-Icher said that she sees the promotion of public transportation in Netanya as a necessary complementary step to the extensive ongoing urban renewal processes, which include the development of tens of thousands of housing units and offices within the city. Some cities, including Tel Aviv, are already taking significant steps to reduce car use, not least by reducing available parking in a city where it is already notoriously difficult to park. But the public transportation needed to replace the cars is lagging behind, observers say.

"There is no single solution," Strolov explained. "We need a mixed approach but these big-scale projects are slow, extremely expensive, and we prioritize them too much over simpler and more effective changes." Where public transportation can deliver, its success is reflected in greater demand (and often cost) for homes along routes — for example, Tel Aviv's soon to be opened light rail line.

That's a good indication that the public is ready to ditch its cars when there is truly an alternative, Strolov pointed out."

## B. JERUSALEM

### (i). INCIDENT AFFECTS SERVICES

From Times of Israel' 30.03.2022: "With security forces on high alert following a spate of deadly terror attacks, police on Wednesday shot two East Jerusalem Palestinians in the city's main public market during an arrest that turned violent. The suspects suffered light injuries to their lower extremities. An officer was also hurt.

Police said that the men raised suspicions with their behavior and remarks as they were travelling on the Jerusalem Light Rail, which they took to the Mahane Yehuda Market. Members of the public then alerted police. Officers arrived at the scene and after a search located the men in a butcher shop in the market. As police approached them, the two suspects "brutally attacked officers with punches and chokeholds," the statement said.....The incident disrupted service on the Jerusalem Light Rail, which stops at the main entrance of the market. Service was eventually resumed."

## (ii). THE JERUSALEM LRV

CAF of Spain has announced on 24.04.2022 that the first Urbos 100 LRV trains for the Jerusalem Red Line have been loaded at the company's factory at Saragossa onto a truck to be transferred to the port of Barcelona. The trains will thus arrive 6 months ahead of planned, so the entering to service will be earlier as well.

Within the coming four years 114 trains will be delivered at a total cost of \$ 350M (NIS 1.2 Bn); they will be added to the current fleet of 46 Alstom Citadis trains which have been in operation for some years, and all be initially integrated into the Red Line and later in the Green Line too.

'R.G.I.' of 10.05.22 adds: "The first of 114 Urbos 100 trams for the expansion of the Jerusalem light rail network has left the CAF factory at Zaragoza in Spain. Deliveries are running six months ahead of schedule, which is expected to enable entry into service earlier than planned. The Jerusalem tram network is operated by the Cfir consortium of CAF and local company Shapir Engineering under a 15-year concession which began in April 2021 and includes expansion of the Red Line. The TransJerusalem J-Net consortium of CAF and Shapir has a separate PPP concession to build and operate the future Green Line. CAF is to supply vehicles for use on both lines, and will refurbish the Red Line's current fleet of 46 Alstom Citadis trams."



- *Attached herewith is a picture of loading the LRV on a truck provided by courtesy of CAF Israel and Shapir.*

## (iii). PLANNED DRONE ATTACK FOILED.

From 'Times of Israel' 24.05.2022: "Israeli security forces uncovered an active Hamas terror cell in East Jerusalem that planned a series of attacks, including against far-right MK Itamar Ben Gvir, authorities said Tuesday.

According to the Shin Bet security agency and Israel Police, the five men planned a shooting attack against Ben Gvir and other Israeli targets, as well as kidnappings of Israeli soldiers, and a bombing attack on the Jerusalem light rail using a drone.

The security authorities said the cell was led by Rashid Rashak, "a prominent Hamas operative, a resident of the Old City of Jerusalem." Authorities seized a drone that was intended to be armed and used in an attack on Jerusalem's light rail. The investigation found that the cell planned to hide in the West Bank cities of Hebron or Jenin after committing the attacks, the Shin Bet said..."

## C. HAIFA.

### THE RAVKALIT

The 'Ravkalit' cable car from Merkazit HaMifratz up to the Carmel was meant to have been opened. Here is a press release dated 29th. March 2022:

"Doppelmayr Urban Cable Car to the University of Haifa

In Haifa, 20,000 students and commuters can now use a Doppelmayr cablecar to get to the University. It runs from HaMifratz central railroad and bus terminal to the Technion, Israel's biggest research centre, and on to the University of Haifa campus. As part of the public transport network, the gondola means a time-saving of up to 25 minutes for passengers and gives them a direct route to their workplaces and education facilities. During their working visit to Haifa, (Austrian) Minister of the Economy Margarete Schramböck and Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg took a trip on the cablecar and were able to experience the comfort of this new mode of public transport at first hand.

The new cable car to the University of Haifa is Israel's first urban gondola and forms an integral part of the public transport network. It incorporates six stations – three of which are being used for boarding and disembarkation from the start – and runs from HaMifratz Central railroad and bus terminal to the Technion, Israel's biggest research centre, and on to the University of Haifa campus. Passengers cover the approximately four-kilometre route up Mount Carmel in just under 20 minutes – with a unique view of the sea and no traffic jams. This saves them up to 25 minutes each way.

20,000 passengers can use the gondola on a daily basis. It runs from mornings to evenings for up to 19 hours a day.

Transport hub for optimized passenger comfort

The base station of the gondola is part of the multimodal transport hub known as Merkaz HaMifratz. Local and regional buses, the Metronit bus rapid transit (BRT) system and the railroad all converge at this point. The HaMifratz hub was modernized in 2018 with the aim of making operations more efficient and simplifying transfers for passengers. The cablecar is an integral part of the local transit system and represents a further step toward multimodal, barrier-free transportation in Haifa. This means that passengers can also use their public transport ticket to travel on the cablecar.

In addition to the multimodal transport facilities incorporating railroad, bus and cablecar, the HaMifratz mobility hub offers passengers one of Haifa's biggest shopping malls: the Lev Hamifratz Mall – also known as the Cinemall.

Highlight for architecture fans

As well as being the destination for around 18,000 students at the university and 15,600 students at the Technion plus staff, the university campus also attracts large numbers of architecture fans. The University's Eshkol Tower was designed by the world-famous Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer in 1962. The new cablecar now makes it easier and more convenient to visit this building.

Urban Cableways in Haifa

Haifa was an early adopter of the cable car as a means of public transport. The Carmelit-Haifa funicular was originally built in the 1950s and rebuilt by Garaventa in 2018 following a fire. It runs underground over its entire length and is therefore referred to as Haifa's subway. The 1.8-kilometre installation serves a total of six stations and is also integrated into the urban transport network and ticketing system.



"As well as making a valuable contribution to the regional transport network, the new cablecar in Haifa is also an impressive example of the worldwide demand for the technological know-how of top Austrian companies. Roughly six out of every 10 euros of Austria's economic output are generated abroad. This is precisely where the Federal Government is placing the focus with our economic initiative ReFocus Austria, which is aimed at driving growth in Austria's exports. This will play a pivotal role in attracting international investments, creating new jobs and strengthening Austria's position as a business location, which will then maintain our economic prosperity and finance our welfare state," says Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg. Margarete Schramböck added: "Austrian exports are a success story. The new Doppelmayr cablecar in Haifa impressively demonstrates the success of our companies in international markets. Our exporters and products made in Austria are in demand worldwide. The export sector safeguards every second job in Austria and ensures economic prosperity. An active trade policy is a crucial driver for the development of an international business location like Austria."

Details: «Rakavlit», Haifa.

Customer: Israeli Ministry of Transport

Length: 4.321 m

Vertical rise: 472 m

Capacity: 2,400 PPH

Speed: 5.0 m/s

Trip time: 19.0 min

Carriers: 150 10-passenger cabins

Doppelmayr Seilbahnen GmbH.  
Konrad-Doppelmayr-Straße 1, 6922  
Wolfurt / Austria

## D. HAIFA - NAZARETH.

On 13.04.22 the Ministry of Transportation, through the Trans-Israel Company, announced the concession tender for the financing, planning, construction and operation of the light rail line. The tender to the amount of NIS 3 Billion includes the construction of a double track along 41 km, 20 stations, procurement of a fleet of stock, electrical infrastructure, signalling and control, establishment of a depot and control centre, operation and maintenance for a period of 25 years. Tenders for the franchise are to be submitted by the end of the year and the winning group will be announced during 2023.

From a press release of 13.04.2022 by both Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry and the project management company Trans Israel:

The Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry through the project management company Trans-Israel published today the concessionaire tender for financing, design, building and operating of the tram/train designated "Nofit" ('Scenery in Hebrew) line between Haifa and Nazareth.

The \$0.94Bn (NIS 3Bn) project includes a 41 km double-track line, 20 stations, more than 30 trains (the final quantity still to be determined), track infrastructures and electrification, signalling and control, a depot and a control centre, and operating and control for a period of 25 years; train speed will be up to 100 km/h and a service frequency of no more than 4 minutes.

The bidders are requested to provide their quotes by the end of 2022; the winner will be announced during 2023; works by the concessionaire to start in 2024.

The project will provide a seamless journey between Haifa and Nazareth making all the surrounding inhabited areas much more accessible than today; it will help further development of the Lower Galilee area.

Two months ago Trans Israel announced the name of the following bidders approved to participate in the concessionaire tender:

Group 1: Dan Buses-Israel, CREC-China, PESA-Poland, Shenyang-China, ATM-Italy.

Group 2: Shapir-Israel, CAF-Spain, Keren Noy Found-Israel.

Group 3: Minrav-Israel, Electra-Israel, Alstom-France, Allied-Israel.

Group 4: COMSA-Spain, GLOBALVIA-Spain, JSC Transmashholding-Russia, Lesico-Israel.

Group 5: Meir-Israel, Afcon-Israel, CRRC-China, CRCC-China.

Group 6: Shikun & Binui-Israel, Egged Buses-Israel, Stadler-Switzerland, Hitachi-Japan & Italy, TEXMACO-India, Downer-Australia.

Both Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mrs. Merav Michaeli, the ministry's General Manager Mrs. Michal Frank, and Trans Israel General Manager Mr. Dan Schoenbach, mentioned the project as one of Israel's most important infrastructure projects that will entirely change the area.



Photo 22: Attached

herewith computer simulation of the government city complex (Kiryat Hamemshala in Hebrew) at Nazareth (717 KB) provided by courtesy of Mrs. Sarit Giladi Dor-Trans Israel Communication consultant; credit for simulation and picture: Trans Israel and Nof Hagalil (new name of former Upper Nazareth).

4... The route to Nazareth has been planned and it seems that the planners are keen to make this railway line a 'light-rail' [Tram]. The issue has still not been decided upon.

In any event this new train/ tram system will handle 100,000 travelers every working day, with a tram arriving every 4 mins at peak times. The full route will take 50 min from Nazareth to Haifa central. The route will be 41 kms.

5... At first 2 Chinese companies were interested - [as part of the finance & building consortium] in the tender for the Haifa -Nazareth line. The DAN company has left this consortium - as they 'just' don't want to work with the Chinese company. While the other Chinese company had 'forced' the Russian company - that wanted in, to leave the group.

6... The Gush Dan Metro complex had at the beginning [ 2020] a serious contender for the new GREEN line into Tel Aviv. [That will run N-S in/ under Tel Aviv - but East of the RED line ]. This new Green line [ by 2027 maybe ] was to be very long and less complicated than the RED line. The Justice

Ministry has forced the Metro-builders Managers to 'cancel' any future Chinese participation in the Gush Dan project - as the Chinese workers have been exploited and there are now 'legal and prosecutorial' issues at these Chinese companies.

7... So, it seems that the Chinese companies are now not at all keen to participate in some 'small' project in the North - as they have a 'bad name' and face 'legal' scrutiny -with their staff, and work ethics.

8... On top of everything else [ the pandemic and the issues that still need to be closed ] - the Ministry of Transport [ that is very rich with all their 'car' income ] , has a 'poor-pusher ' - as the MINISTER. She is much less effective than Israel Katz - who was bull-dozer when it came to getting 'transport' moving - when he was minister.

Steve Sattler

## E. GENERAL COPING WITH ISRAELI DRIVERS.

On 13. April (NOT 01.04.22) came this:

"Following the government's decision to promote a national plan for smart transportation:

The Ministry of Transportation, the National Authority for Public Transportation, the Innovation Authority & Netivei Ayalon are launching a national project to conduct tests to operate autonomous public transportation.

Promoting autonomous public transportation: In recent years, Israel has "bought itself" a leading place in the field of smart transportation with over 600 Israeli startups in the field & over 20 development centers of car manufacturers and their suppliers. At the same time, in March 2022, an amendment to the Traffic Ordinance was approved that would allow more advanced experiments to be performed than those permitted today, including the commercial operation of an autonomous vehicle without a driver.

In addition, Israel is interested in integrating the existing technologies on the market into the public transportation system in Israel, with the understanding that in the future, transportation in Israel will be based on

efficient and smart public transportation. Harnessing Israeli technological innovation in the field of autonomous vehicles in favor of improving the public transportation system in Israel will make Israel a world leader in experiments with autonomous public transportation.

Thus: the Ministry of Transportation and others are launching an innovation project to support the implementation of experiments to promote autonomous public transportation. This is a two-stage project that aims to examine the feasibility of integrating autonomous vehicles in the public transportation system in Israel.

The project includes an examination of various models of operation & their economic & operational efficiency, and will connect public transportation operators with innovative technology companies in Israel & around the world. The project will also increase public awareness of autonomous vehicles & their characteristics: safety, driving experience and environmental benefits.

In the first phase of the project, the Innovation Authority will issue a call for support for experiments in autonomous bus experiments by public transport operators who will connect to companies developing autonomous vehicle systems. The winners in the call will receive a grant & perform a series of experiments in a field of experiments and in operational areas in order to reach operational technological feasibility.

In the second phase of the project, some companies will receive from the National Public Transport Authority a license to operate independent public transport services on public roads, including passenger transportation. This means that within 1-2 years. Residents will be able to board autonomously operated bus lines & enjoy the use of groundbreaking technology.

The project will also be able to map the infrastructure needed to operate an autonomous public transportation system, & support & test the business organization of public transportation operators, with the intention that companies that successfully complete the pilot will be given the opportunity to operate public transportation services.

New legislation, which enables the commercial operation of autonomous vehicles without a driver, together with the publication of the current call for proposals, together express the Ministry's vision for promoting public transportation."

## OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

137:07.

### A. TURKEY.

#### (i). CONTRACT FOR REBUILDING LINE TO BULGARIA CANCELLED.

From 'R.G.I.' 11.03.2022: "The country's highest administrative court has cancelled the contract awarded in June last year for reconstruction of TCDD's main line between Ispartaküle and Halkali, which forms the southern section of the Turkey's principal rail link with western Europe.

The Council of State ruled that the 'closed' tendering process, which was not announced in advance and under which only invited companies were allowed to bid, was illegal.

It rejected an argument by the Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure that a closed tender was needed due to the 'urgency' of the project, pointing out that the tender covered for work to be completed within 1,170 days. The tender law defined 'urgent' as relating to situations such as natural disasters, epidemics and danger of loss of life or property, but the court said none of these applied in this case.

Including a planned realignment for 200 km/h running, the reconstruction of the main line between the Bulgarian border at Kapküle/Svilengrad and Halkali has been made more complex because of the planned development of the 'Kanal Istanbul' ship canal. This is intended to link the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, bypassing the Bosphorus Straits, but would bisect the railway alignment between Halkali and Ispartaküle, necessitating a rerouting of up to 10 km of the line.

Construction of twin-bore tunnel under the future waterway had been included as part of the tender.

The civil works contract was won by a consortium of Gülermak, Yapi Merkez? and Tasyapi with a bid of TL3.1Bn, the lowest of five bids submitted from the nine groups invited to bid. Apart from the proposed tunnel, no details of the work packages covered by the contract had been released.

#### Changing background

Meanwhile, development of both the canal and the railway could now be impacted by the war in Ukraine. The main rationale for construction of the canal, which has been strongly backed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was the increase in oil tanker traffic through the Bosphorus to the Black Sea serving the Caspian oil fields belonging to Kazakhstan and Russia. That trade is now under threat due to the international embargo on Russian oil and the possible rerouting of Kazakh crude via other pipelines.

At the same time, the war is also expected to have a long-term impact on rail-borne Eurasian freight between China, eastern Asia and Europe, most of which had until recently passed through Russia. Restrictions on that corridor could make the so-called 'middle route' through Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan an appealing alternative for shippers seeking to continue using rail.

The rebuilding of the Kap?küle – Halkali corridor had been scheduled for completion by 2027. This was to have been complemented by the long-planned Istanbul orbital freight line linking Halkali with Gebze via the Yavuz Selim bridge



from 2029, which would enable freight trains to avoid the busy Marmaray suburban corridor through the centre of the city.

These deadlines were included as conditions for a €275M EU grant and a €150M EBRD loan granted to Turkey in the last two years, but they now appear unlikely to be met unless the tendering can be restarted rapidly or the court ruling can be overturned on appeal."

#### (ii). UK FINANCE FOR HIGH SPEED LINE.

From R.G.I. 21.03.22: "UK Export Finance has agreed to guarantee £1.8Bn through its Buyer Credit Scheme to support construction of the Polatl? – Izmir high speed line, which will create a more direct route between the capital and Turkey's third largest city.

Under the agreement UK companies are set to benefit from contracts for rail equipment including track, turnouts, point machines, fasteners, material and equipment for signalling, telecommunication and electrification systems as well as project insurance and freight forwarding services.

The financing was led by Credit Suisse and Standard Chartered Bank. The guarantees are being provided in line with Green Loan Principles to help Turkey meet its COP26 climate change commitments. Reinsurance is also being provided by international export credit agencies including SACE in Italy, SERV in Switzerland and OeKB in Austria.

#### New and rebuilt alignment

Once completed, the line will reduce the rail distance between Ankara and Izmir from 824 km to 624 km. The new line will diverge from the existing Ankara – Konya high-speed corridor at a junction at Kocahacili, 27 km south of Polatl?, from where it will run west to Afyonkarahisar on a new alignment. From there the line will run west, broadly following an existing rail corridor via various cut-offs and realignments to serve Usak, Esme, Salihli, Manisa and Izmir. Operating speeds would be at least 200 km/h throughout. The Ankara – Izmir journey time is expected to fall from around 14 h today to 3 h 30 min once the new line has been completed.

Work on the project started in 2020 with infrastructure manager TCDD reporting in March that 52% of the required civil works had been completed. Key interventions required include construction of 41 tunnels totalling 35 km, 56 viaducts totalling 23 km, 779 bridges, and 385 under- and overpasses.

According to the government's 2022 budget, the Ministry for Transport has allocated TL33Bn for the scheme in total, of which TL28Bn is to be sourced from external lenders by 2025.

The Ankara – Izmir programme was to have been tendered in 2016 in three stages: Polatl? - Afyonkarahisar, Afyonkarahisar - Usak and Usak - Izmir. A contract worth TL879M was awarded to a consortium of Tekfen Insaat and Dogus Insaat for civil works between Afyonkarahisar and Usak, with work to be completed in 36 months, but the contract subsequently collapsed and procurement was relaunched in 2020. This led to ERG winning with a bid of €2.2Bn.

Although based in Turkey, ERG has subsidiaries in London (ERG International UK Ltd) and Switzerland (SSB Sauerwein & Schaefer Bau), both of which will be supporting the Ankara – Izmir project.

Commenting on the UKEF deal, Murat Dedeoglu, ERG International UK Group CEO, said his company was 'honoured with the achievement and its historic milestone. ERG look forward to strengthening ties with UKEF and the Turkish government in the construction sector and adding value to the economies by making advance engineering and technological solutions available.'

#### Seeking UK support

ERG International UK approached the UK's Railway Industry Association in October 2020 asking for support to understand the British supply chain's capability in the areas of superstructures, electrification and signalling.

'This is clearly a significant boost for both the UK railway industry, showing it has world-leading products and expertise which can export across the globe, and for the wider Global Britain agenda', commented RIA Export Director Neil Walker. He told Railway Gazette International that UK suppliers would receive at least 20% of the contract value in orders under UKEF lending terms,

although a significantly higher proportion was likely in this case. Work on all three sections has now commenced, but there is no clear indication when the line is expected to be completed.

(Excavation of the first major tunnel for the Ankara – Izmir high speed line was completed on October 16 last year. Tunnel T1 is on the Esme - Salihli section of the route.)"



Photo: Railway Gazette

#### (iii). LONG-TERM HIGH SPEED RAIL EXPANSION PLAN

In 'I.R.J.' 14.04.2022: "Turkey announces high-speed rail expansion plans under 2053 Plan.

Turkey's minister of transport Mr Adil Karaismailoglu has announced plans to increase the number of regions connected by the high-speed network from eight to 52 by 2053, as the country develops its 30-year transport plan

Speaking at the Transport and Logistics Master Plan - Transport 2053 Vision Launch in Istanbul alongside the general manager of Turkish State Railways (TCDD), Mr Metin Akbas, Karaismailoglu said the expansion of the network is expected to cost \$US 198Bn over the next 30 years.

Karaismailoglu says the government is adopting an integrated approach for transport and communications systems, and is looking to develop freight traffic in a way that also benefits passenger services with a focus on mobility, logistics and digitalisation. The plan will develop a more sustainable, safe, environmentally friendly, accessible, comprehensive, fast and technologically more innovative transport sector with a new, fast and comfortable infrastructure.

"We will ensure integration in transport and logistics activities in order to become a global leader in transport and logistics and a leader in this region,"

he says. "We will increase fair access to transport services and improve infrastructure quality."

Rail carried 33 million tonnes of freight in Turkey in 2019, with a market share of 3.13%. Karaismailoglu says this is expected to increase to 55M tonnes with a market share of more than 5% in 2023, with the market share further increasing to more than 11% in 2029 and around 22% in 2053.

"This will result in a seven-times increase in rail's share of freight between 2019 and 2053," Karaismailoglu says. "We expect the share of international freight to increase by ten times." The number of passengers carried by rail is also expected to increase from 19.5M in 2023 to 145M in 2035 and 269M in 2053.

"We know the importance of transferring the share of passenger and freight from road to other transport modes in order to make the most effective use of the geographical location of our country," Karaismailoglu says. "In the Transport and Logistics Master Plan, there is a special emphasis on railways."

## B. SAUDI ARABIA

### (i). CAF SERVICE CONTRACT

From 'I.R.J.' 14.03.2022: "Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) has awarded CAF a five-year, €200M service contract which covers the Saudi operator's eighteen push-pull trains which operate on the Riyadh - Dammam and Riyadh - Qurayyat lines, built by the manufacturer, including technical support.

There is also an agreement to establish a joint engineering department, to be known as the Engineering Excellence Centre. The department will train SAR staff with the necessary operating and maintenance skills for the train fleet, as well as adapting SAR's facilities for the overhaul of the trains, which were delivered in 2015.

The facilities will require modification to support bogie and axle maintenance as well as the fitting out of specific areas for the overhaul of engines and pneumatic components. Strategic agreements will also be created with local universities and technical centres to conduct research work and improve railway competence and expertise in the region.

The contract also includes implementing SAR's Digital Hub Centre as a benchmark in the region for train digitalisation. The aim is to develop digital systems and tools for trains in the SAR fleet. This will be based on CAF's LeadMind digital train platform."



• Photo: Railway Gazette

### (ii). RIYADH METRO WIFI

From 'R.G.I.' 24.03.2022: "A Czech company Passengera has completed its largest contract to date, covering the provision of internet connectivity and wi-fi on the Riyadh metro which is nearing completion. 'The project includes the design of the communications infrastructure, the installation of wi-fi in several different types of trains and metro stations, quality control, connection strength and seamless user authentication', said CEO Jan Kolar. 'Part of the

10-year contract also includes a management and monitoring suite, which enables the metro operator to monitor and manage all of the 1,100 installed devices in real-time."

### (iii). NEW INTER CITY FLEET SOUGHT.

From 'R.G.I.' 17.03.2022: "National railway company Saudi Arabia Railways has called for expressions of interest in a contract to design, supply and maintain its next generation of inter-city passenger trains.

The first batch of new trainsets is planned to enter service by 2025, increasing capacity on the Riyadh – Dammam route. Further trainsets would be ordered for growth on the Riyadh to Hail section of the North–South Railway. The trainsets would be equipped with ETCS, and the contract would include 10 years of maintenance.

'Planning and delivering the growth of the kingdom's railway is a priority for SAR', said Dr Bashar Al Malik, CEO of SAR which was formed from the merger of Saudi Railways Organization and Saudi Railways Co in 2021. 'By procuring a new generation of modern passenger trains we intend to grow our share of the Riyadh to Dammam travel market by continuing to provide excellence in customer service.'

### (iv). MECCA METRO VIDEO

The link: Why the World's Biggest Metro Only Runs 7 Days a Year - YouTube will bring one to a jaunty approach (just 4 minutes plus some ads) to the Metro system constructed from 2010 in Mecca and operated on only one week per year, to transport the Haj pilgrims between holy sites. It has 9 stations in 18.2 km. (11.2 miles). It can operate 24 12-car trains per hour in each direction, each conveying 3,000 pilgrims (replacing 50,000 buses!)

### (v). PRIVATE PARTNERS SOUGHT TO INVEST IN RAIL EXPANSION.

From 'I.R.J.' 18.03.2022: "Saudi Arabian minister of transport and Saudi Railways Company (SAR) chairman Mr Saleh Bin Nasser Al-Jasser has unveiled a raft of economic and industrial opportunities worth more than Riyals 1Bn (\$US 266.6M) as the country looks to attract private partners to its expanding rail sector.

Al-Jasser outlined the opportunities during the launch of the virtual Railway Industrial Opportunities Forum on March 17 as part of the National Industrial Development and Logistics Program (NDLP). The minister says the forum aims to expand partnership opportunities between the public and private sectors, including the development of rail infrastructure. He also indicated that the network could be opened to private freight and passenger operators in the future.

During the forum Al-Jasser announced plans to expand the Saudi network by more than 8,000km, double freight and passenger capacity, and adopt modern technology and advanced technical solutions to reduce rail's environmental impact. He said the country's 5,500km network had already carried more than 33 million passengers and more than 70 million tonnes of freight over the past 10 years.

The CEO of SAR, Dr Bashar bin Khalid Al-Malik, encouraged the private sector to invest in opportunities as partners, saying that it was now a strategic objective to improve the localisation of the railway industry supporting the network. He added that since the merger of Saudi Railways Organisation and Saudi Railways in 2021, SAR has focused on developing local industrial capabilities by encouraging partnerships and knowledge transfers with international manufacturers.

SAR has also called for expressions of interest to design, supply and maintain its next generation of inter-city passenger trains. The first trains are due to enter service in 2025 and will increase capacity on the Riyadh - Dammam line.



A further batch could be ordered for the Riyadh - Hail section of the North-South Railway. The trains will be equipped with ETCS, with the contract to include 10 years' maintenance."

#### (vi). TOURISM ISSUES

In April there was some correspondence on the Continental Railway Circle chatline on the possibilities for visiting railways in Saudi Arabia: Here are some (anonymised) excerpts.

From Ray: "Subject to world events being kind to us, I expect to run a multi-faceted rail tour this November (due to impending loss of internal contact in early 2023). For said tour, both the local contact and our inbound agent have been to check (and Madain Salah too plus the wrecks between the two and remaining artifacts).

A warning for independent visitors: There are no issues in going independently to KSA as I've done but:

1. The Medina Museum is the opposite side of the city to the Haramain HS station with its frequent service to Jeddah. One must travel between the two via the ring road as the centre is forbidden for non-Muslims and trying to go direct could result in deportation. Potentially the same for not alighting from the train at Jeddah and trying to continue to Mecca.

2. Some of the artefacts on the Hijaz route north need 4Wheel-Drive to access.

3. The Madain Salah museum is currently being incorporated into a large new resort and solo visitors just appearing are unlikely to gain access. There's a big tourist expansion for that area.

4. With the exceptions of Medina and Mecca the country is free to travel in and the north line now extends from Riyadh to the Jordan border, but best not to venture right up to the border or try to take the border road. That would be asking for trouble!"

"At Medina I know there are some hulks and rows of bogie box vans and once upon a time a Pakistani Moslem engineer drove one loco a short distance for a while, though I don't know if passengers were actually carried, but any pictures - also of the surviving buildings and infrastructure - would be appreciated..." (Ed.)

Subject: Re: Japan - Cape Gauge: "I suppose one could add that 3ft 6in is the reasonable approximation for Imperial-minded folk to One Metre gauge and metre gauge seems to have a correct set of dimensions for height, centre of gravity, width of vehicles, profile, carrying capacity and so forth. (The fact that the Beirut-Damascus and the Hedjaz railways went for five centimetres more remains a bit of a mystery.) Walter

My understanding (not sure where I picked it up from) re the Ottoman 1.05m gauge is that it started when a concession for the new line - the first to use it - specified gauge to be 'greater than 1 metre' - what was wanted was standard, rather than narrow, gauge, what they got met the specification, if not the desire... Jeremy

Ray: "In response to Jeremy and the original 1.05m line. "Yes, I think it's Tourret who says that the concession to construct the line from Beirut stipulated that it must be over 1m gauge. The Hijaz simply followed suit for convenience of the connection. I doubt there's any info in the Medina Museum and I never made it to Medina in my attempt two years ago due to the city closing to tourists two days before my visit due to Covid. I was returned to Jeddah on the Haramain HS line. But - Not expecting such issues this November as Saudi tries to ramp up tourism but in this now uncertain world what's our next impediment?

PS - Officially, non-Muslims are allowed up to the enclosure around Masjid An-Nabawi. The area is signposted. Anything around that, but still within the 1st Ring Road (King Faisal) is open to non-Muslims; that includes Assalam Museum, as well as all the hotels around the mosque.

Loco 111 (Hartmann 3465/1910) is the loco that was made operational at the Madinah Station Museum. It was first driven by an Indian Muslim driver, and later by drivers under contract from CFH (Syria). Passengers could ride in one refurbished German-built coach. The train service ended before the start of the Syrian Civil War.

The loco hulks (No. 54, 111, 157, 158 and the Tubize 0-6-0T) and wagon remains at Madinah have long ago been either removed or refurbished for display either there or at other Hijaz Railway stations along the line, which have been turned into tourist attractions. There are lots of older and more recent photos of what was and is on display at Madinah on GoogleMaps.

There is no harm in venturing right up to the Jordanian border or trying to take the border road, otherwise how would people who enter or exit KSA from/to Jordan cross over? I was in Aqaba (JOR) last month and went to Tabuk (KSA) on a day trip, however as we were visiting friends I did not have time to go to the old station (now also a tourist site).

I also don't think loco 105 (Hartmann 3465/1910) will ever run again, it is now on display inside the 4-road loco shed together with sister loco 111 (Hartmann 3546/1912) which has had its boiler cut open, 2-6-0 54 (Hartmann 3094/1907) and the 64-seat 3rd class bogie coach (not German-built, but Baume & Merpent 1905). Outside in the yard, aside from a handful of wagons of various types, are two lines of six covered wagons, one headed by loco 157 or 158 (SLM 2292-93/1912) and the other by its tender. The sister loco 157/158 was taken away for display at one of the stations up the line, as was the Tubize 0-6-0T (possibly DHP 108).

The Station Museum is one of the stops on Madinah's Hop-On Hop-Off Tourist Bus Red Line. This links up most of Madinah's tourist attractions and starts/ends at the Clock Tower just outside Masjid An-Nabawi, as does the much shorter Green Line, which only goes around the outside of Al-Haram.

Thomas.

It was the Chinese workers who built the Makkah Metro as well as the Makkah section of the High-Speed railway who had to convert to Islam in order to work on the projects. That was done with the understanding of their employer, a Chinese state-owned entity. They would have no problems when returning to China, unless they decide to stick with their new religion and become activists.

The Al Masha'ar Al Mugaddassah Metro only runs during Hajj, at which time Rasarana Bhd. staff is flown in from Malaysia to operate it.

"In the 1995 DGEG book you are referring to Ahmad von Denffer, a German railway enthusiast, author and translator born in 1949, who wrote the chapter on then-almost-abandoned Madinah Station of the book (9 pages), at a time when it was still difficult for a non-Muslim to go there.

While religious tourism has been a mainstay of the Saudi economy for centuries, only relatively few visitors took an interest in the railway remains at Madinah even after the station was turned into a museum about two decades ago. At the time when the steam train was running, most visitors were locals who would go there at the end of the day.

After Saudi Arabia introduced national tourism as one alternative source of income to its oil revenues, most of the old stations along the line which had been left to decay for decades were refurbished as tourist sites. This also included the sometimes not so historically-accurate restoration of abandoned locomotives and rolling stock and their transfer to locations where they were deemed better needed. These sites, such as Meda'in Saleh could also be visited by international tour groups on tourist visas, while Madinah was still closed to them.

With the introduction of the Saudi tourist eVisa in 2019 the Madinah station site was also opened to all international tourism and only the central Al Haram area of the city inside the 1st Ring Road around the holy mosques officially remains off-limits to non-Muslim visitors. However, Saudi non-religious tourist attractions are not especially good at advertising themselves and the introduction of the eVisa was shortly followed by a closure of the borders due to Covid. Now that the country has opened up again, I would expect to see a growing number of non-Muslim international visitors to the museum, especially as it is one of the few remaining historic sites in the city.

I had for a long time had the opportunity to visit the site, but always opted for more exciting countries in the region where trains were still running and now that I would like to visit what is keeping me back are financial, time and work constraints, just like you.

"Thanks so much for giving us more insight into the Medina Museum. It was 2020 I was there on a relatively simple to obtain e-visa, entering over the causeway from Bahrain on a simple break of journey further east on Gulf Air. I made my way covering all the rail to Jeddah (one simple air hop from Ha'il to Jeddah) then the Covid restrictions hit.

I was allowed to use the HS line as far as the intermediate station to Medina, but Medina was on a lock-out for tourists, so I never got there! I was planning to get a cab to take me from HS station to museum via the ring road and so avoiding anything near the Haram centre.

I think the likelihood of the restored steam loco ever working again is slim But, the Kingdom is definitely trying to push non-Islamic tourism. What's your view?"

## C. GULF STATES.

### (i). DUBAI FREIGHT TERMINAL.

From 'I.R.J.' 01.04.2022: "Etihad Rail and Dubai Industrial City (DIC) have announced plans to establish a rail freight terminal on the 51 hectare DIC site to the southwest of Dubai.

DIC is located within the vicinity of Jebel Ali Port, Al Maktoum International Airport and Dubai's road network, and will be served by Stage 2 of the Etihad Rail network, which will run from the border with Saudi Arabia at Ghufeifat to Fujairah on the Gulf of Oman via Abu Dhabi and Dubai. A ceremony was held last month to mark the completion of track laying on the Abu Dhabi - Dubai section of the railway.

Etihad Rail says establishing the terminal will contribute to cementing the UAE's position as an international trade hub and boost Dubai's global competitiveness in manufacturing, logistics, transport, trade and investment. DIC is home to more than 780 companies including more than 240 factories, which will be able to access Etihad Rail's services. DIC also has a range of logistics facilities and a substantial storage area covering 40 hectares.

"The terminal will contribute to strengthening the supply chain and freight logistics services, in line with the UAE's efforts to develop the country's transport and logistics sector," says Mr Shadi Malak, CEO of Etihad Rail. "With a capacity of 5 million tonnes, the terminal will connect the industrial and manufacturing centres in the UAE, open new trade routes, and support the country's sustainable development."

### (ii). ABU DHABI TO DUBAI LINE COMPLETED.

Adding to our previous report: From 'Railway Technology' 02.03.2022: "The UAE's national railway network developer and operator Etihad Rail has completed the work to connect Abu Dhabi and Dubai through a direct line.

This project comes within the framework of The UAE Railway Programme. Introduced under the Projects of the 50, with an investment worth \$13.61Bn (AED50Bn), this programme includes a national network of railway projects that would connect seven emirates.

The final piece on the railway track was placed by UAE Finance Minister Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Etihad Rail chairman Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The completion of this project will now pave the way for a new phase of logistic and economic integration between the two emirates. With a length of 256km the rail line is designed on the basis of the highest international standards and specifications in connection with environmental aspects, security and quality. This route is expected to be instrumental in the development of the UAE National Rail Network, facilitate goods transportation within the UAE as well as lower transportation expenses.

The rail line encompasses 29 bridges, 60 crossings and 137 drainage channels. The entire excavation and backfill work covered 46 million cubic metres, with the involvement of 13,300 workers.

UAE Finance Minister Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed said: "The completion of the main railway of the UAE National Rail Network project between Dubai and Abu Dhabi represents an important pivotal phase that shows the great benefits of this national project in linking all the emirates of the country and enhancing the transportation process between industrial and economic centres, and facilitating transportation within the UAE."

Last month Etihad Rail signed a \$517M (AED1.9Bn) loan agreement with First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) for supporting railway passenger transport services in the region."

## D. EGYPT.

### (i). TALGO TRAINSETS DELIVERED

From 'R.G.I.' 01.04.2022: "The first of seven Talgo trainsets for Egyptian National Railways has been delivered from Spain to the port of Alexandria. In April 2019 ENR selected Talgo to supply and maintain a fleet of 160 km/h inter-city trainsets for its principal routes linking Alexandria, Cairo and Aswan, in a project funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development. Each 14-car trainset will have five first-class and eight second-class coaches plus a buffet car, giving a total of 492 seats, along with a diesel-electric locomotive and a generator car.

The interior configuration is derived from the trainsets supplied for the Haramain High Speed Rail line in Saudi Arabia, which are designed to operate in very high temperatures and pressure sealed to minimise the ingress of sand."





### (ii). KUWAIT TO FUND STUDIES FOR EGYPT-SUDAN LINE

From 'I.R.J.' 12.04.2022: "The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development will finance the preparation of technical, economic and environmental feasibility studies.

Egypt and Kuwait have signed a Dinars 750,000M (\$US 2.45M) agreement to prepare technical, economic and environmental feasibility studies for a rail connection between Egypt and Sudan. The funding will be provided through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Egyptian minister of international cooperation, Ms Rania Al-Mashat, said the grant builds the efforts undertaken by the Egyptian government to enhance economic relations with the countries in the African continent within the framework of the 2063 Development Agenda.

Preliminary studies for the 363.5km line, which would connect the two countries' rail networks, were completed in February with the line to be built in two stages. The first is a planned 283.5km line from Aswan to Toshka and Abu Simbel, in southern Egypt, with the second stage extending the line a further 80km to Halfa in northern Sudan.

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

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

### (iii). KOREAN LOAN TO FINANCE SIGNALLING UPGRADE

ETCS Level 1 will be installed on the 224km Luxor - High Dam line.

From 'I.R.J.' 25.04.22: "Egyptian National Railways (ENR) has signed an agreement with the Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for a \$US 251.6M soft loan to finance upgrades to the signalling system on the 224km Luxor - High Dam line.

The project includes installing ETCS Level 1 to enhance safety and train control along the line. The line has 53 stations, with a line speed of 120km/h. The upgrade project will increase capacity on the line from 78 trains a day to 200 trains a day.

Talks to increase cooperation between ENR and EDCF were held alongside the signing ceremony.

ENR awarded Hyundai Rotem a Won 122.5Bn (\$US 110.1M) contract in April 2021 to resignal the 118km Nag Hammadi - Luxor line as part of the Egypt National Railways Modernisation Project (ENRMP)."

'Railway Gazette' 08.05.22 reported more details: "The cabinet has approved two railway financing packages, including an agreement for Export-Import Bank of Korea to provide a loan for signalling modernisation on the 224km Luxor – Aswan High Dam railway.

Electronic signalling, new control systems and the installation of automatic barriers at 70 level crossings is intended to enhance safety and reduce headways to increase passenger and freight capacity, while allowing the maximum speed to be raised from 120 to 160km/h.

In January Egyptian National Railways and Export-Import Bank of Korea signed an agreement for the Korean Economic Development Co-operation Fund to provide US\$251.6M soft loan to finance the project.

The cabinet has also approved a draft agreement which would see the European Investment Bank provide a €221M loan for upgrading the 119 km Tanta – Mansura – Damietta line.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has awarded a US\$2.5M grant to finance technical, economic and environmental feasibility studies for the construction of a 570km line linking Egypt and Sudan.

Transport Minister Kamel Al Wazir also met the Kazakh ambassador in early April to discuss business opportunities including the possibility of the countries co-operating to establish a rolling stock factory."

### (iv). SIEMENS CONTRACT FOR NEW NETWORK

In 'I.R.J.' 30.05.22: "Egypt's National Authority for Tunnels (NAT) has signed a contract with Siemens Mobility, Orascom Construction and The Arab Contractors to build 2000km of high-speed lines and create what Siemens says would be the sixth-largest high-speed rail system in the world. The Siemens Mobility share of the contract is €8.1Bn, including an €2.7Bn initial contract for the first 660km route from Ain Sokhna to Marsa Matrouh and Alexandria signed on September 1 2021. According to Dr Roland Busch, president and CEO of Siemens, "it is the biggest order in the history of Siemens."

The 15-year turnkey contract also includes the design, construction and maintenance of a 1,100km route between Cairo and Abu Simbel near the Sudan border, and a third route running for 225km to connect the archaeological site of Luxor with Hurghada on the Red Sea. In total, the three-line network will connect 60 cities with trains operating at up to 230km/h, and some 90% of the population of Egypt will have access to the new rail system. It will be fully electrified and could cut transport emissions by as much as 70%, according to Siemens.

Siemens Mobility will supply 41 eight-car Velaro high-speed trains, 94 four-car high-capacity Desiro EMUs for regional services and 41 Vectron freight locomotives. On all three lines, Siemens Mobility will also install signalling based on ETCS Level 2, the traction power supply system and its digital Railigent system for asset and maintenance management. Construction of the new network will directly create up to 40,000 local jobs, with an additional 6,700 jobs at Egyptian suppliers and indirectly through the wider Egyptian economy.

"This landmark transport project is truly historic for both Egypt and Siemens and we are honoured to partner with the Ministry of Transport to reimagine the future of transport in Egypt," says Siemens Mobility CEO, Mr Michael Peter. "The extensive 2,000km high-speed rail network will connect 60 cities and enable around 500 million journeys a year. It will link the country like never before, fight pollution and global warming, while also providing an effective and reliable method for the movement of goods."



## E. IRAN.

### (i). FREIGHT FROM PAKISTAN.

From 'R.G.I.' 04.04.2022: "The fourth Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul freight train departed on March 19 carrying six containers of high-value products for Turkey. Nine eastbound trains had run since services resumed after a decade during December, with traffic including rice."

### (ii). STANDARD GAUGE INTO PAKISTAN?

More on this route: From 'I.R.J.' March 2022 p.6: "Pakistan Railways is working on plans to convert the 635km broad-gauge line from Quetta to Taftan on the Pakistan-Iranian border to standard gauge.

The 'Dawn' newspaper reports that the proposal would support the transport of high-value goods to Europe and Central Asia. Trains on the Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul route currently take around five days to complete the journey, with the newspaper quoting sources suggesting that this is because of the condition of the track. It is claimed that a standard-gauge line would reduce journey times to 20 hours. The project is reported to cost \$US500M but requires approval by the Ministry of Railways."

[Here – in comparison to the scheme mentioned below with Afghanistan – the reasons for the choice of a particular gauge are made clear. Ed.]

### (iii). TRAIN DERAILMENT

On 08.06.2022 Steve sent: "At least 17 people have been killed and dozens more hurt after a train derailed in eastern Iran, state media report.

The train, which was carrying 348 passengers, came off the line between the cities of Mashhad & Yazd about 50km from Tabas. Emergency services officials said the train collided with an excavator before being knocked off the track. They warned that the death toll could rise because many of the injured were in a critical condition in hospital. Tabas County Governor Ali Akbar Rahimi told state media that four of the train's seven carriages were knocked off the line.



Footage posted online by local media showed a number of carriages on their side, as well as a yellow excavator on its side by the track.

National rescue service spokesman Mojtaba Khaled told reporters that a large rescue operation was under way and that three helicopters and 10 ambulances had been dispatched to the scene. State TV broadcast footage from a hospital where the injured were receiving treatment. One of them told a reporter that they felt the train brake suddenly and then slow before the derailment.

An investigation has been launched by the Tabas prosecutor to establish how the train came to strike the excavator.

Iran saw its deadliest train disaster in 2004, when a train loaded with petrol, fertilizer and cotton crashed near the north-eastern city of Neyshabur, killing almost 320 people. In 2016 49 people were killed when a train that had broken down was hit by another train in the northern province of Semnan."

## F. AFGHANISTAN

### APPROVAL OF LINE FROM UZBEKISTAN AND KABUL TO PAKISTAN

From 'I.R.J.' March 2022 p.9: "Afghanistan's Taliban-led government has approved construction of a rail link with Pakistan, which would run from

Peshawar to Jalalabad and Kabul, along with a rail link with Uzbekistan. The lines were approved during a cabinet meeting on January 19, presided over by acting prime minister Mr Mohammad Hasan Akhund.

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

During the first phase of the project, Russia will conduct surveys and prepare feasibility studies, Each country is responsible for constructing the line in its territory."

*[Clearly this pre-dates the international uproar following the Russian military invasion of Ukraine; but not mentioned here (again) is the thorny issue of Gauge and whether the line, to have any purpose as a through route, should have the Russian / Uzbek broad gauge, the standard gauge used so far in Afghanistan, or the Pakistan broad gauge! The Russian perspective would be clear, if trainloads of military supplies are to be sent into neighbouring countries... Ed.]*

## G. LEBANON:

From 'LCGB Bulletin' 74:05 pp.137/9: "Lebanon's transport minister has

said that Spain will finance a plan to revive the railway network that has been out of service since the start of the 1975-1990 civil war. A deal for a "comprehensive master plan for the 307 kilometre-long (252 miles) railway is expected soon. Lebanon has had a railway network since the end of the 19th century which connected Beirut to the Syrian capital Damascus. It was built during Ottoman rule

and inaugurated on 1895, operating until the devastating civil war which started 47 years ago. Several proposals to revamp the network, and public transport in general, were made after the end of the war in 1990 but were shelved.

The network, like most of Lebanon's post-war infrastructure, fell into disrepair and illegal construction sprouted along the railway. With public transport effectively non-existent, there are more than two million cars for six million people in Lebanon. In 2018 the World Bank approved a \$295M package to jumpstart the country's first modern public transport system. But that too was put on hold as Lebanon has been struggling since 2019 with a major financial crisis, dubbed by the World Bank as one of the planet's worst in modern times. Spain's government will pay a Spanish firm to draft a feasibility study; a survey of current infrastructure and proposals to settle infringements on the rail network."



# DIE WARTE.

## • Part 4. (continued from previous issues)

1873.

p. 155. 6.2.1873. News from Palestine.

"... the latest post from Palestine allows us to add a report and additional information to the already-reported plan for a harbour and railway construction in Jaffa. Herr Hoffmann (head of the Colony here) writes concerning this: The most important event for us is the formation of a railway to Jerusalem, concerning which there is now no longer any doubt. The main initiator, a Frenchman named Farcy (i.e. not Fosit, as has been earlier reported in error) has arrived here. The concession does not mention the construction of a harbour but only of a railway and together with this a mole or pier into the sea at which also larger ships will be able to moor. The place chosen for this, very close to our German Colony, I have already mentioned in my last communication. Farcy hopes to have the whole thing ready in 18 months.

"This is for us of course an important divine gift, that would provide our existence with the foundation it has lacked for so long. Craftsmen and even construction workers will find a view forwards since the population and consumption will also grow generally, and the value of goods will also rise."

p.156. 27.2.1873. From the latest letter from Jaffa dated 1st. February

"The railway engineers who are staying at the Jerusalem Hotel in our Colony are busy with their initial preparations. The originator of the enterprise is, as one hears, a Frenchman named Odibert. It is he who has achieved the acquisition of the firman, but afterwards sold it on to Mr. Forbes. Farcy is employed as Chief Engineer. One can already see that the railway is causing an enormous rise in land prices."

Regarding the Patriarch question, one now hears that the Russian Consul attempted still to retain the old Patriarch whilst in contrast the German Consul put the Pasha under pressure to carry out finally the process of deposing him. But it would now seem Russia also is withdrawing its protecting hand from the deposed Patriarch..."

p. 156. 13.3.1873. Reports about our Colonies in the latest despatches which the Oriental Post bring include: ".....Regarding the railway works it is reported that the preliminary tasks, i.e. the setting out of the line, are almost finished, they should however require the definitive approval from Constantinople. There could therefore still be a problem there or a cause of delay in the matter, In Turkey one must always be prepared for the unexpected. The line as laid out goes so close to our Colony that a corner of the land below Imberger's house would be cut, then it runs between Salame and Jasur and then heads towards Ramleh, where a station is to be built."

p.156. 10.4.1873. "Jerusalem, 13th. March. This week there are many travellers here, including two Bavarian Princes, who however travel incognito. There are already several thousand pilgrims and daily more come to join them.

In the Holy Nativity Church in Bethlehem there have been further fights between Latins and Greeks, since the former have hung a tapestry over a section of the wall which is not theirs. 150 soldiers were required and already in this church double posts have been established so that peace may remain on the soil of Bethlehem, or at least it be restored."

pp.157-160. 22.5.1873: Big fights and vandalism between Greeks and Latins in Bethlehem. "Jerusalem 28th. April 1873. Due to the conflicts which have broken out in recent times between the Latins and the Greeks in Bethlehem, the government was required to maintain a large number of military in the Nativity Church for several months long, but then gradually withdrew the men, since they had required these men in Jerusalem for the period over Easter. Hardly however had ten days passed by after the last 50 men had been withdrawn than already on the 25th. of this month the peace on the soil of Bethlehem was disrupted once more in scandalous fistfights at the holy site, so that once again the majority of the military, the Pasha with his officials and some of the Consuls had to make haste to go there.

For years already the Latins have been seeking to win terrain within the holy site and allow themselves to do things for which they have no formal right. In

the most important sites each of the Confessions has a very precisely-delineated section allocated to them; each corner, each nail is allocated and this decision is sealed by the government. The jealousy over who has the largest possession in the Nativity, or in the Holy Sepulchre, is boundless amongst all the parties concerned and whoever feels they can get an advantage over another group will do anything he can and avoids no means to do so. If it were possible or necessary to do something communally they would rather let decades pass by rather than come to an agreement. This is how it was with the wholly derelict cupola over the Church of the Sepulchre, where rainwater ran into the church and the entire Grave Chapel had to be hung with cloths. The Turkish government, which is always prepared to make repairs at its own cost (in order to avoid conflict), was rejected.

It seems the French and the Russian governments have agreed to sort out the repairs to the dome of the Sepulchre in agreement with the Turkish government, without bothering about the protests of their respective priests. When some eight years ago it was planned to raise the height of the little door that leads from the Street of the Christians to the Church of the Sepulchre and the Latins through Bakshish finally received the permission to build the door and had already completed their work, overnight the entire work was thrown down to the ground and in a few days built again by the Greeks. Etc.....

Regarding what happened in the Nativity site some two days ago, I am enabled to report due to some research on the spot..... Entry to the church is now forbidden to all and it was only by chance that we were able to gain permission during the Pasha's visit to enter and an officer showed us the gruesome evidence of the destruction. We saw the demolished crib, the naked blackened walls, the silver and golden lamps lying in a corner, the door which had been punctured by bullets, the holes big enough that one could comfortably push one's hand through, the bullet holes in the Confessionals and the oil paintings, the piles of rubble of glass and marble fragments and the earth that had been dug up and scattered around the crib. We shuddered when we considered that all this wanton damage was carried out by people who truly believe that this is the birthplace of the Saviour, our Redeemer and great Ruler. Schiller says, 'The most shocking thing of all is Man in his madness!'..... The Pasha is advising all concerned to remain calm and to seek forgiveness and promises to restore everything as it was at the cost of the Turkish government. A soldier said to us, 'If God allows it, we will flatten everything here back to ground level – that would be the best solution....'

The Greek church conflict of last winter has indeed caused a number of Greeks together with their priests to leave the Jerusalem Patriarchate, since they remain still loyal to the Patriarch who was expelled. They have built an own chapel in Bethlehem and hold their services there. Recently they received some substantial financial support from the former Patriarch and the current Russian Consulate in order to meet their outgoings. These Greeks are now actually closer to the Latins, who support them. The Russians here go no longer to the Greek services, which they previously always attended. Their contributions to the Church of the Sepulchre are now made instead to the new Russian church outside the city, which means a significant drop in financial income for the Greek monastery...."

1874.

p.161. 1.1.1874. "The First Impression. ...that a Westerner gains when he treads the soil of Palestine for the first time is similar to that which one experiences when one is removed from the tumult of an annual fair to a lonely wilderness where one is bothered only by the howling of hyenas and jackals. Concerning the manner in which people rush around on the streets and the railways, to which they are driven by the interest in scientific agriculture, industry and trade, one will find here no trace. In the vicinity of the cities, such as Jaffa is, he will indeed see quite frequently caravans of camels, which in groups of two, three or up to twenty, heavily laden and led by Fellachin, follow each other and they transport the produce of the land into the city; these animals possess a great stoicism and such a silent tread that one hears nothing of their approach even if they are walking closely behind one's back. The Arabs run around them, the richer one on horses, the poorer ones down to the actual beggars on donkeys or in many cases on foot but one cannot tell what their intentions are. They do not seem to be driven to movement by any great enthusiasm for business but

more simply out of pleasure or the need to carry our small commissions and to visit the market where they buy and sell their foodstuffs..... Indeed one finds no trace at all in the East of all that calculated and organised commercial life organised in Europe and the West by the indigenous peoples, which can meet the needs of entire nations and sections of society, which creates all sorts of manufactories, smaller and larger trading houses etc. The city of Jaffa has one major export, but this is restricted to the produce of its orchards, whereby oranges form by far the major crop, and then some agricultural produce of the fields: Wheat, barley, sesame, and these products are not transported and exported by locals but by Austrian, French and Russian ships, to Alexandria, Beirut, Smyrna, Constantinople and as far as Odessa.

Even less than commercial life in the West does one encounter here in the East any political life or activity, no political or social associations for the pursuit of communal interests, no Church Assemblies, no associations of Lawyers, no association of Teachers, no Fire Brigade association, social Workers' Associations and whatever other sort of society one may care to mention which in the West are as numerous as the sand on the seashore. Of all these one sees as little as one sees trees in the desert. One does not even find a newspaper, apart from those few examples which a few of the Westerners who live here subscribe to, although they must then accustom themselves to the fact that this valuable resource will come only once in every 14 days. All political news and other matters in which one may have interest is therefore a minimum of at least 14 days old. One is so liberated here from any political life, as if one had abandoned all sense of Time and had entered the rooms of eternal rest.

In this Muhammedan wilderness, which has until now managed to avoid or resist any efforts for the introduction of Western civilisation, the Tempel colonies lie like small oases in the desert..." (Christoph Paulus – who emigrated to Palestine in 1873.)

p.163. 29.1.1874. "Some Thoughts on the Situation in Turkey.

"Before I can introduce the reader to the Tempel colonies of Palestine, I must beforehand acquaint them with the situation in the Holy Land and its inhabitants.

One speaks a lot, mainly in the newspapers, of the Turkish reforms, and it is true that possibly in no other land is reform so urgently needed as it is in Turkey. The older conditions have indeed become impossible to maintain as the world around makes progress and the reforms are therefore an existential matter for the survival of the Turkish government; yet they are a great danger in the face of Mohammedan fanaticism. The reforms therefore remain mostly on paper, and in reality one sees little of them; nowhere more than in this centre of Islam is the gap between Word and Deed such a major gap that cannot be crossed... And where one makes an attempt to apply a reform seriously, the new fits the old so little as a old rag to a new coat, and the improvement often turns out to be the reverse and makes things worse.

..... In the north and west it borders lands with Christian culture and is therefore almost forced to trade with them, yet on the other hand through their inherited hatred of Christians and their fatalistic indolence the Mohammedan Turks are incapable of undertaking trade and industry; They are therefore compelled to allow these activities to be performed partially by foreigners who live in their port cities and partly by the Christian section of the Oriental population, the Greeks and the Armenians. The Turkish government, which surely for simple financial reasons would have enough reason to stimulate industry and trade, cannot actually come to any real decisions, for it looks ahead and fears a loss of its power and image through the growing activities and influence of foreigners. Due to this fear it can only bring itself to half-measures. What one offers with one hand, one takes away again with the other. No satisfactory alteration to the Customs system is possible, which with its high duties on imports and exports and through the incompetence of the customs officials effectively cripples trade; there is no willingness to allow concessions to foreigners to build railways, though the need for these is great, and not even to do anything about construction of bridges and roads, for here too one would be dependent on the skills of the foreigners. And so it is that nothing is done for the development of means of transport, though this is a basis for productive activity, and with a very few exceptions within the great Turkish Empire there are no roads and no bridges, and apart from in European Turkey and the region around Smyrna no railway will be found...."

"Things are no better with cultivation, which is not in a position to develop without trade and industry. This important element of the material economy of the population is affected in Turkey especially by the limitations and imbalance in ownership. The great majority of the land is the property of the State that is sold to others only with great reluctance, and also the fellahin, the Turkish farm labourers, due to their poverty cannot acquire any. In order that it does not then lie totally unused, the fellah and also the stranger is permitted to cultivate the land in return for a fifth of the crop. A further part of the land is Wakuf, i.e. it belongs to mosques and cannot be sold but only leased. However, whoever leases an area of land falls into the rough hands of the tax collectors whose presence he must inevitably expect when he begins to harvest. This leasing arrangement is a burden and a source of need for the fellah; He is robbed of his energy, not only because he cannot bring matters into his own ownership but also because due to his poverty he tends to fall into the hands of the exploiters, who know how to handle the poor so that they eventually give up their own skin. The exploiter will indeed lend him money for his equipment and his seed, but he must then pay 40 to 60% for this. The scenes of abject poverty and misery which result hardly need illustration.

"Once one subtracts the Government and the Mosque lands there is only a small amount left over, which is in private ownership and the owner is secured by a hadschi (purchase document). This private property is usually situated close to cities and the larger towns. This can indeed be purchased, except the purchase procedures are not so simple as they are with us. Often the farm in question is itself deeply in debt and used as security, the actual owner lives somewhere else, or there are several who share the ownership rights. So one has difficulty in establishing the true ownership and overcoming any resistance."

And so it happens that, while in the Divan in Constantinople each year the progress achieved and envisaged in the lives of the people is loudly praised with beautiful phrases before the ears of the Sultan, the wider areas of the Turkish countryside continue to present the image of an agricultural and economic wilderness, such as one could barely see in other parts of the world.

5.2.1874. "With all the above I have not yet mentioned the main cause of damage to Turkey, and that is the corruption and arbitrariness of the officials. Without a bakshish (present) one cannot get to a court hearing, and often the level of bakshish will be established by a preliminary hearing which has the nature of an auction, whereby the one who offers the most acquires the object on sale, and sometimes the opposite, where the price is pushed as low as possible....This corruption, whereby the poorly-paid officialdom knows how to help itself, is compensated by acts of violence, of which especially the Fellachin population bears the brunt, in that they are either compelled to perform physical labour, or that camels and donkeys are simply taken from them, with the help of soldiers, under the legal claim 'The Pasha needs it.'"

.. These examples of the general condition must serve to show the atmosphere here and in which the Oriental breathes, and I will give here just a few examples that are of especial importance to our Colonists.

"First the Jerusalem Road; this is, apart from that between Beirut and Damascus, the only road in the whole of Syria and just about meets the most urgent requirements, more so perhaps than the Beirut road. Although the goods traffic on the Jerusalem road is less important than on the other, the number of passengers is much greater and comes into the thousands and tens of thousands of pilgrims who travel each year from Jaffa to Jerusalem, especially in the springtime. The best evidence for the amount of traffic on this road is the project to build a railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which appeared last year, gained a Government concession and caused already a substantial degree of expenditure. Even if this project may turn out to have been only an attempt at a property swindle, it nevertheless bears witness to the heavy frequenting of the road and, should the railway not be built and the project rest for a while, then the work on the road would be even more urgent and important.

"The Jerusalem road was laid some years before the Suez Canal was opened and is therefore not yet even ten years old. In this intervening period nothing whatsoever has been done on it in terms of maintenance, whilst the heavy thunderstorms which characterise the winters here never fail to carry out their destructive powers. So, in many locations the layer of stone has been laid bare, partially destroyed and so the road has been allowed to fall into such a state of dereliction that one cannot traverse it without danger. Our drivers use their initiative to make their way easier by leaving the road at



certain particularly damaged spots and prefer to drive along the adjacent field rather than on the road itself.

Even though the Government does nothing for the maintenance of the road, nevertheless it charges a toll on those who traverse it with animals or vehicles. For a wagon which goes to Jerusalem 15 piastres, i.e. roughly 1 florin, 30 kroner has to be paid; One would gladly pay this tax if it were to be used for the repair of the road and also there would soon arise a greater amount of both passenger and goods traffic, which would be beneficial for the government and for the population and would guarantee increased income; except that the Turkish officials have no sense for this. The current Pasha Kyamil of Jerusalem seems indeed to have here and there glimmers of civilised ideas – so that in recent times road stones were laid between here and Ramleh – but without any plan and supervision. Only in some places are the piles of stones, as they should be, placed at the sides of the road, in others they spread over the entire breadth of the road so that wagons cannot make any progress and the driver is essentially compelled to deviate over the adjacent field; not even this is always possible though, for some Arabs seem to find it proper to pile up heaps of stones also on the fields. In such cases the driver has to make an even greater detour.

One could accept even this were some supervision applied and the stones were then used fairly quickly and put in place to repair the road surface; but there is little hope even for this, for currently rumours circulate that the current pasha is to be dismissed and transferred to the south of Arabia, to Yemen, and whether his successor would continue his predecessor's work on the road is very questionable. In consequence nothing is gained except that the heaps of stones between Jaffa and Ramleh serve as reminders of the fact that attempts at improvements in Turkey normally end with things being left worse.

"That even less attention is paid to other roads is of course to be expected since there is absolutely no concept of official concern. These normally run between high cactus hedges and so do not allow for detours to be made. In winter the roads fill with water wherever there is a declivity, becoming swamps one to two feet deep, which one can wade through on an animal but which form real obstacles for pedestrians. It is therefore left to the Colonists to do what they can to fill some of the holes with rubble on the roads they need, which they do. Three years ago I once came to a ford over the Wadi Muzeirah towards Selameh (east of Jaffa) and found a number of inhabitants there who were waiting 6 to 8 hours until the waters in this wadi, swollen by the rain, had subsided sufficiently for them to be able to cross without danger. This is how one copes with the lack of bridges." (to be continued)

p.166. Jaffa 16 Jan. 1874. "Those who have lived longer in the country say that such a winter has not been known since 1868....."

Due to the heavy rain standing water has formed on many fields and the seeds stick out... the road between the Colony and the city is under water in places; in the deeper places real lakes have formed. The road between the colony and the city is truly under water in several places, so that pedestrians have to let themselves be carried by Arabs over the puddles for a piastre. These lakes are now spreading out beyond the orchards. The first rains did not badly affect the Jerusalem road between Jaffa and Ramleh and it remained a shoe's height above the surface of the lake that filled the slight depression near the Netter property, but now the water level has reached such a height that even here the road is flooded to shoe height. Due to this amount of water and the currents connected with it the bridges in this part of the road have collapsed and beyond Ramleh towards Bab el Wad the road is apparently even more ruined; one fears therefore that this winter the road to Jerusalem will be totally unusable due to these winter floods; This would be a great loss, for one cannot place any hope on the Government doing anything for the damaged sections.

A small but also uncertain hope is offered by the rumour that the Kaiser of Russia wishes to visit Jerusalem in the course of this year, for in his honour the road would of course be restored to better condition once more. The Wadi Muzeirah has overflowed for the second time and its waters have flowed like a river from it, and also partially caused some damage."

The arrival of tourists has not yet begun, which is partly put down to the quarantine and partly to the financial crisis in America. On the other hand one hears from Jerusalem that the arrival of Jews who have chosen to settle there is significant. I have read in a letter by a Jew that each week 100 Jews arrive

in Jerusalem; Even if he may have had some reason to exaggerate, nevertheless there must be some element of truth in this and our people confirm the substantial increase in the Jewish population of Jerusalem and correctly see in this a sign that Jerusalem's time will indeed soon come. If however many Jews do come, they will not in the slightest influence the importance or purpose of Jerusalem, and their settlement has mainly the effect of driving upwards the price of land for construction. I therefore interpret this as more a sign that God is giving to the Christians, that the hour has come in which the Holy Place shall be built again in Jerusalem, which however can only be carried out by those in whose inner souls the holiness resides, from those people who are driven by the spirit of Christ and who live in the desire of the conclusion of God's decision. " (Chr. Paulus.)

p.168. 12.2.1874. Some Thoughts on the Situation in Turkey. (Conclusion)

"These reports will surely suffice to awake in the reader the thought: 'How is it at all possible in such a land possible for a European, a German Christian settlement to exist?' ..... First one must note that a significant change in the Oriental perspective has occurred in the past twenty years. Even if the Hatti Hümayun, the Sultan's decree of 1856, which followed the Crimean War and which promised the equality of the Christians with the Muhammedans, as well as many other reform plans have in the end not been carried out, nevertheless these changes in combination with other factors, such as the opening up to shipping of the Suez Canal, the Sultan's journey into the West, the humiliation of France and the rise of Germany have indeed brought a change in the heads of the Muhammedans. The gap between Christians and Muhammedans has become smaller and the arrogance of the latter has been softened. .... To be true this change in the attitude of the Arabs is something which can be better felt than seen and is therefore impossible to describe clearly, but it has its real signs that one can grasp. This includes for example the fact that for some years now Christians have been permitted to visit mosques and even the Temple Square in Jerusalem.

An especial advantage that we foreigners have here in the Orient is due to the powers of the Consulate. In no other country in the world do the consuls have the same position as they do in Turkey and in Persia. These have the capacity to represent those under their protection to such an extent that only the Consuls and not the Turkish authorities are responsible. In this way the German colonists effectively form a small state within the Turkish empire, which can arrange all its procedures according to its own rules and will not be troubled by the Turkish officials....."

p.170. 5.3.1874. "Even before the stormy period rents had risen by over a third due to the arrival of Russian Jews and now there are hardly any more rooms to be found. There is great competition when a house is available for purchase or for rent. Additionally the monasteries seek new property like all other speculators. In recent days Jews from Damascus have come who buy up all they can find." (Chr. P.)

p.170. 26.3.1874. "Jaffa, 26.2.74. In view of the Turkish conditions I can report today that it does indeed appear as though the Turkish government has some plans for the Jerusalem Road. Recently the pasha of Jerusalem was here in Jaffa for business reasons; He is currently in Gaza but is expected back here very soon. While he was here a member of our Community Council spoke with him about the Jerusalem road. He assured us that he is concerned to repair the road, which is in poor condition, and also made other offers for the operation of a regular travel service. To be sure, here one is very mistrustful and one believes something only when one has seen it. However, this time it does seem to be meant seriously. At least work is under way on the road at various points between here and Ramleh and also on the far side of Ramleh; the bridges destroyed by the winter floods are to be rebuilt, the paving stones laid and bedded and covered. If this eagerness truly continues, the wagons of our farmers will soon be able to be seen upon this road again and one will be able to get to Jerusalem by wagon once more without any danger...."

*To be continued*





A new and remarkable exhibit at the restored Tzemaeh (Samakh) station is a replica of the famous aero-engine-powered goods wagons designed and built by Baruch Katinka for German airmen to travel from their base in Merhavia near Afule along the Hedjaz line to the gaudy night life of Haifa (and back....) during World War I. It is an initiative of Kinneret College which owns the site and is accompanied by illustrated information panels.