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FEATURES: **Evolution of Urban Railways (part 2)**
Movies and Railways

*TRTA Marunouchi Line crossing River
Kanda beneath JR East Ochanomizu
Station where Sobu Line (yellow train
in distance) branches off from Chuo
Line (orange train)   (EJRCF)*

Editorial

Challenges for Tokyo's urban rail network

Massive improvement of Tokyo's railways started in the 1960s, including JNR's so-called Five-Front Strategy (quadrupling of five trunk lines radiating from central Tokyo), extension of the subway network to replace tramways, and upgrading of private lines. The subway extension involved two methods: participation by Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) in subway constructions and operations, and introduction of through operations between subways in central Tokyo and suburban JNR or private lines.

Today, Tokyo is proud of its close-knit rail network, which involves JR East, the Teito Rapid Transit Authority (TRTA) and TMG, as well as seven private railways. Most of these rail operators are making money—something quite unique among the world's large cities, most of which are losing money in public transport. However, although trains are still overcrowded during peak hours, the number of passengers is gradually decreasing due to the stagnant Japanese economy and aging population. This may lead to serious difficulties in the future. From the passengers' viewpoint, a notable weakness of Tokyo's rail network is the lack of seamless connections between different operators, especially in terms of fare systems. Moreover, connections with other public transport modes, such as buses, are not as good as in some European cities. Tokyo's railways must find a better solution for these problems that were ignored when the city's population was young and the economy was growing.

At the turn of the century, Tokyo's urban rail network must tackle some serious new challenges.

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