Himeji Castle and cherry blossoms (Himeji City)

Himeji Castle

Himeji Castle is near JR West's Himeji Station in Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture in west Japan. Originally built in the late 16th century by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a powerful feudal lord who later became the ruler of Japan. The castle was destroyed and rebuilt into its present form by the feudal lord Ikeda Terumasa in 1609. The rebuilding was completed by Ikeda's successor, Honda Tadamasa. The castle, which is considered to be the finest remaining example of 17th century Japanese castle architecture, was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993.

Series *Kiha* 127 running on Ibogawa Bridge (R. Okamura)

Kishin Line

JR West's Series *Kiha* 127 service running on Ibogawa Bridge in west Japan. The 158.1-km line connects Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture, and Niimi in Okayama Prefecture.

The line opened in 1936 when sections from the Inbi and Sakubi lines were incorporated into the former Himetsu Line later renamed the Kishin Line. In August 2009, its service on the Kishin Line was suspended due to damage caused by heavy rain. Currently, JR West and cities near the line are doing works, such as installation of concrete ballast and safety sidings, cant improvement, and introduction of new rolling stock to improve speeds on the line.

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