OVERVIEW: To address the need for railway substation systems that are more compact, incur fewer losses and are easier to maintain, Hitachi has already developed smaller and more compact SF₆ GIS (gas-insulated switchgear), quieter and more efficient transformers for electric railways, and digitally controlled power switching boards. Recently, to meet the growing demand for equipment that is more environmentally safe, efficient, compact and easy to maintain, we have developed (1) an environmentally friendly silicon transformer with superior disaster-proofing, (2) environmental GIS and compact accumulation-type SWGR (switchgear) that contain no SF₆ greenhouse gas, (3) a new eco-friendly rectifier containing no PFCs (perfluorocarbon compounds) in the coolant and which incurs even lower losses, and (4) a BBU (building block unit) capable of online maintenance, achieved by forming the protection controllers as standard units.

INTRODUCTION
DUE to recent changes in social forces, there is a growing need for railway substation systems that are more environmentally friendly, more compact, more efficient and easier to maintain.

To address this need, Hitachi is developing environmental transformers, switching equipment and rectifiers, as well as protection controllers with enhanced maintainability.

This paper discusses the technology and products that Hitachi has developed for railway substation systems (see Fig. 1).

RECENT NEEDS OF RAILWAY SUBSTATION SYSTEMS
The technologies and products that Hitachi is developing to respond to the needs of railway substation systems are as follows (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 1—Environmental Railway Substation System. Reflecting recent social trends, there is a growing need for railway substation systems that are more environmentally, more compact, incur fewer losses and requires less maintenance. Hitachi is developing new railway substation systems to address these needs.
ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES FOR TRANSFORMER EQUIPMENT

Electric Railway Transformers Using Silicon Oil

Hitherto, SF$_6$ gas-insulated transformers have been used for transformer substations in urban districts by virtue of their disaster-prevention characteristics. However, now that SF$_6$ has been found to be a greenhouse gas, it is important to cut back on its use. Also, an amendment to the Fire Prevention Act in July 2001 ruled out the use of anything with a flash point of 250°C or above as a dangerous material, and since we are already experienced in the use of silicon oil in transformers for vehicles, we developed a silicon transformer that can also be used for electric railways (see Fig. 3). The properties of each type of insulation medium are compared in Table 1.

The benefits of silicon transformers include the following:

1. Disaster-proofing: it has a high flash point and does not readily ignite. It is also flame resisting and self-extinguishing properties, making it difficult to burn.
2. Reliability: it is stable and non-corrosive.
3. Environmental safety: it readily breaks down in the environment and can be broken down into natural substances (silica being the main constituent).

Environmental GIS and Accumulation Type SWGR

Overview of environmental 24-kV GIS

In the environmental GIS (see Fig. 4), we used dry air as the substitution gas.

The properties of dry air are as follows:

1. Safety: it is a non-toxic, stable, non-flammable gas.
2. Insulation: its insulation performance is about one-

Table 1. Properties of Various Insulation Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Mineral oil</th>
<th>SF$_6$ gas</th>
<th>Silicon oil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied voltage</td>
<td>22 kV, 66 kV</td>
<td>22 kV, 66 kV</td>
<td>22 kV, 66 kV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash point</td>
<td>145°C</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>&gt;250°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific gravity</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow point</td>
<td>-30°C</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-60°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative size of equipment</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative mass of equipment</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overload capacity</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Environmental

(a) Transformers with better disaster-proofing that use silicon oil instead of mineral oil
(b) GIS and accumulation type SWGR that contain no SF$_6$ greenhouse gas
(c) Eco-friendly rectifiers that use pure water as a coolant instead of PFCs (perfluorocarbon compounds)

(2)Compactness and efficiency

Rectifiers with reduced losses due to reductions in the number of diode elements

(3) Improved maintainability

BBUs capable of online maintenance based on protection controllers formed as standard units.

Fig. 2—Products that Meet Needs of Railway Substation Systems.
In railway substation systems, there is a growing need for compact environmental equipment that is easy to maintain and incurs low losses.

Fig. 3—Silicon Transformer.
This figure shows a 22-kV 4,780-kVA silicon transformer. It is roughly the same size as a mineral oil transformer.

Fig. 4—Environmental 24-kV GIS.
Compared item | Existing model | Environmental model
--- | --- | ---
Insulation medium | SF₆ | Dry air
Rated gas pressure (MPa) | 0.1 | 0.35
Lowest guaranteed gas pressure (MPa) | 0.07 | 0.3
Structure and parts dimensions | Inherited from conventional parts

*Fig. 4—Characteristics and Outline Structure of Environmental GIS.*

The structure and size of the 24-kV 1,200-A environmental model are inherited from a conventional device.

(3) Interception and arc-extinguishing: its performance is not as good as that of SF₆ gas.

In developing this product, we investigated the following items:

(1) Increasing the gas pressure in the VCB and its enclosure

To improve the insulation performance, we increased the gas pressure from 0.1 MPa (as used with SF₆ gas) to 0.35 MPa.

In this class of circuit breaker, a VCB is used because a pressure difference must be maintained between the vacuum part and the external pressure. Here, we developed and used a VCB capable of withstanding an external pressure of up to 0.4 MPa.

(2) DS lead/lag small-current switching

Since the breakdown characteristic of dry air is worse than the performance of SF₆ gas, we devised a shape for the main circuit conductors of the disconnecting switch that made it possible to achieve the required performance.

(3) Size and configuration of component parts

The component configuration was the same as in a conventional design, allowing parts to be replaced easily. The use of dry air insulation is also advantageous from an environmental viewpoint because it greatly reduces the amount of industrial waste.

### 24-kV accumulation type SWGR

By employing a dry air insulation system as in the GIS, we aimed to implement environmental measures even for the 24-kV accumulation type SWGR where it is possible to make substantial reductions in the installation area (about 6% for a nature interruption edge SWGR). The specifications of an accumulation type SWGR are shown in Table 2.

#### New Eco-friendly Rectifier

PFCs have hitherto been used in the coolants that cool the rectifier diode elements. However, to eliminate greenhouse gases we developed an eco-friendly rectifier with a heat pipe cooling system that uses pure water as the coolant (see Table 3).

**Table 2. Main Specifications of Accumulation Type SWGR**

This table shows the main specifications of a 24-kV accumulation type SWGR which contributes to substantial reductions in the installation area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switch</td>
<td>An accumulation type vacuum circuit breaker with 4 positions (energize — intercept — disconnect — test/earth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulation system</td>
<td>Vacuum — dry air — epoxy mold composite insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rated voltage and current</td>
<td>24 kV, 200/400/600 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruption electric current</td>
<td>25 kA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruption time</td>
<td>5 cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. current</td>
<td>25 kA, 1 s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Main Specifications of New Eco-friendly Rectifier**

By using pure water as the coolant, PFC greenhouse gases have been eliminated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Heat pipe self-cooled silicon rectifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambient temperature</td>
<td>-20°C to +40°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolant</td>
<td>Pure water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC voltage</td>
<td>1,500 V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratings</td>
<td>6,000 kW (type E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic connection scheme</td>
<td>6-pulse, parallel 12-pulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (external)</td>
<td>2,000 (W) × 1,600 (D) × 2,995 (H) mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Product characteristics**

1. Elimination of greenhouse gases: the diode elements are cooled using a heat pipe with pure water as the coolant.
2. Normal operation at −20°C ambient temperature: the use of a variable conductance heat pipe allows the device to be operated at ambient temperatures as low as −20°C (without the need for a frost-preventing heater).
3. Compact space-saving design: the device occupies 50% less space than a conventional rectifier.
4. Low loss: the use of high-voltage diode elements allows the number of elements to be halved, resulting in losses that are 40% lower than those of a conventional rectifier.

**Application of new techniques**

1. New cooling system
   A drawback of heat pipes that use pure water is that they cannot be used in cold climates due to freezing of the water. In the eco-friendly rectifier we developed, a VCHP (variable conductance heat pipe) is used to cool the rectifier elements. In this VCHP, the pure water coolant is injected together with a noncondensable gas that regulates the amount of heat dissipation. This allows the device to exhibit stable cooling performance without freezing of the coolant.

The operating principle of a VCHP is illustrated in Fig. 5.

2. Rectifier elements
   For the diode elements, we used newly developed high-voltage components. This allowed us to halve the number of elements, resulting in a compact low-loss rectifier.
TRENDS IN PROTECTION CONTROLLER EQUIPMENT

Distributed Protection Control System (BBU)

Conventional protection controllers are configured as systems that extend across an entire power supply board. Consequently, the maintenance and alteration of these controllers involve large-scale power outages and large amounts of time and labor. But in the BBU we developed, a railway’s transformer substations are separated into blocks for each facility, and a system is configured in which the unit that performs the protection control of each block is accommodated in an operation protection board (see Fig. 6). This makes it possible to employ separate structures for the systems of each unit, making it much easier to maintain (see Fig. 7).

BBU Characteristics

1. The operation protection board is configured from standardized units corresponding to each facility. By providing a spare unit, maintenance and alterations can be performed simply by switching out the affected unit, thereby improving the maintainability.
2. The use of digital relay doubling ensures high reliability.
3. The wiring requirements are greatly reduced by employing the field network and mounting the units on the main machine side.

CONCLUSIONS

We have discussed our transformer equipment and protection controllers that address the latest needs of railway substation systems.

In the future, Hitachi plans to continue developing railway substation systems that meet the needs of customers by employing the latest technology and environmental measures, striving for compact efficient designs, and producing equipment that is easy to maintain.

Fig. 7—Operation Protection Board Incorporating BBUs (left), and Appearance of Single BBU (right).
This figure shows an operation protection board incorporating 4 BBUs and a sequencer for overall control, and the appearance of a single BBU.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Naoki Kawamura
Joined Hitachi, Ltd. in 1989, and now works at the Switchgear Design Department, the Power & Industrial Systems Division, the Power & Industrial Systems. He is currently engaged in the design of the switch board, receiving & distribution board, and protection controller for railway substation systems. Mr. Kawamura can be reached by e-mail at naoki_kawamura@pis.hitachi.co.jp.

Tetsuya Kato
Joined Hitachi, Ltd. in 1989, and now works at the Power Electronics Design & Mfg. Department of the Power Electronics Devices & Systems Division, the Power & Industrial Systems. He is currently engaged in the design of railway substation systems. Mr. Kato can be reached by e-mail at tetsuya-a_katou@pis.hitachi.co.jp.

Yoshimasa Eda
Joined Hitachi, Ltd. in 2002, and now works at the Industrial System Engineering Department of the Power & Industrial Systems Division, the Power & Industrial Systems. He is currently engaged in the system engineering of railway substation systems. Mr. Eda can be reached by e-mail at yoshimasa_eda@pis.hitachi.co.jp.

Hirotaka Takahashi
Joined Hitachi, Ltd. in 1991, and now works at the Signaling & Power Supply Department of the Transportation Division, the Power & Industrial Systems. He is currently engaged in the integration of railway substation systems. Mr. Takahashi can be reached by e-mail at hirotaka_takahashi@pis.hitachi.co.jp.