

Topics

(January-March 1994)

- 1 January** • Former West German National Railways (DB) and former East German National Railways (DR) merged to form privatised *Deutsche Bahn Aktiengesellschaft* (DBG). DBG to be divided into three independent companies: passenger transport, cargo transport and infrastructure management, in 2002.
- 3 January** • Domestic Russian airplane (Baikal Airline, Tupolev 154-seater passenger plane) bound for Moscow crashed and burned shortly after takeoff at Irkutsk Airport. All 124 persons aboard killed.
- 6 January** • 10-seater biplane crash landed and burned in Florida, United States. All nine persons aboard including Japanese killed.
- 13 January** • JR East's "Airport Express" nicknamed "N'EX", connecting central Tokyo directly to Narita, carried 10 million persons in 1,032 days since opening 19 March 1991.
- 15 January** • Two ferryboats collided near Tigmar City in estuary of Ganges in eastern India. One boat capsized and sank. Ten of 148 passengers aboard drowned, 24 persons rescued, remaining 114 reported missing.
- 27 January** • According to survey by New Tokyo International Airport Public Corporation, airport used by about 12.15 million persons in 1993, up about 120,000 persons over record in previous year. Amount of air cargo handled totalled 1.39 million tonnes, up about 4,000 tonnes over 1990.
- 11 February** • Executive Air Service, private company operating helicopter services, started Japan's first pleasure helicopter service on weekends and holidays. Helicopter starts and arrives at Urayasu on Tokyo Bay, flying over Tokyo Disneyland, Rainbow Bridge, Ginza and other places in 15 minutes. Fare ¥13,000 for adults and ¥9,000 for children.
- 22 February** • Strong winds caused by atmospheric depression as powerful typhoon raged in East Japan, with wind velocity of more than 30m per second, derail train on Minami Rias Line of Sanriku Railway in Iwate Prefecture, and diesel railcar on JR's Nemuro trunk line. Total of 12 persons injured.
- 1 March** • JR East formulated first integrated hardware-software safety measures to be implemented for 5 years from fiscal 1994. Plans to invest total of about ¥400 billion in safety measures, or about same amount as in past 5 years.
- 2 March** • 25 years since Concorde, supersonic jet jointly developed by Air France and British Airways, made first flight in 1969. Commercial flight started in 1976, with total of 12 Concorde, boasting round-world flight in less than 33 hours. Supersonic Concorde suffer from high fares, limited passenger capacity of 100 persons per flight, and relatively short cruising distance.
- Series E1, Japan's first double-decker Shinkansen, scheduled to go into service this summer, shown to press at Sendai General Rolling Stock Yard in Miyagi Prefecture. Train introduced in response to increase in commuters; composed of 12 coaches with seating capacity of 1,235 persons, up 40% over present 12-coach Shinkansen.
- 5 March** • Film festival held on 5 and 6 March at Yoshioka Undersea Station, on Hokkaido side of two undersea stations in Seikan Tunnel. Held as part of event to deepen exchange between Hakodate and Morioka cities connected by undersea tunnel.
- 17 March** • Tuna longline fishing boat operating off Guam with nine-member crew including Japanese captain, sank due to engine trouble 9 February. Crew drifted over distance of about 2,800 km for 37 days on life raft until rescued in southern Philippines. Slaked thirst with rainwater.
- Japan's first railway train ran between Shimbashi and Yokohama on 14 October 1872. 14 October previously remembered as "Railway Commemoration Day." Ministry of Transport names day "Railway Day" to arouse public interest in railways.
- Special "Access Express" trains of JR West and Nankai Electric Railway, to connect Kansai International Airport with central Osaka and Kyoto, made debuts. Trains to move onto joint siding line to airport from existing lines. JR West's *Haruka* (281 series), composed of five coaches, to run from Kyoto via Shin Osaka to airport in 73 minutes. Nankai's Rapid (50000 series) composed of six coaches, to depart from and arrive in Namba.
- 23 March** • Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation, engaged in large-scale projects such as construction of Seikan Tunnel and Joetsu Shinkansen, celebrated 30th anniversary of establishment in 1964 constructing 76 lines with total length of 1,800 km.

30 March • Subway section between Imaike and Nonami (8.6 km) in Nagoya City opened for traffic to complete No.6 Subway (Sakura Dori Line) between Nakamura Kuyakusho and Nonami (14.9 km). Connected to Higashiyama, Maizuru and Meijo lines between two subway stations.

31 March • Nogami Electric Railway (11.4 km between Higata and Tozanguchi), with head office in Kainan City, Wakayama Prefecture, closed after 78 years and company liquidated. Closure caused by discontinuation of subsidies from Ministry of Transport. Bus service taken over by another company.

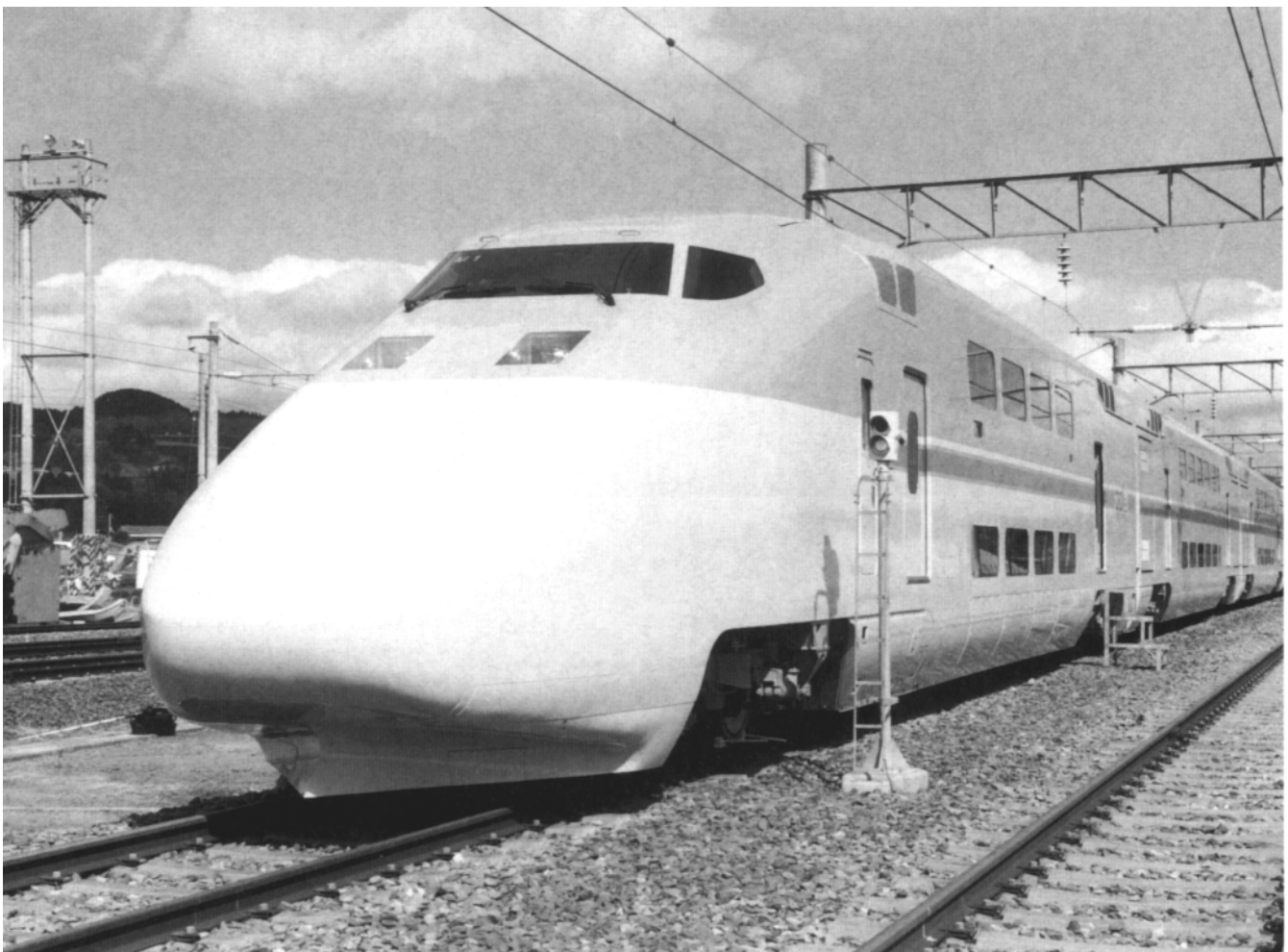
Series E1 Shinkansen EMU *MAX*

The expansion of the Tokyo metropolitan area has brought considerable growth of long-distance commuter traffic on the Tohoku and Joetsu Shinkansen lines. In July, JR East will start commercial operation of two sets of Series E1 double-decker EMUs on both lines.

The Series E1, nicknamed *MAX*, is designed to carry long-distance commuters from the Oyama and Utsunomiya areas on the Tohoku *Shinkansen*, and from the Kumagaya and Takasaki areas on the Joetsu *Shinkansen*. The cities of Utsunomiya and

Takasaki are both about 100 km from Tokyo. The new trains will also be used for intercity services between the morning and evening peak hours.

The 12-car train set has 1,235 seats including 102 green-car seats (equivalent to First Class). The same length of the Series 200 EMU has only 885 seats including 55 green-car seats. The Series E1 has a VVVF inverter control system driving twenty-four 410-kw traction motor units.



Courtesy: JR East

■ Series E1 Shinkansen EMU *MAX*

New Trains for New Kansai Airport

The New Kansai International Airport, Osaka's second airport, is due to open on 4 September. It is Japan's first 24-hour airport, and has been constructed on an artificial island in Osaka Bay by the half-private, half-public Kansai International Airport Company. It is linked to the mainland by a long bridge carrying a double-track railway and a four-lane motorway.

The airport branch of the railway is linked to both JR and the private



Courtesy: JR West

■ Double-deck bridge to airport

Nankai lines; there will be three exclusive services to and from Osaka city. JR West will provide express services using the new five-car Series 281 EMUs (nicknamed *Haruka*). The trains link the airport to the ancient capital of Kyoto, stopping at Shin-



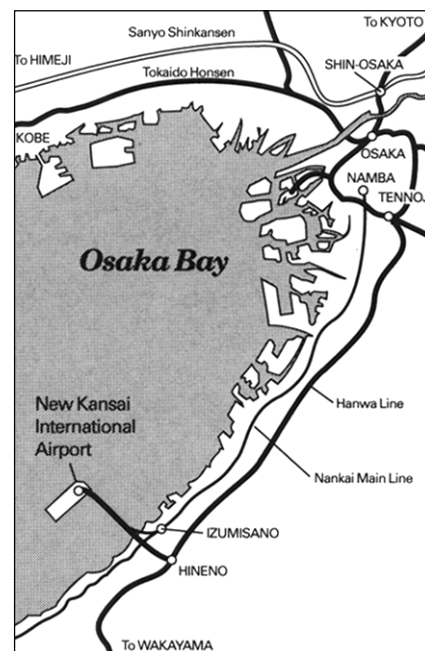
■ Haruka Series 281 EMU

Courtesy: JR West



■ Series 50000 EMU

Courtesy: Nankai Electric Railway co., Ltd.



Osaka Station for passengers changing to shinkansen trains. It will take 48 minutes from the airport to Shin-Osaka, and 73 minutes to Kyoto. JR West will also run rapid services with more conventional Series 223 EMUs to Tennoji Station (45 minutes) and Osaka Main Station (65 minutes).

The Nankai Electric Railway will run express services using new Series 50000 EMUs between the airport and Namba Station, the company's main terminal in central Osaka.

Both the smartly-dressed JR Series 281 and the unusual mask of the Nankai Series 50000 have attracted the attention of rail enthusiasts. ■