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 “NEX”, 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 Tigmari City in estuary of Ganges in eastern India. One boat capsized and sank. Ten of 114 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.

5 March • Film festival held on 5 and 6 March at Yoshihiko 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.

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 Concordes, boasting round-world flight in less than 33 hours. Supersonic Concarde suffer from high fares, limited passenger capacity of 100 persons per flight, and relatively-short cruising distance.

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.
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 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-