

2 September — Swiss Air MD11 en route to Geneva from New York crashed into Atlantic off coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, killing all 229 passengers and crew on board

2 September — Last four wagons of freight train belonging to The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway derailed en route to Los Angeles causing explosion and fire but no injuries

3 September — Maintenance wagon collided with ballast-spreading train on out-bound track of Aioi-Okayama section of Sanyo Shinkansen delaying 18 shinkansen trains including *Nozomi* by up to 50 minutes

8 September — Four vehicles, including two passenger buses carrying 98 Catholic pilgrims, collided with overturned fuel truck on arterial road in Araras, southeast Brazil, bursting into flames and killing 53 people

11 September — Boeing 747-400 aircraft of Taiwan's China Airlines hit severe turbulence over Pacific west of Hawaii injuring 11 passengers

11 September — Nangoku Kotsu bus company operating in Kagoshima City, south Japan, started operating women-only last bus on every Friday departing Nishi Kagoshima Station at 22:17 to allow female passengers to take late bus home without risk of annoyance by drunk male passengers

12 September — Boeing B767 aircraft of Vietnam Air overran Tan Son Nhut Interna-

tional Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, southern Vietnam

19 September — Inaugural flight of Skymark Airlines Boeing 767-300 between Haneda and Fukuoka as first new airline to enter Japan's newly deregulated domestic market in 35 years. Fare of ¥13,700 (50% lower than recommended fare) achieved by hiring foreign pilots and offering simpler in-flight services

23 September — JR East and Shiki Theatrical Company inaugurated performing arts complex in Hamamatsu-cho, Tokyo, as first permanent theatre owned by JR East

25 September — JR East reopened Kuroiso-Shirakawa section of Tohoku Line closed for 29 days due to torrential rains in area at end of August that caused extensive damage at 47 locations along line

25 September — Prototype shinkansen cars built by JR East and JR West to be kept permanently at JR Railway Technical Research Institute. Front cars of STAR21 developed by JR East and of WIN350 developed by JR West to be maintained at Wind Tunnel Technical Center in Maibara, Shiga Prefecture

26 September — Japan's oldest Class 6 electric locomotive built in 1920 and still operational, hauled freight train on Mikuni Ashiwaru Line of Keifuku Electric Railway, Fukui Prefecture, to celebrate 70th anniversary of line

27 September — DC10 Aircraft of Japan Airlines en route from Sendai to Hawaii hit turbulence over Pacific injuring 11 passengers

29 September — Lion Airlines Antonov carrying 54 crew and passengers destined for Colombo lost immediately after take-off from Jaffna Airport, northern Sri Lanka

6 October — JR East celebrated 1 billion passengers carried on three shinkansen over 16 years of operation. Tohoku Shinkansen carried approximately 656 million passengers, Joetsu Shinkansen 335 million, and Nagano Shinkansen 9 million

6 October — JR East announced plans to automate ticket gates at all stations on Tohoku, Joetsu and Nagano shinkansen as well as at Akita and Yamagata stations by May 1999

8 October — Pleasure boat sank on Lake Banyoles near Barcelona, northeast Spain, drowning 20 and injuring 44

9 October — JR East began experiments using German-made red and white crossing barriers in comparison to domestic yellow and black barriers at three locations, including Uchibo Line in Chiba Prefecture

10 October — The Akita Inland Traverse Railway serving Akita Prefecture, Japan, marked 10th anniversary by issuing ¥10 tickets compared to normal fare of ¥1620. Line inaugurated in April 1989 by taking over former JNR line



External and interior scenes of the JR East Art Center/Shiki Theaters near Hamamatsucho, Tokyo

(JR East)

12 October — JR East held groundbreaking ceremony for Heart Itsuhashi care facility for elderly to be constructed adjacent to JR Sendai Hospital. Construction to be completed in late June 2000 at total cost of ¥12 billion

15 October — JR East Planning and Kokuyo (office equipment manufacturer) opened offices equipped with computers at Yaesu Exit of Tokyo Station

15 October — Plenary session of Japan's Upper House approved disbandment on 22 October of JNR Settlement Corporation established 10 years ago to dispose of former JNR debts. Remaining work to be taken over by Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation, and government to take over majority of long-term debt (¥27.7 trillion) and reduce interest burden by advanced redemption of interest-bearing debt

15 October — Fuji Kyuko Co., operating train services around base of Mt. Fuji, Japan, began test run of two trains allowing carriage of bicycles by passengers to ease road traffic congestion around scenic areas and save energy

15 October — 7.2-km Line 14 (also called *Météor*) of Paris Metro opened from *Madeleine* to *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Six-car unmanned EMUs with rubber-tyred wheels run at maximum speed of 80 km/h

18 October — Passenger train derailed in suburbs of Alexandria, Egypt, colliding with commercial area near station killing 46 train passengers and injuring 101

23 October — JR East completed test run of new Series 500 commuter train for local Chuo and Sobu lines. Width increased by 15 cm to alleviate rush-hour crowding. Ten trainsets (100 units) to start operation in late December

28 October — Air China Boeing B737 aircraft with 104 passengers and crew flying from Beijing to Kunming hijacked by pilot and landed at Chusei International Airport, Taipei

31 October — *Fairy Queen* steam locomotive manufactured in England in 1855 returned to active service carrying tourists twice monthly between New Delhi and Alwar, India. Locomotive preserved since 1971 in National Rail Museum

18 November — Keihin Electric Express Railway Co., Ltd. opened new Haneda Station linking terminal building at Tokyo's Haneda Airport to central Tokyo. Construction in progress since 1993 at total cost of ¥50 billion

24 November — Jiro Kawasaki, Japan's Minister of Transport, submitted *1998 Transport White Paper* to Cabinet. Report sheds light on promoting transition from private cars to railways, and barrier-free public transport concept for elderly and disabled

25 November — JR Kyushu announced abandonment of plan to construct new Fukuoka head office building scheduled for completion in spring 2001. Instead, will rebuild head office in front of Hakata Station at budget of ¥5 billion

26 November — Saitama Prefectural Police conducted drill at JR East Omiya Works for handling train derailment. First time train (to be scrapped) actually overturned in police-sponsored drill

27 November — Tama Monorail (5.5 km) linking Kamikitadai (Higashi-Yamato City) and Tachikawakita (Tachikawa City) opened. Monorail connects with JR Chuo Line at Tachikawakita and with Seibu Haijima Line at Tamagawa Josui. Southern half of monorail, spanning 10.61 km between Tachikawakita and Tama Centre scheduled to open in fiscal 1999

27 November — Passenger shot bus driver in Seattle, Washington, USA. Out-of-control bus crashed through barrier onto road 15 meters below, killing two passengers and driver. Perpetrator committed suicide by shooting himself



RTRI Experimental free-gauge train passing gauge-changing section on experimental track in Kokubunji, Tokyo (RTRI)

30 November — Test run of free-gauge train held by Railway Technical Research Institute at Kokubunji, Tokyo. Free-gauge train able to run on both shinkansen and narrow-gauge lines by automatically changing wheel gauge on gauge-changing section between standard and narrow-gauge sections. Further 100 km/h tests scheduled between Yonago and Yasuki on Sanin Line, and high-speed tests at 250 km/h planned on Pueblo test track in USA from April 1999

Milestones

Eiki Inukai

Executive Vice President of Nagoya Railroad Co., Ltd. and Chairman of Meitetsu Kanko Service Co., Ltd., died on 22 June aged 68. He joined Nagoya Railroad in 1953 and was appointed a Director in 1975 and Executive Vice President in 1992

Norihiko Nomizo

Vice President of Tokyu Tourist Corp., became President of Tokyu Corporation on 27 October. He joined Tokyu Corporation after graduating from Musashi Institute of Technology and became a Director in 1995