

5 March — Seibu Railway Co. filed application with Tokyo Metropolitan Government to build 30-storey hotel and park on company land close to Tokyo Tower

8 March — Itochu Corp., Kinki Sharyo Co., Ltd. and Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. jointly unveiled order worth 50 billion yen for 250 railway carriages from Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation of Hong Kong

9 March — Amtrak announced new *Acela* express to run in eastern USA, beginning later this year. Train to boast max. speed of 240 km/h and will reduce travel time between Boston and Washington DC (280 km) from 4.5 hours to 3 hours

10 March — Sagami Railway's Izumino Line extended 3.1 km between Izumi Chuo and Shonandai to connect with Odakyu Railway's Enoshima Line at Shonandai

13 March — Series 700 *Nozomi* shinkansen debuted between Tokyo and Hakata as result of joint development by JR Central and JR West. Max. speed of 285 km/h, lower than 300 km/h of Series 500 operated by JR West but improved noise levels, energy saving, ride comfort, etc.

15 March — Korean Air plane over-ran runway at Riko Airport in south Korea, injuring 70 passengers and crew

15 March — Amtrak night train from Chicago to New Orleans collided with trailer on crossing in Chicago, leaving 16 people dead and two missing

16 March — North Wing of Terminal 1 at Tokyo's Narita Airport reopened after more than 6 years, increasing lobby space by 50%

24 March — Fire in Mont Blanc Tunnel (11.5 km) in French Alps left at least 35 dead

28 March — 80-year old woman in wheelchair killed on crossing by express train on Hanshin Railway's main line

2 April — Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) figures for foreign visitors to Japan in 1998 showed drop of 2.7% to 4.106 million, second-highest figure recorded. Number of Japanese visitors abroad recorded minus growth for first time in 7 years, decreasing by 5.9% to 15.806 million

4 April — Niigata Transportation Company's line between Higashi Sekiya and Tsukigata (21.6 km) closed to end 66-year history

5 April — Transport Minister Jiro Kawasaki met China's Railway Minister Fu Zhihuan in Beijing to explain Japan's plan to bid for express train project linking Beijing and Shanghai

8 April — Passenger car on pedestrian crossing of Chichibu Railway Co. in Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture, hit by train, killing car driver and passenger

12 April — Suspended monorail at Wuppertal in Germany, derailed killing three passengers and injuring at least 59

14 April — Manned test of MAGLEV by JR Central and Railway Technical Research Institute in Yamanashi Prefecture, achieved world record manned speed of 552 km/h

15 April — Korean Air MD-11 cargo aircraft from Shanghai to Seoul crashed on takeoff killing all three crew and six people on ground

17 April — JR West began loading 20 diesel railcars carriages donated to State Railway of Thailand

18 April — Usui Pass Railway Monument Park opened at site adjoining Yokokawa Station on JR Shin'etsu Line. Railway theme park includes Class EF63 electric locomotive used on rack-and-pinion Usui Pass plus 21 other locomotives and carriages

22 April — Sendai branch of JR East unveiled 359-million yen investment in Sendai Airport railway access project. New line opening in 2004 to cover 7.2 km between JR East's Natori Station (Tohoku Line) and airport

25 April — Japan Telecom Co., Ltd. (JR affiliate), British Telecom (BT) and AT&T announced capital tie up, marking first major capital link up of Japanese telecommunications company with overseas counterparts

29 April — JR East started occasional operation of C57 steam locomotive between Niitsu and Aizu Wakamatsu on Ban'etsu West Line (111 km) until 28 November. Locomotive preserved in Niitsu for last 30 years, but recalled to service to revitalize holiday areas along line

1 May — Setouchi Shimanami road opened, linking Onomichi (Hiroshima Prefecture) and Imabari (Ehime Prefecture) as part of Honshu-Shikoku Highway (Onomichi-Imabari route) and completing last of three bridge links in Seto Inland Sea

1 May — JR Hokkaido started occasional operation of *Suzuran* C11 steam locomotive on Rumoi Line between Fukagawa and Rumoi (50.1 km) for tourism

9 May — Tourist bus with 46 passengers crashed into embankment on highway in New Orleans, USA, killing 22 passengers

9 May — 54-year old blind man killed on crossing by express train on Hanshin Railway's main line at Nishinomiya

10 May — Japanese Ministry of Transport abandoned plan to build 2500-m second parallel runway at Tokyo's Narita Airport by fiscal 2000 due to failure to obtain land (4.8 ha) from opposing farmers

14 May — JR East announced introduction of new IC card commuting season tickets in January 2001 for major stations within a 100-km radius of Tokyo

21 May — Bahaman-registered cruise ship *San Vista* (30,440 tonnes, 1100 passengers and crew) caught fire and sank in Strait of Malacca, Malaysia, without loss of life

25 May — Japanese Ministry of Transport announced survey to promote urban railways. In Tokyo, survey will include through operation of Tobu-Tojo Line and Seibu-Ikebukuro Line to Haneda Airport, etc.

27 May — Japan Non-Government Railways Association announced 7.337 billion passengers carried by 15 major private railway companies in FY 1998, down 1.9% from previous year and seventh consecutive drop since peak of 8.010 billion passengers carried in FY 1991

28 May — JR Central unveiled automatic train control (ATC) system for Tokaido Shinkansen to be introduced in 2006, enabling faster timetable recovery after delays, etc.

28 May — International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) approved Montreal Convention to increase compensation for victims of transport accidents. Under new convention, international airlines have no liability limit

Milestones

Akio Tsujii

Appointed President of Kinki Nippon Railway Co., from 25 March. Graduated from Faculty of Economics of Kyoto University in 1956 and joined Kinki Nippon Railway Co., becoming Director in 1989, and Representative Vice-President in June 1994

Masayuki Saigusa

Appointed President of Keio Railway Co., on 24 April. Graduated from Faculty of Literature of Keio University in 1957 and joined Keio Teito Railway Co. (as then called), becoming Board Director in 1987. Served 3 years from 1992 as President of Keio Kanko Co., becoming Senior Managing Director of Keio Railway Co. in 1995

Jiro Yoshida

Appointed President of Nankai Electric Railway Co., from 27 April. Graduated from Faculty of Economics of Osaka University in 1957 and joined Nankai Electric Railway Co., becoming Board Director in 1985, and Vice-President in 1996

Naohiko Ito

Appointed President of JR Freight on 7 May. Graduated from Faculty of Law of Tokyo University in 1964 and joined JNR. Served as Director and Managing Director of JR Freight after JNR privatization

Misao Kimura

Appointed President of Nagoya Railroad Co., Ltd. from 11 April. Graduated from Faculty of Law of Kyoto University in 1961 and joined Ministry of Transport. Assumed position of Director General of Chubu Transportation Bureau in 1986, and Senior Managing Director of Nagoya Railroad Co. in 1997

Yoshizumi Nezu

Appointed President of Tobu Railway Co., from 19 May. Graduated from Faculty of Law of Tokyo University in 1974 and joined Tobu Railway Co., becoming Board Director in 1990, and Vice-President in June 1995

Kohei Kobayashi,

Chairman of Hankyu Corporation, appointed Chairman of Japan Non-Government Railways Association on 27 May. Graduated from Faculty of Economics of Keio University in 1950 and joined Hankyu Realty Co., Ltd. in 1959, becoming Director at Keihanshin Kyuko Dentetsu Co. (now Hankyu Corp.) in 1969

Financial Results of JR Companies

(Billion yen)

Company Name	Fiscal Year	Operating Profit/Loss			Non-operating Profit/Loss	Ordinary Profit/Loss	Extra-ordinary Profit/Loss	Pre-tax Profit/Loss	Profit/Loss after Tax
		Revenues	Expenses	Profit/Loss					
JR East	1997-98	1,945.9	1,607.9	337.9	-250.7	87.2	1.1	88.4	50.2
	1998-99	1,909.4	1,596.7	312.7	213.4	99.2	-67.6	31.6	11.9
JR Central	1997-98	1,147.1	778.4	368.7	-307.2	61.5	2.0	63.4	33.4
	1998-99	1,106.9	771.4	335.5	-263.3	72.2	-23.7	48.5	12.7
JR West	1997-98	946.0	831.2	114.8	-66.5	48.3	0.5	48.8	23.4
	1998-99	909.5	796.8	112.7	-62.1	50.6	-50.5	0.0	-5.6
JR Hokkaido	1997-98	102.5	139.6	-37.1	33.4	-3.7	-1.8	-5.5	-5.6
	1998-99	99.2	131.9	-32.7	34.7	2.0	-96.0	-94.0	-94.2
JR Shikoku	1997-98	48.1	56.7	-8.6	8.7	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
	1998-99	42.8	52.2	-9.4	8.2	-1.2	-61.8	-63.0	-63.2
JR Kyushu	1997-98	168.9	186.3	-17.4	18.4	1.1	1.1	2.2	0.5
	1998-99	159.1	172.1	-13.1	17.5	3.5	-138.8	-135.4	-135.5
JR Freight	1997-98	187.0	190.9	-3.9	-4.9	-8.8	9.9	1.1	0.9
	1998-99	173.8	177.9	-4.2	-3.1	-7.2	-7.8	0.5	0.3

*US\$1 is about 115 yen.