

1 September—Usui Pass Railway Monument Park in Matsuida City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan started offering visitors chance to drive EF63 electric locomotive on 300-m track for ¥30,000 tuition fee. Village opened as new facility accompanying closure of Shin'etsu Line due to opening of Nagano-bound Shinkansen

5 September—Small airliner of Necon Air crashed near Katmandu, Nepal, killing all 10 passengers and five crew onboard

10 September—Tokyo Metropolitan Government announced start of full operations of Tama Intercity Monorail on 10 January 2000 with newly opened 10.6-km section between Tama Centre and Tachikawa Kita

16 September—First phase of Pudong Airport opened in Shanghai, China, with 4000-m runway and large terminal building to handle 20 million passengers and 750,000 tonnes of freight annually

16 September—17 railway companies in Kanto district, Japan, unveiled plan to introduce shared prepaid card system in October 2000 with further three companies to join scheme in 2001

18 September—First generation Series-0 shinkansen cars retired from Tokyo–Shin Osaka section of Tokaido Shinkansen. Total of 3216 cars manufactured carrying about 2.5 billion passengers during 35 years. JR West to continue operating 259 Series-0 cars on Shin Osaka–Hakata section until about 2005

18 September—Runaway locomotive collided with express train bound for Karachi killing 23 passengers and crew and injuring at least 75

19 September—Long-distance bus from Madrid to Gerona left road and rolled over, killing 28 passengers and injuring 25

21 September—Richter-7.6 earthquake hit central Taiwan killing about 2000 people and injuring some 10,000 others

27 September—Maintenance car derailed on east-bound line of JR San'yo Shinkansen between Shin Kobe and Nishi Akashi stopping 25 trains and 10,000 passengers

29 September—Passenger car driven onto JR West Shimonoseki Station platform. Driver then stabbed people waiting on platform killing three and injuring 12 others

30 September—Nuclear chain reaction accident in nuclear-fuel processing company at Tokaimura, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, exposed workers and nearby residents to radiation. Widespread emergency restrictions stopped both Joban and Suigun lines of JR East, affecting more than 200 trains and about 100,000 commuters

2 October—Electrification of Maizuru Line (26.4 km between Ayabe and Higashi Maizuru) of JR West completed with debut of *Maizuru* electric express between Kyoto and Higashi Maizuru

3 October—Kanbara Railway between Gosen and Muramatsu in Niigata Prefecture, Japan, closed after 77 years of operations

5 October—JR East and Tokyo Metropolitan Government announced agreement to restore Marunouchi side of Tokyo Station to condition at opening in 1914 with three-story domed roof. Station rebuilt to present two-stories after damage by bombing in WWII

5 October—JR East announced plan to introduce new ticketing system using IC card in metropolitan and suburban areas in January 2001. Experimental implementation to be conducted on Saikyo Line from June to August 2000

5 October—Rush-hour commuter express and two-car suburban train collided and caught fire in west London killing more than 30 passengers

6 October—Japanese Ministry of Transport announced increase in maximum number of departures/arrivals at Haneda Airport by 114 in two phases beginning July 2000

9 October—Another concrete block weighing 226 kg fell from tunnel roof onto track between Kokura and Hakata of San'yo Shinkansen. To confirm tunnel safety, JR West stopped operations between Hiroshima and Hakata from early morning to late afternoon affecting 62,000 passengers. Followed earlier fall of concrete block from tunnel roof on carriage in June

12 October—Large trailer truck stalled on railway crossing in Saitama Prefecture, Japan, hit by semi-express train derailing front car and injuring 17 passenger

16 October—Richer-7 earthquake near Los Angeles, California, derailed Amtrak train

18 October—Japanese Ministry of Transport opened public hearing into construction of temporary runway at Narita Airport

22 October—Japanese Ministry of Transport announced that number of railway passengers in 1998 held at 22,010 million, down 1% from previous year and marking three consecutive annual decreases. Six JR companies carried 8,760 million passengers, down 1.1% over previous year

27 October—Shinkansen Through-Operation Committee of Ministry of Transport announced seven sections for feasibility study into free-gauge train operations

29 October—Massive typhoon hit eastern India killing more than 3000 people

30 October—ANA joined Star Alliance of eight international airline companies including United Airlines (USA) and Lufthansa (Germany). First Japanese airline to participate in such alliance to expand network through joint operations

30 October—Joshin'etsu Expressway (203 km) fully opened to link Niigata, Nagano and Gunma prefectures

31 October—Boeing 767 of Egypt Air, bound from New York to Cairo crashed into Atlantic Ocean off Massachusetts, USA, killing all 217 people onboard

9 November—DC9 airliner of TAESA Airline crashed immediately after takeoff in western Mexico killing all 23 onboard

10 November—JR Freight announced integration of Onagigawa Station in Tokyo with Sumidagawa Station of Joban Line by end of fiscal 2001. Present site of Onagigawa Station to be redeveloped by public subscription

12 November—Richter-7.2 earthquake hit northwestern Turkey killing 705 and injuring 5108

22 November—Air Self Defense Force trainer jet crashed into power transmission line in Saitama Prefecture, Japan, killing two crew and cutting power to 800,000 households, subways and private railways in metropolitan Tokyo and southern Saitama

24 November—9000-tonne ferry sank off Yantai, Shandong Province, China, drowning 150 people and leaving more than 100 missing

28 November—Two-tonne concrete block fell from roof of Rebunhama Tunnel (1232 m) between Rebun and Ogishi on Muroran Line of JR Hokkaido derailing freight train bound from Nagoya Cargo Terminal to Sapporo Cargo Terminal

MILESTONES

Tsutomu Aihara

Appointed Chairman of Corporation for Advanced Transport & Technology on 1 September. Joined Ministry of Transport after graduating from Faculty of Law of University of Tokyo in 1967. Served as Director General of Transport Policy Bureau, Director General of Maritime Safety Agency and Manager of Japanese National Railways Settlement Headquarters

Toshihiro Nikai

Appointed Minister of Transport on 5 October. Elected member of House of Representatives in 1983 (now in fifth term). Served as Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Transport twice under Kaifu and Hosokawa cabinets

Yukitaka Ishii

Chairman of JR Kyushu, awarded the Order of Diplomatic Service Merit Heung-In Medal on 10 November by government of Republic of Korea for contribution to promoting mutual friendship and interchange

Shuichiro Yamanouchi

Chairman of JR East, awarded *Officier de la Legion d'honneur* by French President on 17 November for contribution to promoting friendly interchange between Japan and France