

1 November—Japan Air System Railroad Fun Club announced plan to conserve diesel train of Ohata Line belonging to Shimokita Transport (closed at end of March 2001) with train to run several times each year in Ohata Station yard

3 November—Railway Technical Research Institute and Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation announced start of test runs of free-gauge trains between Ogura and Oita on JR Kyushu's Nippo Line, and between Shin-Shimonoseki and Ogori on San'yo Shinkansen. High-speed endurance tests already conducted on lines in USA

12 November—American Airlines Airbus 300 crashed near airport in Queens, New York, killing all 260 on board and 5 people on ground

12 November—Japan Airlines (JAL), largest Japanese airline, and Japan Air System (JAS), third largest airline, announced plan to establish joint holding company in September 2002

15 November—French government announced decision to construction third international airport at Chaulnes, 125 km north of Paris with planned opening in 2020

18 November—JR East started operating SUICA IC card ticket gates at 424 stations in and around Tokyo, permitting passage just by touching card on gate

18 November—China's domestically developed rapid-transit railway started operation between Beijing and Guangzhou at maximum speed of 160 km/h

19 November—Domestic passenger Ilyushin 18 crashed in northern Moscow suburb killing all 24 crew and passengers

24 November—Small Avro RJ passenger plane of Cross Air crashed near Zurich Airport in Switzerland, killing 24 and injuring 9

1 December—Revision to 1986 Japan Railway Business Law came into effect making JR East, JR Central and JR West fully private companies

1 December—JR East R&D Center opened in Saitama City with four research institutes and full-size track and train testing system

2 December—Rail fastening ceremony held in Ninohe Station for extension of Tohoku Shinkansen between Morioka and Hachinohe

7 December—Takamatsu Kotohira Electric Railroad together with Group company, Kotoden Bus, applied for bankruptcy rehabilitation to continue operation while requesting aid from municipal government

20 December—JR East acquired 70% of shares of Tokyo Monorail connecting central Tokyo with Haneda Airport, becoming joint shareholder with Hitachi, Ltd. (30% shareholding)

1 January—Euro banknotes and coins entered circulation in 12 countries of EC

2 January—According to Japanese National Police Agency, 2001 road traffic deaths dropped below 9000 for first time in 20 years

2 January—According to report by US Air Safety Network, number of fatal air accidents in 2001 involving passenger airplanes with multiple engines lowest since 1946 with 34 crashes, killing 1118 passengers and crew

3 January—Car driven by student collided with sleeper on JR Uetsu Line in Niigata during blizzard after car entered railway line at crossing 2 km from accident

4 January—Light Cessna 172 flying from Kagoshima Airport to Kumamoto Airport crashed in mountains of Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, killing two of four people onboard

5 January—Light airplane piloted by 15-year-old boy crashed into 28th floor of building in Tampa, Florida, killing pilot

8 January—Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation filed application to Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport to construct Hokkaido Shinkansen between Shin-Aomori and Sapporo (360 km), as well as Kyushu Shinkansen between Takeo Onsen and Nagasaki (66 km)

9 January—Boeing Corporation announced halving of orders for new planes in 2001 after terrorist attack on 9 September

15 January—Kagoshima City Transportation Authority introduced three ultra-low-floor trains on city's tramway system; floor panel of entrance flips open to form ramp for wheelchairs and easy access by elderly passengers

18 January—EJRCF announced plan to restore building of old Shimbashi Station, Japan's first railway terminal, on its rediscovered site, as small complex of restaurant and exhibition hall to open in spring 2003

28 January—JR East announced test run of E993 Advanced Commuter Train from February 2002 on Kawagoe Line using five-car train set with direct drive motor, articulated bogies, and information service

28 January—Plane belonging to TAM Airline of Ecuador crashed high on volcano, killing all 92 passengers and crew

29 January—Japan Airlines (JAL) and Japan Air System (JAS) confirmed plan to establish joint holding company to be called Japan Airline System with reorganization in spring 2004 into Japan Airline International for international flights, Japan Airline Japan for domestic flights and Japan Airline Cargo for cargo



On 18 January 2002, EJRCF announced a project to rebuild old Shimbashi Station, Japan's first railway terminus completed in 1914 to a design by the American architect R. P. Bridgens. The station's function as a passenger terminus for the Tokaido main line (for Osaka and west Japan) came to an end when Tokyo (Central) Station was opened in 1914 and a new Shimbashi Station was opened on the diverted main line. The old Shimbashi Station was destroyed by fire in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake and the site was lost under the huge Shiodome Freight Terminal. After the closure of the Terminal in 1986 and the JNR privatization in 1987, the land was transferred to the JNR Settlement Corporation and finally sold to the private sector to repay part of JNR's debts. The foundations of the old station were discovered during the redevelopment and the government designated them as a national historical monument. JNRSC decided to restore the original building on the preserved foundation and commissioned EJRCF to oversee the project. The restored building will be opened in spring 2003, accommodating restaurants and a railway history exhibition hall. (EJRCF)

Milestones

Mutsuo Kimura

Former President of House of Councillors and former Minister of Transport died on 7 December. Joined Ministry of Transport after graduating in law from University of Tokyo in 1938. After serving as Director of Road Transport Bureau and Director of Tourism Department in Ministry of Transport, elected in 1964 to House of Councillors for Okayama district. Elected for five consecutive terms, holding important posts such as Minister of Transport

Shigeaki Tsukihara

Appointed Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport to replace retiring Vice Minister Shinya Izumi. Joined Defense Agency in 1960 after graduating in law from Tohoku University. First elected to house of Councillors in 1983 and since re-elected twice

Restoring Tokyo Station

On 15 February 2002, JR East announced an ambitious project to restore Tokyo (Central) Station to its original glory. The station's Marunouchi-side red-brick main building (facing the Imperial Palace and Tokyo's business centre) was completed in 1914 by the architect Kingo Tatsuno (top). It survived the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, but was heavily bombed and burned out towards the end of WWII. The postwar repairs reduced the original 3-storey building to the current 2-storey one and the cupola domes on both ends were changed to simpler structures (bottom). The restoration will be completed by spring 2011, and the enlarged building will accommodate a hotel, restaurants and shops as well as Tokyo Station Gallery run by EJRCF. The project also includes demolishing the current Yaesu-side main building (on the other side of the tracks) to widen the station plaza as well as construction of two high-rise buildings on both sides of the square, accommodating a department store and offices. (Photos: JR East)

