

4 February—Kinki Nippon Tourist Co., Ltd., (#3 in domestic Japanese travel industry and Nippon Travel Agency Co., Ltd., (#4) announced withdrawal from planned January 2003 merger citing impact of 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in USA

5 February—Civil Aviation Administration of China announced State Council approval for Chinese International Airlines (Beijing) to absorb Air China and China Southwest Airlines, China Eastern Airlines (Shanghai) to absorb China Northwest Airlines and Yunnan Airlines, and China Southern Airlines (Guangzhou) to absorb China Northern Airlines and China Xinjiang Airlines

5 February—Passenger train collided with freight train approximately 60 km from Durban in South Africa killing 22 and injuring over 100

12 February—Domestic Tupolev 154 of Iran Air Tours crashed after take off from Teheran killing all 13 crew and 118 passengers

14 February—Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) approved plan for third-sector Man'yo Railway to take over 12.8-km streetcar of Kaetsuno Railway (Toyama Prefecture) with financing from prefectural and municipal governments

15 February—JR East announced ¥50 billion project to renovate red-brick Tokyo Station building to original three-storey structure with cupola domes, plus construction of new twin high-rise buildings on Yaesu side

15 February—Chikage Ogi, Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, submitted White Paper (in CD-ROM format with abstract) on Infrastructure and Transport to Cabinet organized around 12 themes, including urban renewal, promotion of tourism, environment-friendly society, etc.

20 February—Passenger train caught fire about 50 km south of Cairo killing 373 passengers

22 February—Remodelled barrier-free Ueno Station opened to mark first step in JR East's *Station Renaissance* programme by offering community and lifestyle support information

22 February—Rapid and local train crashed on JR Kyushu's Kagoshima main line in Munakata City, Fukuoka Prefecture injuring 77 people

26 February—Two freight trains collided some 30 km south of Vienna, Austria killing 7 and injuring 15 people

13 March—Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) Transportation Bureau took over operation of Ueno Zoo Monorail (0.3 km) after operation shut down in November 2001 due to mechanical problems

13 March—According to preliminary 2001 air transportation statistics released by MLIT, although Japan's domestic air travellers numbered 94.15 million (1.3% year-on-year increase), impact of 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in USA resulted in first drop (−9.1%) in Japanese international air travel in 8 years to 11.48 million passengers

13 March—Iyo Railway in Ehime Prefecture announced debut of new ultra-low-floor tram, bus location system and express and late-night bus services

13 March—Korean Ministry of Construction and Transportation and Railway Technology Institute announced development of Korean high-speed electric railcar with maximum speed of 350 km/h using Alstom TGV technology for introduction on Honan Line and Kyunbu High Speed Railway

15 March—IGR Iwate Galaxy Railroad (*IGR Iwate Ginga Tetsudo*) and Blue Forest Railway (*Aoi Mori Tetsudo*) applied to MLIT for permission to take over operation of Morioka–Hachinohe section of Tohoku main line running parallel to Hachinohe extension of Tohoku Shinkansen as category-2 operators and Aomori Prefecture applied for permission to take over facilities as category-3 operator

18 March—Government commission announced new company named Narita New High-speed Railway Access Co., Ltd. to be established in late April to lead construction of new railway to New Tokyo International Airport (Narita) with ¥978 million in start-up capital provided by Chiba Prefecture, Narita Airport Authority, Keisei Electric Railway Co., Ltd., Japan Airlines Co., Ltd., All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd., and Japan Air System Co., Ltd.

27 March—JR East announced fiscal 2002 group management plan to build new line (about 3.8 km) between Ueno and Tokyo permitting direct connections to Tohoku/Takasaka, Joban, and Tokaido lines with target completion date in late FY 2009

27 March—Airports Council International (ACI) announced 2.6% drop in air travel worldwide to 3.21 billion as well as 8.4% drop in air freight to 61.57 million tonnes due to impact of 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in USA and slumping world economy

28 March—Kinki Nippon Railway filed plan with MLIT to close 20.4-km Hokusei Line in Mie Prefecture from Nishi Kuwana to Ageki on 1 April 2003 due to declining passenger and freight volumes

29 March—TMG Transportation Bureau announced plan to sell 50 secondhand buses to Ministry of Transportation in Republic of Indonesia at ¥430,000 each

29 March—Hankyu Corporation announced paper sale of 84 railway carriages to holding corporation in British Cayman Islands for ¥10.2 billion with carriages to be leased back to Hankyu for extraordinary profit of ¥7.4 billion

29 March—Nankai Electric Railway and Wakayama Prefecture announced approval by MLIT of plan filed in February to close 2.6-km Wakayama Port–Suiken section of Wakayama-ko Line

30 March—*Euromed* high-speed train from Barcelona to Valencia crashed with express train north of Tarragona in Spain, killing 4 and injuring about 90

31 March—Kijima Line of Nagano Electric Railroad shut down after 77 years of service and replaced by bus service running parallel to line

15 April—Air China Boeing 767 crashed in suburb of Pusan in South Korea killing 122 passengers and crew

17 April—JR East's SUICA smart card ticket gate exit system won Prime Minister's Award at 31st Japan Industrial Technology Awards

18 April—Temporary 2180-m runway began full-scale operation at New Tokyo International Airport (Narita), expanding take off and landing slots by 135,000 to 200,000 per year

18 April—Amtrak passenger train derailed in Orlando, Florida killing 4 and injuring over 150

18 April—Commander light aircraft crashed into 25th floor of skyscraper in Milan killing pilot and two people in building

18 April—Alliance for Early Realization of Joetsu Shinkansen Direct Express (*Joetsu Shinkansen Chokko Tokkyu Soki Jitsugen Kisei Domeikai*) announced estimated cost of building mini-shinkansen between Nagaoka, Kashiwazaki, and Joetsu at ¥51.9 billion

21 April—JR East purchased 500 new E231 carriages in 3-car configuration for Yamanote Line with 15-cm greater width to alleviate overcrowding, LCDs to display stations, world news, World Cup reports, etc.

21 April—292 people completed Tunnel Walk organized by Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation and local municipalities through 25,810-m Iwate Ichinohe tunnel between Morioka and Hachinohe on Tohoku Shinkansen and world's longest land tunnel

23 April—Double-decker commuter train collided head on with freight train in suburbs of Los Angeles killing 2 passengers and injuring 265

26 April—Fair Trade Commission announced intention to approve merger of Japan Airlines and Japan Air Systems scheduled for October

26 April—All six JRs announced sale of 2002 Football Pass discount ticket (¥22,000 and valid for 5 days of travel on all JR trains including shinkansen) from 20 May for foreigners visiting World Cup soccer tournament

30 April—JR Central announced transfer of prototype 300X train, (Japanese holder of 443 km/h speed record in July 1996) to Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI) for display at RTRI Wind Tunnel Technical Center in Maihara Town, Shiga Prefecture until August 2002

MILESTONES

Kaichiro Nezu

Former President of Tobu Railway Co., Ltd., died on 15 February aged 88. Eldest son of Tobu Railway founder Kaichiro Nezu Senior. Graduated in 1936 from Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo). Held post of President of Tobu Railway for 53 years from 1941 until 1994 and promoted Tobu Group diversification. Also President of Tobu Department Store for 22 years from 1960

Yasuo Nishimura

Last Chairman of Japan National Railway Settlement Corporation from April 1993 to October 1998 died on 27 March aged 70. After graduating from University of Tokyo in 1954, joined Ministry of Transport where held various posts including Director General of Civil Aviation Bureau before retiring in January 1986

Takashi Sasaki

Managing Director of Japan Travel Bureau (JTB) elected JTB President designate on 26 April. Joined JTB in 1967 after graduating in science from University of Tokyo. Named Director in 1996, and Managing Director in Charge of Western Japan Regional Headquarters in 2000. Will take up post on 28 June when current President Ryuji Funayama becomes Chairman and Company Representative, while current Chairman Isao Matsuhashi becomes Director and Senior Advisor

Sir Peter Parker LVO, KBE

Former Chairman of British Rail (1976–83) and of Mitsubishi Electric Europe BV (1976–96) died aged 77 on 28 April while on holiday in Bodrum, Turkey. Awarded Grand Cordon of the Order of the Sacred Treasure by Japanese Government in 1991 for his long association with Japan