

2 February—Egyptian ferry *al-Salam Boccaccio 98* (11,800 GT) carrying some 1370 passengers and crew sank in Red Sea off east coast of Egypt, drowning about 1000

2 February—Privately financed company founding Shinwa Takachiho Trokko Railway to takeover Takachiho Railway (50-km third-sector railway between Nobeoka and Takachiho) announced operations to restart over 12.4-km section between Takachiho and Hinokage Onsen on 15 April

3 February—Third-sector Miki Railway (6.6 km between Miki and Yakujin) in Hyogo Prefecture began moves to switch railway service to bus service with formal decision in FY2006

4 February—Groundbreaking ceremony for final section (about 11 km) of Narita Rapid Railway linking New Tokyo International Airport (Narita) to central Tokyo in 36 minutes held in Narita City with opening slated for 2010

10 February—JR East's *Komachi* No. 3 ran into massive snow avalanche on Akita Shinkansen in Akita Prefecture, stalling for more than 5 hours and causing cancellation of 25 up and down services

13 February—Tanker lorry ran into more than dozen passenger cars, trucks, etc., stopped in traffic jam in Kyoto Prefecture, causing 12-car pileup and killing three people

15 February—JR East announced promotion of Vice President Satoshi Seino to President on 1 April with current President Mutsutake Otsuka becoming non-representative Chairman and current Chairman Masatake Matsuda serving as Director and Advisor

16 February—Kobe Airport opened with 2500-m runway on artificial island (about 272 ha) off coast of Port Island

16 February—China National Development and Reform Committee announced construction of two passenger railways—245 km between Tianjin and Qinhuangdao, and 278 km between Beijing and Shijiazhuang as part of China's medium- to long-distance railway network plan

17 February—Huge mudslide on Leyte Island, Philippines buried entire village, killing more than 1500 people

18 February—Operation of Munabao–Khokhrapar railway line between India and Pakistan resumed for first time after operations stopped by 1965 India–Pakistan war

20 February—With kickoff of 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany on 9 June, Japan Airlines (JAL) direct international flights between Frankfurt and Narita to sport new *Samurai Blue 2006* livery until 9 July 2006 in support of Japan's football team

22 February—German Federal Minister for Transport, Building and Urban Development disclosed that China plans to extend 30-km Shanghai MAGLEV between Shanghai Pudong International Airport and city centre another 160 km to Hangzhou City

1 March—JAL announced resignation of President Toshiyuki Shinmachi to become Non-representative Chairman and Director Haruka Nishimatsu to become President, ending internal disputes in which four directors of subsidiary companies urged Shinmachi's retirement

13 March—China's National Development and Reform Committee announced Beijing–Shanghai (1320 km) High Speed Railway Project with maximum train speed of 350 km/h, linking two cities in about 5 hours and revenue operation scheduled to start in 2010

16 March—Class-2 state-owned Shin Kitakyushu Airport opened on artificial island in Suo Sea with 2500-m runway for large jets

16 March—Class-3 prefecture-owned Shin Tanegashima Airport opened in Nakatane Town, Kagoshima Prefecture, with 2000-m runway for small jets

17 March—Yoshioka Kaitei Station on Hokkaido side of Seikan Tunnel (53.85 km) demolished for construction of Hokkaido Shinkansen



With the 2006 FIFA World Cup kicking off in Germany on 9 June, JAL is supporting the Japanese team by painting its aircraft on Tokyo–Frankfurt flights in a special *Samurai Blue 2006* livery from late February until the end of the competition. (K. Mohri)

22 March—European Union (EU) publicized 95 airlines judged 'unsafe' for failure to meet international safety standards; 92 prohibited from using any airport in EU or overflying member states, and 3 subject to special flight regulations

22 March—International Air Transport Association (IATA) revised projected 2007 profits of world airlines from \$6.2 billion to \$7.2 billion due to demand growth and improved operational efficiency

23 March—Fire on *Star Princess* cruise ship (2690 passengers and 1123 crew) killed 1 passenger and injured 11

27 March—New Keihanna Line (18.8 km) opened, consisting of Gakken Nara Tomigaoka–Ikoma section (8.6 km) constructed by third-sector Nara Ikoma High Speed Railway and former Higashi-Osaka Line (between Ikoma and Nagata) of Kinki Nippon Railway and extending to Osaka Municipal Subway's new Chuo Line

27 March—Ariake–Toyosu extension (2.8 km) of Tokyo Waterfront New Transit (*Yurikamome*) opened

30 March—Pleasure boat sank in Persian Gulf off Bahrain, leaving 57 dead and 13 missing

31 March—Land adjoining Tobu Railway's Narihira Station in Sumida Ward, Tokyo, announced as site of world's tallest digital broadcasting tower (610 m)

4 April—Indian government announced decision to merge two state-managed airlines—Air India (international service) and Indian Airlines (domestic service) before end of 2006

5 April—Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency (JRTT), sold all 286,071 shares in JR Central, completing privatization of JR Central

9 April—High-speed hydrofoil hit drifting log about 80 km off Cape Sata in Kagoshima Prefecture, injuring all 110 passengers and crew

10 April—Japan National Tourist Organization announced number of foreigners visiting Japan in 2005 largest ever at 6,727,926 (up 9.6%). Tourists numbered 4,368,573 (up 13.8%), while Japanese travelling abroad in 2005 numbered second largest ever at 17,403,565 (up 3.4%)

13 April—Small cargo boat (498 tonnes) hit large freighter (6,182 tons) in dense fog in Tokyo Bay, causing freighter to sink about 7 hours later after all 25 crew rescued

14 April—*Yurikamome* (14.8-km AGT between Shimbashi and Toyosu) stopped when wheel fell off, leaving system closed for 2 days during inspections

15 April—Express train collided from behind with local train in Purwodadi Prefecture, Java, Indonesia, killing 13 passengers and injuring 26

17 April—Passenger vessel carrying 60 persons overturned off coast of Timor, Indonesia, but 59 of 60 people on board rescued

18 April—Two gondola cars on 1-km ropeway connecting central Manhattan in New York and Roosevelt Island on East River stopped due to transmission problems but all passengers evacuated safely after 11 hours

19 April—After signing \$4.6 billion contract for purchase of 80 Boeing aircraft just before visiting America, China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced plan to purchase 2000 aircraft from USA in next 15 years, stressing intention to cut China's trade surplus

20 April—Hokkaido Chihoku Highland Railway Company closed Furusato Ginga Line (140 km between Ikeda and Kitami) after reopening Chihoku Line as longest third-sector railway in June 1989

23 April—Mid-air collision between two light airplanes in Anchorage, USA, killed all five people on board

24 April—Construction-related heave in tracks of JR East's Yamanote Line closed entire line in Tokyo for about 5 hours, stopping 400 trains on Yamamote and nearby Saikyo lines and inconveniencing about 320,000 people

24 April—JAL opened Safety Promotion Center (containing fuselage, parts, etc., of crashed JAL B747SR-100 jet that killed 520 people) in Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) for safety training of employees and viewing by general public

24 April—Long-distance bus ran off road into gorge in mountains in Quezon, Philippines, killing seven passengers and injuring 50

29 April—Toyama-ko Line (7.6 km)—Japan's first full-fledged Light Rail Transit (LRT) opened under management of third-sector Toyama Light Rail Company with seven articulated trains, each consisting of two low-floor cars

2 May—Bus ran off bridge in Maharashtra State, western India, killing 30 passengers and injuring more than 10

3 May—Armenian Airbus A320 crashed off coast of Black Sea in Russia, killing all 113 passengers and crew

9 May—Last train departed from Beijing South Station in China, ending 48 years of history before reopening as new terminal of Beijing–Shanghai high-speed railway in 2010

12 May—World-famous railway model maker Märklin of Germany announced sale to UK investment company Kingsbridge Capital Management GB

12 May—Small ferry sank off Masbate Island in central Philippines, killing 21 persons

20 May—China celebrated completion of Three Gorges Dam (2309-m wide and 185-m high) on Yangtze River in Hubei Province with world's largest generating capacity (18,200 MW)

22 May—Air China became twentieth member of Star Alliance, including Lufthansa, United Airlines, All Nippon Airways, etc.

24 May—Large fire destroyed cargo-handling facility at Atatürk International Airport in Istanbul

25 May—Oil pipeline (962 km) opened between Kazakhstan in central Asia and Alashankou in Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous District of China

27 May—Large earthquake (6.2) struck southern Yogyakarta, Indonesia, leaving some 6000 persons dead and more than 10,000 injured

28 May—Berlin Central Station opened in Germany, replacing two central stations dating from pre-unification days and expected to handle some 300,000 passengers daily

2 June—South Wing Satellite No. 5 (150,000 m²) of Narita International Airport Passenger Terminal Building 1 opened to serve passengers of All Nippon Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines and 10 members of Star Alliance aviation union

4 June—Japan Airlines officially joined OneWorld international aviation union formed by eight companies, including American Airlines and British Airways

5 June—International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced final total losses of world's aviation companies for 2006 to reach \$3 billion due to skyrocketing fuel prices

7 June—Tokadai New Transit in Aichi Prefecture applied for permit to abandon 7.4-km Tokadai Line between central Komaki City and new town in eastern part of city on September 30 due to huge cumulative losses suffered since 1991 opening

8 June—Spanish construction company Ferrovial announced successful bid of £10.1 billion for British Airports Authority, owners of seven UK airports, including London's Heathrow Airport

9 June—Cathay Pacific Airways announced purchase of Dragonair serving mainland China as wholly owned subsidiary

11 June—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport announced second runway (4000 m) of Kansai International Airport to enter service on 2 August 2007, about 2 months ahead of schedule

12 June—Train carrying 200 passengers derailed in suburb of Netanya, Israel, killing at least 5 people and injuring about 70

13 June—Tramcar of Arakawa Line in Kita Ward, Tokyo, carrying 31 passengers ran into back of another tramcar, injuring 25 people

19 June—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin announced opening of New Bangkok International Airport (Suvarnabhumi Airport) with 4000-m and 3700-m runways on 28 September

22 June—Passenger boat sank in storm off west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, leaving 24 of 116 passengers and crew missing

26 June—Construction of 51.5-km MRT connecting Taipei City and Chiang Kai-shek International Airport started, with entire line scheduled to open in June 2012

29 June—Shareholders approved merger of Hanshin Electric Railway and Hankyu Electric Railway on 1 October as first merger of two major private railway companies in postwar Japan and forming third largest private railway company

MILESTONES

Mr Fumio Takagi

Former President of Japanese National Railways (JNR) died on 14 February. Joined former Ministry of Finance after graduating in law from University of Tokyo in 1943. Retired from Ministry after serving as Director of Secretariat, Head of Tax Bureau, Administrative Vice-Minister of Finance, etc. Served as eighth JNR President from 1976 to 1983

Mr Satoshi Seino

JR East Vice President appointed President from 1 April. Joined former JNR after graduating in law from Tohoku University in 1970, becoming Director and Executive Director in 1996 and Vice President in 2002

Mr Tatsuo Tsunoda

Former JR West President died on 20 February. Joined former Ministry of Transport after graduating in law from University of Tokyo in 1953. Retired from Ministry in 1985 after serving as Director-General of Maritime Safety Agency. Became first JR West President in April 1987, serving as Chairman from 1992 to 1997 as well as Advisor and Counselor

Mr Yoshiyuki Kasai

JR Central Chairman took office as member of National Public Safety Commission on 22 February. Joined former JNR after graduating in law from University of Tokyo in 1963, becoming JR Central President in 1995 and Chairman in 2004

Mr Haruka Nishimatsu

Director of JAL appointed CEO of JAL Group and President of JAL. Joined JAL after graduating in economics from University of Tokyo. After serving as fund manager and executive officer, became Director in June 2005. Assumed post of Representative Senior Managing Director on 1 April 2006