

# T O P I C S

## July

**1 July**—Section of China's Qinghai Railway (1142 km) between Golmud in Qinghai Province of China and Lhasa in Tibetan Autonomous Region opened as world's highest railway (5072 m asl) with 84% of line at more than 4000 m asl and train carriages sealed to prevent altitude sickness

**2 July**—Airbus and parent company European Aeronautic Defence and Space (EADS) announced resignations of both CEOs with replacements by Mr Louis Gallois, President of French National Railways (SNCF) and Mr Christian Streiff, former executive of Saint-Gobain Group, respectively

**3 July**—Subway train derailed in Valencia, Spain, due to damage to wheel caused by speeding, killing 35 people and injuring 47 others

**6 July**—Himalayan pass of Nathu La between China's Tibetan Autonomous Region and India's Sikkim State reopened after 44 years

**6 July**—Shin Oki Airport in Shimane Prefecture, Japan, opened on site of old airport with 2000-m runway to accommodate jets

**9 July**—S7 Airline's Airbus A310 slid off runway on landing at Irkutsk to hit building, causing explosion killing 129 people

**10 July**—Narita International Airport Company applied to Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) for permission to extend runway to 2500 m (additional 320 m), including construction of taxiway, apron, etc., with service planned to start in March 2010

**10 July**—Pakistan International Airlines domestic aircraft crashed at Multan in eastern Pakistan, killing all on board

**17 July**—Magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck SE side of Java, Indonesia, generating tsunami and killing more than 500 people

**17 July**—Airbus announced development of mid-sized A350XWB to compete with Boeing's state-of-the-art B787

**20 July**—First direct freight flight between Taiwan and China operated since founding of People's Republic of China

**31 July**—Nippon Sharyo and Sumitomo Corp. announced order for 50 split-level carriages from America's Virginia Railway Express with bodies to be manufactured in Japan before shipment to USA for final assembly by 2008

## August

**1 August**—Thai government approved plan to construct two new urban railway lines (Bang Sue-Bang Yai Line (23 km) and Hua Lamphong-Bang Kae Line (14 km) by Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA), and two new sections on Light Red Line at Rang Sit-Maha Chai (66 km) and Taling Chan-Suvarnabhumi Airport (New Bangkok International Airport) (55 km) by State Railway of Thailand (SRT)

**2 August**—Eurotunnel operator of Channel Tunnel declared bankrupt with €9 billion in debts but French court allowed company to continue services under court administration by freezing debt and interest repayments

**3 August**—Local train hit two donkeys and derailed near Nimes in southern France, damaging about 200 m of rails but without injuring any passengers

**14 August**—Construction crane on river barge touched high-voltage power lines, blacking out about 1.4 million households in Tokyo, Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures and stopping Tokyo Metro subways to affect about 310,000 people

**21 August**—Two trains collided north of Cairo, Egypt, killing 58 people and injuring about 140 people

**21 August**—Express train carrying more than 400 passengers derailed at Villada in northern Spain, hitting bridge girder and killing six passengers

**22 August**—Domestic flight of Pulkovo Airlines crashed in eastern Ukraine, killing all 171 passengers and crew

**22 August**—US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced 2005 traffic death toll of 43,443 (+1.4% over previous year) and worst number since 1990

**22 August**—Shenzhen Zhongji Industrial Company in Guangdong Prefecture signed agreement to purchase ailing state-owned Luoding Railway (62 km, Chunwan-Luoding), becoming China's first private railway line

**23 August**—JR West announced new timetable after converting power transmission methods from AC to DC on Hokuriku main line (38.2 km, Nagahama–Tsuruga) and Kosai Line (5.8 km, Nagahara–Omi Shiozu) with local trains running directly between Osaka and Tsuruga

**26 August**—Large bus collided with parked truck on highway in Shaoguan, China, killing 17 passengers and injuring 33

**27 August**—Domestic Bombardier CR 200 jet crashed on takeoff from wrong runway at Lexington, USA, killing 49 of 50 people on board

**28 August**—Long-distance bus overturned on highway in northern New York State, USA, killing five people and injuring more than 30

**28 August**—Boeing revised forecast for airplanes required to keep pace with rapid Indian economic growth to 856 units over next 20 years

**30 August**—Kawasaki Heavy Industries successfully tested *SWIMO* ultra-light rail vehicle powered by nickel-hydride battery

## September

**1 September**—Tupolev 154 belonging to domestic airline crashed on landing at Mashhad airport in NE Iran, killing 30 out of 148 people on board and injuring 47

**4 September**—Passenger and freight train collided 30 km north of Cairo, Egypt, killing 5 people and injuring 28

**5 September**—Japan's MLIT approved plan to close Tokadai Line between Komaki and Tokadai-higashi (7.4 km) in Aichi Prefecture on 30 October 2006 as first closure of automated guideway transit (AGT) system after 15 years of operation

**6 September**—Taiwan parliament approved name change for Chiang Kai-shek International Airport (TPE) used since 1920 to Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport

**11 September**—Japan's MLIT gave approval to extend runway B on north side of New Tokyo International Airport (Narita) by 320 m to 2500 m with completion scheduled for late FY2009

**11 September**—Usui Pass Exchange Memorial Foundation applied to MLIT to run tourist trains from October 2007 over 11.2-km Usui Pass section (Yokogawa to Karuizawa) of Shin'etsu main line closed when Nagano Shinkansen opened in 1997

**16 September**—Head-on collision between bus and passenger car in Swiss tunnel killed six people and injured six more

**17 September**—Tornado in Nobeoka, Miyazaki Prefecture overturned front two carriages of slow-running five-car express train on JR Kyushu's Nippo main line, injuring six people

**18 September**—SNCF announced decision to start test runs of TGV between Paris and Marseilles at up to 360 km/h, increasing speeds from current 300 km/h

**22 September**—Maglev train on elevated section of 32-km test line in NW Germany struck maintenance vehicle stopped on track, killing 23 people on board

**23 September**—Helicopter crashed in E Nepal killing all 24 people on board, including Minister of Forestry and World Wildlife Fund officials

**24 September**—Speeding bus overturned on mountain road near Quito, Ecuador, killing 47 people on board and injuring five children

**25 September**—JR Central announced plan to extend Yamanashi Test Line to 42.8 km and purchase 14 new Maglev test cars at total cost of ¥355 billion (¥119 = US\$1)

**26 September**—Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appointed cabinet, including Mr Tetsuzo Fuyushiba as Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport

**28 September**—New Bangkok International Airport (Suvarnabhumi) fully opened with two runways (4000 m and 3700 m) and expected to handle 45 million passengers annually

**29 September**—Domestic Boeing 737 of Brazil's GOL Airline collided with light plane and crashed in Amazon jungle, killing all 155 people on board but light plane landed without loss of life

## Milestones

### Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto

Former Prime Minister and Minister of Transport died on 1 July. First elected to House of Representatives in 1963, becoming powerful politician in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and holding posts as Secretary General of LDP, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Minister of Transport, and Prime Minister between January 1996 and July 1998

### Mr Masafumi Yasutomi

Appointed Administrative Vice-Minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transport on 11 July. After graduating from University of Tokyo, joined former Ministry of Transport in 1970, holding various posts including Director-General of Railway Bureau, Director-General of Secretariat, and Vice-Minister for International Affairs

### Mr Hiroaki Taniguchi

Appointed Vice-Minister for Engineering Affairs of MLIT on 11 July. After graduating from University of Tokyo, joined former Ministry of Construction in 1972, becoming Director-General of Road Bureau in July 2004

### Mr Ken Haruta

Appointed Vice-Minister for Land and Infrastructure of MLIT on 11 July. After graduating from University of Tokyo, joined former Ministry of Transport in 1972, becoming Director-General of Secretariat in August 2005

### Mr Shigetaro Yamamoto

Appointed Vice-Minister for International Affairs of MLIT on 11 July. After graduating from University of Tokyo, joined former Ministry of Construction in 1972, becoming Director-General of Housing Bureau in July 2004

### Mr Tetsuzo Fuyushiba

Diet Member and New Komeito General Secretary appointed new Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport in Abe Cabinet. Worked as lawyer after graduating from Kansai University before first election to Japanese House of Representatives in 1986. Joined New Frontier Party (NFP) and New Peace Party before rejoining New Komeito in 1998 where held position as party Chief Secretary

### Mr Koichi Sakata

Former JNR Vice President for Engineering and Chairman of Japan Railway Engineer's Association died on 28 September 2006. Joined JNR after in science and engineering from Waseda University in 1951, holding post of Vice President for Engineering from June 1985 to December 1986 before becoming President and Chairman of Japan Telecom