

January–September 2008

January

- 2—Japan's National Police Agency announced road deaths in 2007 decreased to 5743, returning to 5000 level for first time in 54 years
- 4—Small plane crashed into sea off coast of N. Venezuela, killing all 14 people onboard
- 11—High-speed Macao-Hong Kong ferries collided in fog, injuring 133 of 456 passengers and crew onboard
- 15—Fishing boat sank off coast of Zhejiang Province, China, after collision with freighter, leaving 19 of 20 crew missing
- 16—Work started on 2.4-km extension to Kyoto Metro–Tozai Line between Nijo and Uzumasa-Tenjingu stations
- 16—Airbus announced record 1341 orders for planes after Boeing announced orders for 1413 planes, or 369 more than previous year and second straight annual increase
- 17—British Airways Boeing 777 made emergency landing at London Heathrow Airport and suffered major damage after complete engine failure on landing but only 6 of 152 people onboard slightly injured
- 20—Bus carrying pilgrims in western India ran off road and fell 20 meters into ravine, killing 36 people and injuring 40 others
- 20—Overloaded tourist bus carrying people returning home for Chinese New Year skidded on ice and ran off road near Mingguang City, Anhui Province, China, killing 11 people and injuring 51 others
- 20—Long-distance bus ran off road south of Yangon, Myanmar, killing 27 passengers and injuring 10 others
- 23—Express train from Beijing struck and killed 18 track maintenance workers in Shandong Province after they started work ahead of schedule
- 24—DB AG started test runs of through freight container trains between Beijing, China, and Hamburg, Germany (approx. 10,000 km) via Mongolia, Russia, Belarus, and Poland with aim of starting regular services in 2010
- 28—Japanese National Tourist Organization announced record of 8.349 million tourists visited Japan in 2007 (+13.8% increase over 2006), breaking 8 million barrier for first time due to Visit Japan Campaign and cheap Japanese yen; outbound travel by Japanese totalled 178.298 million (–1.3%), first decrease in 4 years
- 29—Expressway bus skidded off icy road in Guizhou Province, China, falling 63 meters to kill 25 people on board and leave 14 others injured

- 30—Collision between tanker and freighter off Yangtze River Delta near Shanghai left 15 of 17 freighter crew dead and 1 missing
- 31—Record snowfalls in central and southern China caused major damage to railway catenary and signalling systems, delaying 2859 trains, cancelling 397, and diverting 436, forcing more than 5.8 million people to sleep in stations and trains

February

- 4—Freight train derailed in Xuanwei City of Yunnan Province, China, striking houses and killing 2 people with two others missing and two injured
- 5—Large tornado struck southern Tennessee, USA, leaving 55 people dead and causing widespread damage
- 5—Large French group Alstom announced plans to develop next-generation high-speed AGV (Automotrice Grande Vitesse) train running at speeds of 360 km/h with low-energy design and planned service start on new lines in Italy from 2011
- 8—Bus with 44 tourists onboard overturned near Durban, S. Africa, injuring 7 people
- 8—Chichibu Railways freight train hauling limestone partly derailed and overturned in Kagemori Station yard when brakes failed, injuring driver
- 11—Historic wooden Namdaemun south gate to Seoul City, Korea, dating from 1398 destroyed by arsonist
- 11—Three long-distance buses carrying people returning from Chinese New Year holidays involved in separate accidents in different provinces, killing 19 people and injuring more than 40
- 12—Large bus ran off road in Renhuai City, Guizhou Province, China, and fell down 60-m drop into river, killing 27 of 34 people onboard and leaving 13 others injured
- 13—EU announced fingerprinting for non-EU visitors as part of anti-terror campaign with expected start from 2015 following approval by national governments and European Parliament
- 15—Direct flights started between Delhi and Islamabad as part of improved relations between India and Pakistan
- 19—Japanese Self Defense Force Aegis destroyer *Atago* (7700 tonnes) struck and sank small fishing boat 40 km off Chiba peninsula, leaving 2 crew of fishing boat missing
- 21—Passenger boat carrying about 110 people struck

another vessel and sank in River Amazon, Brazil, leaving 13 people confirmed dead and another 10 missing

- 21**—Twin-engine ATR-400 crashed in mountains of Merida State, Venezuela, killing all 46 people onboard
- 24**—Virgin Atlantic Airways B747-400 made world's first test flight using biofuel between London's Heathrow Airport and Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport
- 26**—Seed bank opened on Svalbard Island, Norway, to preserve genome of world's plant life against future global catastrophe by storing seeds of 4.5 million plants
- 27**—Light police plane crashed into sports arena in Santiago, Chile, killing at least 11 people, including 5 on ground
- 28**—JR Central started test boring in southern Japanese Alps, Yamanashi Prefecture, along route (290 km) of proposed maglev shinkansen with more tests to start in Nagano Prefecture from March
- 28**—Passenger ferry sunk after collision with freighter in Buriganga River near Dacca, Bangladesh, leaving at least 39 people dead
- 29**—Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced plans to issue tourist visas to small family groups of Chinese from 3 March, permitting non-group tourism visits to Japan by Chinese nationals
- 29**—Terminal 3 opened at Beijing Capital International Airport as world largest airport terminal building with 986,000 square meters of floor area and gateway to 2008 Beijing Olympics

March

- 1**—Small plane crashed into other plane on landing at Titusville Airport, Florida, USA, killing two people in one plane and injuring another two
- 1**—World's highest (165 m) *Singapore Flyer* Ferris wheel opened for rides to surpass previous record holder, London's *Big Eye* (135 m); next record holder to be Beijing's 208-m Beijing Great Wheel when completed next year
- 5**—Three-vessel collision off Kobe, Japan, left one person dead and three missing after one vessel sank
- 15**—Osaka Higashi Line (9.2 km, Hanaten to Kyuhoji) running north-south on east side of Osaka, Japan, opened for revenue passenger services after upgrade from old JNR freight line with northern extension (11.1 km, Shin Osaka to Hanaten) expected to open in 2012. Third-sector

Osaka Sotokanjo Tetsudo responsible for construction and maintenance with JR West and JR Freight operating services as Category-2 railways

- 15**—JR East started accepting Mobile Suica electronic money using mobile telephones for shinkansen services
- 20**—Hawaii's Aloha Airlines filed for Chapter-11 bankruptcy protection and announced plans to restructure company
- 23**—Truck with 48 people onboard overturned into 12-m ditch in Yunan Province, China, killing 12 and injuring 20
- 26**—Japan's Ministry of Land, Transport and Infrastructure approved construction of 45.7-km extension to Kyushu Shinkansen using free-gauge design running on existing 1067-mm, narrow-gauge tracks between Takeo Onsen and Isahaya; groundbreaking ceremony held on 28 April at Ureshino City in Saga Prefecture and completion scheduled for 2018
- 26**—JR East announced plans to start work on Tohoku Juukan (through) Line from May to create new route between Ueno and Tokyo stations using elevated tracks over Tohoku Shinkansen near Kanda Station and allowing through operations from Tohoku, Takasaki, and Joban lines onto Tokaido Line via Tokyo Station from summer 2013
- 27**—German government announced abandonment of plans to build 40-km maglev between Munich Airport and Munich Central Station due to high construction costs
- 27**—Coastal freighter struck bridge under construction in Zhejiang Province, China, causing collapse killing four bridge workers
- 27**—Head-on collision between long-distance bus and passenger vehicle in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region killed 10 people
- 28**—Mitsubishi Heavy Industries announced plans to build Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ) passenger plane following order for 25 units from ANA with delivery in 2013
- 29**—JR Central and JR West started EXPRESS IC touch card for Tokaido Shinkansen services between Tokyo and Shin Osaka stations
- 30**—Yokohama Metro started Green Line (Line No. 4) services between Nakayama and Hiyoshi (13 km) on standard-gauge tracks (1435 mm) using linear motor drive, linking Nakayama Station on JR East Yokohama Line with Hiyoshi Station on Tokyu Toyoko Line via Kohoku New Town

January–September 2008

- 30—Tokyo Metropolitan Bureau of Transportation opened 9.7-km *Nippori-Toneri Liner* new transportation system linking Nippori and Minumadai Shinsui Koen, following construction by Tokyo Metro
- 30—Private executive jet crashed into house near Farnborough, UK, soon after takeoff from Biggin Hill Airport, killing all five people onboard without injuring anyone on ground
- 31—Third-sector Miki Railway (6.6 km, Miki to Yakujin) taken over from old JNR, closed with services replaced by bus
- 31—Southern section of Shimabara Railway line (78.5 km, Isahaya to Kazusa) in Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, closed between Shimabara Gaiko and Kazusa (35.3 km) following long-term stoppage due to volcanic explosion of Mt Unzen
- 31—Milan, Italy, announced as site of 2105 Expo following Milan City proposal for Environment and Energy theme

April

- 1—All Nippon Airways (ANA) started late-night charter flights between Tokyo Airport (Haneda) and Hong Kong as longest international flight for domestic airline operating from Haneda
- 1—Five companies including ANA, Nittsu, and Kintetsu Express, established All Express joint venture for international carriage of small freight under ALLEX brand
- 3—Antonov 28 crashed on landing in Suriname, S. America, killing 20 people on board
- 4—French 88-m luxury yacht *Le Ponant* hijacked by pirates off Somalia, Africa, with 30 people on board taken hostage
- 9—Small plane carrying visitors to Nazca UNESCO World Heritage Site in Peru crashed killing 5 French tourists and seriously injuring pilot
- 9—Boeing announced further delays in delivery of its fuel-efficient, next-generation B787 *Dreamliner* with plans slipping 15 months behind first delivery estimates
- 11—News museum called *Newseum* opened in Washington DC, USA
- 11—Collision in S. China Sea between Chinese fishing boat and Hong Kong coastal freighter left 3 crew dead and 13 missing after fishing boat sank
- 14—US Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines announced

merger creating world's largest airline in terms of flown scheduled passenger-km with new company to be called Delta Airlines

- 14—Passenger rail services resumed between India and Bangladesh (538 km) after 43-year break following 1965 Indo-Pakistan War
- 15—DC9 aircraft with 85 passengers and crew operated by Hewa Bora Airways crashed into town and burned soon after takeoff from Goma Airport in DR Congo, Africa, killing 40 people and leaving 111 injured
- 16—Bus carrying students sitting entrance exams drove off road into river in Gujarat, India, killing at least 44
- 18—Construction of 1318-km high-speed railway line started between Beijing and Shanghai with completion expected in 5 years to link both cities in 5 hours operating at 300 km/h
- 22—IATA announced plans to promote achievement of CO₂ free plane emissions in 50 years
- 25—Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport finalized establishment of Japan Tourism Agency with government approval and simultaneously integrated Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission and Marine Accident Inquiry Agency as new body called Transportation Safety Commission with responsibility for examining causes of land, sea and air accidents
- 26—German Intercity Express (ICE) high-speed train derailed in tunnel in Hessen slightly injuring 23 passengers
- 28—Groundbreaking ceremony held at start of construction of Isahaya to Takeo-Onsen (45 km) section of Nagasaki route of Kyushu Shinkansen with completion expected in 2010
- 28—Speeding high-speed passenger train derailed near Zibo, Shandong Province, China, and slammed into another local train, killing 70 people and injuring more than 400 others

May

- 1—World's longest Hangzhou Bay Bridge (36 km, six lanes each way) opened over Hangzhou Bay of East China Sea linking Shanghai and Ningbo, cutting distance between two cities from 400 km to 120 km
- 1—Tourist recreational vehicle visiting Salar de Uyuni at 3700-m asl in southwest Bolivia crashed into other vehicle and caught fire, killing 6 people

June

- 1**—Collision between small motor cruiser and fishing trawler in Sydney Harbour left 5 people dead and 9 injured
- 1**—Tourist bus overturned near Hong Kong, killing 18 people and injuring 43
- 3**—Tropical cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar leaving at least 43,000 people dead and more than 20,000 missing according to government announcements
- 3**—Large boat overturned in Solimoes River, northwest Brazil, leaving 15 people dead and about 30 missing
- 4**—Freak high waves struck coast of Yellow Sea, S. Korea, drowning 9 people fishing and injuring 14 others
- 5**—Long-distance bus caught fire near Shanghai, China, killing 3 people and injuring 12 others
- 10**—Ferry carrying more than 100 passengers and crew sank near Port au Prince, Haiti, drowning at least 20
- 12**—Magnitude 8.0 earthquake struck Sichuan Province in west China, causing massive damage and casualties with at least 69,000 people dead and 18,000 missing (at 1 June 2008)
- 20**—New Tokyo International Airport (Narita) marked 30 years since opening, ranking sixth in passenger numbers (38.86 million) and third in airfreight (2.24 million tonnes) for 2006
- 20**—Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, announced plans to expand international operations from Haneda Airport six fold by expanding late night slots to America and Europe and relieving pressure on overstretched Narita
- 20**—JR Central announced plans to build JR Central Museum (provisional name with scheduled opening in spring 2011) near Nagoya Bay to exhibit 35 pieces of rolling stock including various shinkansen series and maglev test vehicles
- 23**—Tourist bus overturned into roadside drain in Anhui Province, China, killing 9 people and injuring 20 others
- 25**—Boeing 747 air-cargo plane overran runway on takeoff from Brussels Airport, Belgium, suffering heavy damage but only slightly injuring 4 crew
- 27**—Japanese government announced drop in 2007 road deaths below 6000 level to 5744 (9.6% year-on-year drop) and seventh successive annual decrease to reach same level as 1953—attributed to severe penalties for drunk driving and increase in seat belt usage
- 30**—Airbus A320 carrying 135 passengers and crew overran runway on landing at International Airport in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to hit 2 vehicles at airport perimeter, killing at least 4 people and injuring 65
- 1**—IATA announced end of paper tickets by member airlines, achieving annual savings of \$3.9 billion with transition to all e-tickets
- 2**—IATA announced expected \$2.3 billion losses in airline industry due to rising fuel costs, reversing \$4.5 billion profit forecast in March
- 8**—Light aircraft crashed into houses in Ohio, USA, killing all six people onboard on same day as helicopter crashed in Texas killing all four onboard
- 10**—Airbus A310 crashed on landing at Khartoum International Airport, Sudan, before catching fire, killing 28 people on board and leaving 66 missing
- 10**—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport approved suspension of 465 flights by new Skymark Airlines during July and August due to shortage of pilots, following 168 suspended flights and ministerial order to improve airline administration
- 12**—Chinese government announced victims of 12 May magnitude 8 earthquake reached 69,159 dead, 374,141 injured, and 17,469 missing
- 14**—Magnitude 7.2 earthquake in Iwate Prefecture, Japan, left 12 people dead and 10 missing
- 14**—Tokyo Metro Fukutoshin Line opened, linking southern Saitama Prefecture with Ikebukuro and Shibuya in Tokyo and connecting with existing Tobu Tojo, Seibu Ikebukuro and Yurakucho lines
- 15**—Light aircraft crashed in Semi-autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia, China, killing 3 people and seriously injuring 1 other
- 17**—Light aircraft on sightseeing trip crashed on Hawaii Island killing pilot and two people on board
- 20**—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport announced strengthened anti-terror measures from 1 July for all international passengers at all airports in Japan
- 20**—Korean government announced completion of second stage expansion at Incheon International Airport with opening of 4000-m runway and new passenger and luggage terminal building to increase capacity
- 21**—Ferry capsized and sank off Philippine island of Sibuyan during typhoon, leaving only 48 survivors out of 862 passengers and crew onboard
- 21**—Railway bridge collapsed during construction in Zhejiang Province, China, crushing nearby houses and killing 7 people with 21 more injured

January–September 2008

- 23**—Japanese fishing boat (135 tonnes) capsized some 350 km off coast of Chiba Prefecture, leaving only 3 survivors with remaining 17 crew dead or missing
- 23**—JAL announced demonstration flight of Boeing 747 burning biofuel in one or four engines
- 24**—Myanmar government announced final toll of victims of May cyclone as 84,537 dead and 53,836 missing
- 24**—Shizuoka Prefecture announced establishment of new Fuji Dream Airways airline operating domestic flights between cities in prefecture using two small jets built by Embraer Corporation of Brazil
- 28**—Paris metropolitan government announced debut of first Vogueo Seine river 'buses' carrying up to 70 people for journeys of 10 km using rail and bus tickets
- 29**—Beijing Subway announced start of passenger hand-baggage searches using X-ray inspection equipment as anti-terrorist measure in run-up to 2008 Beijing Olympics
- 29**—Third-sector Hojo railway (13.6 km between Hojo City and Ao in Hyogo Prefecture) announced Japan's first test run of diesel railcar using biofuel manufactured from discarded vegetable oils
- 30**—New bridge (32 km) opened over Yangtze River between Suzhou City and Nantong City in China with world's longest cable-stayed section of 8,146 m and setting new records for length of main span, height of main towers, and length of cables
- 30**—Passenger train derailed by landslide in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China, slightly injuring driver and seven passengers

- previous year (second lowest since 2000) due to high costs of air travel resulting from high fuel surcharges
- 11**—Kintetsu Sharyo announced new order from American subsidiary Kintetsu Sharyo International (Florida) for 144 light rail vehicle (LRV) carriages (48 train sets) from Dallas Area Rapid Transport (DART), Texas, following previous delivery of 230 carriages (115 train sets)
- 14**—Groundbreaking ceremony held for new 610-m terrestrial digital broadcast mast (world's tallest freestanding mast) in Tokyo's Sumida Ward, providing terrestrial digital services from spring 2012
- 16**—Level crossing accident on railway in northern Egypt when passenger train struck back of truck stopped on track left 40 people dead
- 19**—Three new lines (Line 10: 24.7 km; Line 8 (Olympic Branch Line): 4.5 km; and Airport Line: 28.5 km) of Beijing Metro opened in advance of 2008 Beijing Olympics, extending total length of Metro to more than 200 km
- 20**—Beijing Metropolitan Government started traffic restrictions using odd and even vehicle licence plate numbers 20 days in advance of Olympics opening ceremony
- 21**—Bomb on board bus in Yunnan Province, China, killed 2 passengers and injured 14 others
- 22**—Chinese government opened 8-car, high-speed, rail link (350 km/h) between Beijing and Tianjin to foreign media, covering approximately 120-km distance in about 30 minutes using CRH2 based on Japan's *Hayate* shinkansen technology and independently developed CRH3
- 25**—Large freight distributor Suzuyo (FDA) with head office in Shizuoka Prefecture announced plans for air services based on Shizuoka Airport, starting with three routes between Shizuoka and Komatsu, Kumamoto, and Kagoshima on 3 September with further plans for international services to Shanghai in 2011, following approval from Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
- 25**—Qantas Boeing 747-400 with 365 people on board made safe emergency landing at Manila Airport after large 3-m hole suddenly appeared in fuselage soon after departure from Hong Kong
- 26**—Light aircraft crashed into sea at Nagasaki Airport, Japan, killing one person and injuring two others on board

July

- 1**—Japan Post established JP Sankyu Global Logistics joint-venture business with Sankyu Corporation focused on distribution of international airfreight in Asia
- 1**—Passenger vessel sank in mouth of Irrawaddy Delta, Myanmar, leaving 38 out of 82 people on board missing
- 4**—Direct weekend charter flights (18 return services from Friday to Monday) started between China and Taiwan with simultaneous relaxation of rules restricting Taiwan-bound tourism trips by Chinese nationals
- 4**—JTB survey of overseas trips during Japan's August summer vacation period (15 July to 31 August) predicted decline of 7% to 2.25 million people compared to

August

- 1—High-speed railway services started at 350 km/h between Beijing and Tianjin using CRH2-300 rolling stock based on Japan's E2 shinkansen design following opening of Beijing South Railway Station
- 1—Express train caught fire in S. India state of Andhra Pradesh, killing at least 32 people
- 2—Fukuda Cabinet reshuffle appointed Sadakazu Tanigaki as Minister of Transport
- 5—Forest firefighting helicopter crashed in north California, killing 9 of 13 firemen onboard and seriously injuring other 4
- 8—Express train derailed in Czech Republic after collision with road bridge, killing 7 people and injuring 70 others
- 8—Chartered bus carrying church members overturned on highway in Texas, USA, killing 14 of 55 people onboard
- 11—Heavy rains and landslips caused by typhoon strike on northern Viet Nam left 98 people dead and 47 missing as well as causing serious damage to railway tracks and trams around Hanoi
- 12—Bus carrying 30 middle-school students in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China overturned on highway killing 25 students and injuring 5 others
- 15—JR Central announced purchase of large rolling stock manufacturer Nippon Sharyo Ltd, supporting manufacturing and maintenance of rolling stock for planned maglev shinkansen
- 15—Severely overloaded bus ran off road and fell 216 m in Henan Province, China, killing 15 passengers and injuring 20 others
- 19—Cessna TU206F light aircraft crashed near intersection on national highway in Osaka, Japan, slightly injuring two people on board
- 20—Spanair MD82 crashed on takeoff from Madrid's Barajas International Airport, Spain, killing 154 out of 172 people onboard
- 24—Itek Air Boeing 737-200 crashed immediately after takeoff from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, killing 68 people out of 90 on board
- 24—Light aircraft crashed in southern Guatemala, killing 10 and injuring 4 people on board
- 26—Highway bus ran off road in Jiangsu Province, China, killing 11 people on board and injuring 31 others

- 29—Italian airline company Alitalia announced restructuring plans following filing for bankruptcy protection after losses of €11.72 billion
- 31—First Series 0 Shinkansen to run on Tokaido Shinkansen in 1964 transported to Omiya General Rolling Stock Centre for later display at JR East Railway Museum

September

- 3—International Airline Travel Association (IATA) announced airline industry expecting \$5.2 billion in losses this year due to high fuel costs, following estimated \$5.6 billion profits in 2007
- 8—Landslide in Shanxi Province, China, killed at least 254 people and injured another 36
- 10—JR Hokkaido announced start of Kitaca IC card ticket services from 25 October covering services in and around Sapporo and compatibility with JR East's Suica from spring 2009
- 11—Fire on truck in Channel Tunnel slightly injured 12 people
- 11—Kawasaki Heavy Industries announced start of work on building new efSET high-speed rolling stock running at operating speeds of 350 km/h with aim of penetrating high-speed railway world market
- 13—Long-distance bus ran off mountain road in Sichuan Province, China, and caught fire, killing 51 people onboard
- 13—Commuter train collided with freight train near Los Angeles, USA, after driver ignored red signal, killing 25 people
- 14—Boeing 737 belonging to Aeroflot subsidiary crashed near Permi, Russia, killing all 88 people onboard
- 17—British Airports Authority (BAA) announced intent to sell Gatwick Airport, UK's second largest airport in response to government's anti-monopoly measures
- 17—Hitachi Engineering announced successful development of high-capacity lithium-ion battery for high-speed diesel hybrid rolling stock to store energy produced by regenerative braking
- 18—Kosaka Railway applied to Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism to close 22.3-km section of line between Oodate and Kosaka in Akita Prefecture from 31 March 2009, ending 100 years of passenger and freight operations

January–September 2008

- 20**—Fire started by fireworks show in nightclub in Guandong Province, China, killed 43 guests and employees and injured 88 others
- 24**—New Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso announced new cabinet with Nakayama Nariaki resigning as Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism soon after on 28 September and Kazuyoshi Kaneko taking up same post on 29 September
- 24**—4000-tonne Korean freighter overturned off Macau, China, leaving 17 crew missing

MILESTONES

Sugiura Takaya died on 16 January, aged 82. Joined old Ministry of Transport after graduating from Faculty of Economics at University of Tokyo in 1951, and held various positions as Chief Cabinet Secretary, Director of Railway Agency, Vice-minister of Transport, etc., until retirement in 1984 when appointed last (tenth) JNR President from 1985 to March 1987 before privatization and division. Following birth of JR operators, held successive posts as President of JNR Settlement Corporation, Chairman of ANA, etc.

Yoshikawa Katsuhisa appointed President designate of Kinki Nippon Tourist. After graduating from Faculty of Economics of University of Tokyo in 1968, joined Kinki Japan Railways where held posts of Managing Director, Senior Managing Director, etc., before becoming Vice-President in 2007. Predecessor Takashi Oota to become advisor to Board of Directors

Kazuyuki Takeshima appointed next President of JR West from June 2008. Joined Nishitetsu after graduating in Commercial Science from Keio University in 1971, and held various senior management positions before becoming Managing Director in 2007. Current President Tsuguo Nakao to become Board Representative Director

Hiromi Tagawa appointed next JTB President from June 2008. Joined predecessor JTB in 1971 after graduating in Commercial Science from Keio University in 1971 where held senior management posts before becoming Managing Director in 2005. Current President Takashi Sasaki to become Board Representative Director

Kazuaki Maruo appointed President of Nippon Travel Agency. Joined JNR in 1975 after graduating in law from Osaka University. Appointed JR West Director in 2004 and Vice-President in 2006. Former President Akira Kanai to become Board Chairman

Eiji Tabira, President of Kinki Nihon Tourist from 1997 to 2000, died on 5 July aged 74. Joined company after graduating in law from Nihon University and held posts as Director, Managing Director and President of Tourist Services

Sadakazu Tanigaki appointed Minister of Transport in new Fukuda Cabinet. Graduated from Faculty of Law, University of Tokyo in 1972 before becoming barrister. Elected LDP member of House of Representatives in 1983 and subsequently re-elected to seat 9 times. Held senior ministerial posts in Ministry of Science and Technology, National Public Safety Commission, Ministry of Finance and LDP

Shuichiro Yamanouchi died aged 75. Graduated in 1956 from Faculty of Engineering, University of Tokyo before joining JNR. Became Vice-President of JR East following JNR 1987 privatization and division and Chairman from 1996 to 2000. Appointed Board Chairman of National Space Development Agency in July 2000 where promoted development and launch of Japan's first fully domestically manufactured H-2A rocket

Nariaki Nakayama appointed Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Aso Cabinet on 24 September. Entered previous Finance Ministry after graduating in law in 1966 from University of Tokyo and first elected to Lower House of Diet in 1986 with 5 subsequent re-elections in total. Held previous positions as Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Resigned post on 28 November for making controversial comments

Kazuyoshi Kaneko appointed Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Aso Cabinet on 29 September following resignation of Minister Nakayama. Graduated in economics in 1966 from Keio University and first elected to Lower House of Diet in 1986 with 6 subsequent re-elections. Held previous post as Minister for Administrative Reforms