

# October–December 2008

## October

- 1—Japan Tourism Agency headed by Yoshiaki Honpo incorporated into Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism with aim of increasing inbound tourism to Japan to 20 million people by 2020
- 1—Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism integrated Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission with Marine Accident Inquiry Agency to form Japan Transport Safety Board responsible for assuring safe land, air, and sea transport
- 1—Fire in video rental shop in Naniwa Ward, Osaka, Japan, killed 15 people and injured 10 others
- 2—Hitachi Engineering and Sojitz Corporation received order for 84 carriages and signalling system for Korea's first straddle-type monorail running 24 km between northwest and southeast parts of Daegu Metropolitan City with opening expected in October 2014
- 5—Head-on collision between long-distance bus and truck on expressway near Cairo, Egypt, killed 13 people and injured 21 others
- 7—JR East announced 7-car Multipurpose Experimental Train (MUE-Train) adapted from Series 209 to run on conventional lines to monitor carriage performance, and develop and monitor control systems and trackside infrastructure
- 14—Six passenger operators in JR group established joint *Tretabi* website to stimulate interest in rail travel by introducing trains, rail scenes, historic stations, station *bento* lunchboxes, etc.
- 14—JR West designated first four carriages of Series 0 shinkansen displayed in JR West's Modern Transportation Museum, Osaka, as historic Railway Monument to celebrate Railway Day
- 14—JR East announced 1.88 million people visited The Railway Museum opened 1 year ago to mark 20th anniversary of JR East's foundation with displays including 36 pieces of rolling stock, such as popular steam locomotives, carriages, and more railway memorabilia
- 19—Keihan Railway opened Nakanoshima subway (3.0 km) linking Nakanoshima and Tenmabashi in Osaka as Category-2 railway operator in partnership with third-sector Nakanoshima High-Speed Railway
- 22—JR Central reported results of surveys into three possible routes for its (proposed opening in 2025) maglev shinkansen between Tokyo and Nagoya to Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism allowing Ministry to estimate transport capacity and construction costs
- 24—Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism announced plans for code sharing on direct flights between Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) and Paris following completion of extension work at Haneda in October 2010
- 27—Switzerland's first subway (m2) opened in Lausanne with unmanned operation over 5.9-km length and world's highest grades of 120‰ max.
- 29—Delta (world #3) and Northwest (world #7) announced merger to create new airline called Delta with world's highest number of scheduled passenger-km flown in 2007
- 29—Governor Yoshinobu Ishikawa of Shizuoka Prefecture announced delay in opening Shizuoka Airport from March 2009 to late July due to need to shorten 2500-m runway by 300 m so forest stand does not affect landings and takeoffs

## November

- 1—Explosion in expressway tunnel under construction in Chongqing City, China, killed 3 workers and injured about 20 others
- 4—Ferry overturned by strong winds in Central Philippines left more than 40 people dead out of at least 125 registered passengers and crew
- 4—Bus drove off cliff on mountain road in northern India when driver distracted by operating CD player, killing 46 people on board and injuring 4 others
- 4—Tourist bus on autobahn caught fire near Hanover, Germany, killing about 20 people and injuring 13 others after fire started by smoker in toilets
- 4—Small jet belonging to Mexican government crashed in central Mexico City, killing at least 8 people and setting fire to about 30 cars on ground
- 4—First domestically produced Chinese jet (ARJ21-700) and capable of carrying 78 to 90 passengers sold to US lease company

- 4—China and Taiwan concluded agreement to expand direct passenger flights between countries threefold (to 108 daily flights) and to start airfreight services (60 flights)
- 10—JR East announced plans to bring forward start of services on Tohoku Shinkansen between Hachinohe and Shin-Aomori (81.8 km) by 3 months to December 2010 due to good progress with engineering works; shinkansen maximum operation speed to be increased in stages, linking Tokyo and Shin Aomori in 3 hours and 5 minutes by late 2012
- 15—Large collapse above subway tunnel under construction in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China, engulfed about 15 buses, trucks and passenger cars, killing at least 5 people and leaving 16 missing
- 27—Airbus A320 belonging to New Zealand airline crashed while under inspection in southwest France, killing at least two engineers on board and leaving 5 missing
- 30—Last Series 0 bullet train dating from first days of Tokaido Shinkansen services between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka in October 1964 taken out of regular service after production of some 3200 carriages by 1986 prior to final memorial *sayonara* run on San'yo Shinkansen in December this year
- 12—Italian airline Alitalia announced sale to Italian business group with new operations resuming under Alitalia name from January 2009
- 12—World's largest gondola (4.4-km long) called PEAK2PEAK with distance of more than 3 km between supporting pylons opened at ski resort near Vancouver, Canada, in anticipation of 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics
- 14—Bus carrying 70 passengers overturned into river in central Egypt, killing 55 people
- 15—President's transition team announced plans for President-elect Obama and family to arrive in Washington by special train on 17 January prior to inauguration ceremony on 20 January
- 16—JAL announced planned flight of B747-300 using non-food biofuel to power one of four engines for 1-hour test flight between Tokyo Airport (Haneda) and airspace off Hachijojima Island on 30 January 2009
- 18—JR Central announced plans to start wireless LAN service on N700 shinkansen services between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka from March 2009
- 18—Collision between two flying-school aircraft near Sydney, Australia, killed 2 people onboard one plane while other plane made successful emergency landing
- 19—JR Group announced closure of *Hayabusa* (Tokyo–Kumamoto) and *Fuji* (Tokyo–Oita) blue train services from 13 March in line with planned 14 March 2009 timetable revisions

## December

- 2—Head-on collision between long-distance bus and truck killed 21 people in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China
- 3—German airline company Lufthansa announced purchase of troubled Austrian Airlines; both companies members of Star Alliance
- 4—122 passengers and crew rescued by Chilean Navy from Argentinian cruise liner after hitting iceberg in Antarctic Ocean
- 8—US Air Force FA18D crashed into houses near San Diego, California, after pilot ejected, killing four people
- 9—IATA announced poor business forecast for 2009 with anticipated 7% year-on-year decrease in passengers and freight worldwide totalling lost income of US\$501 billion
- 11—Boeing Corporation announced fourth 6-month delay in first deliveries of new flagship B787 until Q1 2010 due to labour problems and parts shortages
- 19—Light aircraft crashed on landing near Honolulu, Hawaii, during flight training exercise, injuring three Japanese on board
- 20—Continental B737 crashed and caught fire on takeoff from Denver International Airport, Colorado, USA, injuring 58 of 115 people onboard
- 21—Beijing-to-Shanghai, 16-car shinkansen with 2-bed sleeping compartments, restaurant car, etc., made debut
- 24—Japan's Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism announced feasibility study for JR Central's proposed linear maglev shinkansen between Tokyo and Nagoya to study transport capacity, technology development, construction costs, etc., for three previously announced candidate routes
- 27—Nagoya Railroad announced closure of 1.2-km Monkey Park straddle-beam monorail in operation since 1988 due to declining passenger numbers and worn infrastructure

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- 28**—Typhoon-damaged, 50-km, Takachiho Railway Takachiho Line in Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan, closed after 73-year operation history
- 29**—Long-distance bus carrying 35 people overturned on highway near Xiamen City, Fujian Province, killing 1 person and injuring 21 others
- 30**—JR East received warning from Kanto District Transport Bureau after problems with shinkansen operations management system on 29 December caused delays and inconvenience to 130,000 passengers

## MILESTONES

**Yoshiaki Honpo** appointed commissioner of Ministry of Land, Transport, Infrastructure and Tourism. Joined old Ministry of Transport after finishing postgraduate studies at Tokyo Institute of Technology in 1974, holding various posts such as Minister's Secretariat, and Deputy Director-General, Policy Bureau from July 2007

**Tsutomu Murai** died aged 90 on 30 October. Joined Sumitomo Bank after graduating from Tokyo Business University (now Hitotsubashi University) in 1942. Held various senior posts as Vice President of Toyo Engineering, Vice President of Sumitomo Bank, and President and Chairman of Asahi Beer, as well as first Chairman of JR West from April 1987 to June 1992