

# January–April 2009

## January

- 1—China and Viet Nam opened international rail service between Nanning and Hanoi using 8-car trainsets with sleeper and restaurant cars and covering approx. 400 km in 13 hours
- 1—Fire sparked by New Year fireworks in Bangkok, Thailand, nightclub left 61 partygoers dead and 241 injured to varying degrees
- 1—Long-distance bus overturned on expressway in Guizhou Province, China, killing 4 people and injuring 13 others
- 2—Japan's National Police Agency announced 5155 road-traffic deaths in 2008 and 8th year-on-year drop to record one-third fatality level of worst year in 1970, attributed to increasing seatbelt usage and huge drop in drunk driving
- 4—Medical evacuation helicopter crashed in Louisiana, USA, killing 8 of 9 people onboard and seriously injuring sole survivor
- 4—Small boat overturned in Kosi River, eastern Nepal, leaving 2 people dead, 30 missing and 12 rescued
- 5—Large bus overturned in Guizhou Province, China, killing 15 of 46 people onboard and injuring 28 others
- 5—Loss-making, third-sector Yamagata Railway (30.5 km between Akayu and Arato) in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan, opened public search to fill position of next president with renewable 2-year contract at salary of ¥6.6 million
- 6—Collision between bus and truck in Hebei Province, China, left 6 bus passengers and driver dead and 4 others injured
- 6—Continental Airways performed first US domestic airline test of biofuel using 50% mixture with aviation fuel to power 90-minute flight by Boeing B737-800
- 8—JTB announced 2009 passenger forecasts with 4.4% third consecutive year-on-year drop in overseas trips by Japanese to 15.3 million due to sluggish tourism and business demand caused by credit crunch
- 8—JR East announced purchase of 96-km, narrow-gauge line running between Hachinohe and Aomori following separation of business due to opening of Tohoku Shinkansen and Aomori Station, with investment reaching ¥8.37 billion in 2010
- 9—US Aircraft manufacturer Boeing announced layoffs of 4500 staff by June totalling about 7% of 68,000 staff due to 53% drop in new orders in 2008 as part of new development cost reduction measures
- 9—Russian Mi-171 helicopter crashed in Altai Republic, killing 8 of 11 people onboard and leaving 3 others seriously injured
- 10—Bus ran off road and over ravine in mountainous region of Peru, killing 32 people and injuring 25 others
- 11—Ferry carrying about 260 people overturned and sunk by high waves off coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, leaving 5 people confirmed dead, 30 rescued and 230 missing
- 11—Taiwan passed anti-smoking law, preventing smoking in any room with more than 3 people and while walking in street
- 12—US government introduced Internet-based preregistration electronic passenger security system (ESTA) for all travellers to United States requiring visas as extension of 2001 anti-terrorist measures
- 12—As part of financial restructuring, Italian airline Alitalia announced tieup with Air France and KLM with new partners taking 25% of Alitalia shares
- 15—Airbus A320 made safe emergency landing with no loss of life or injuries on Hudson River, New York, after bird strike caused both engines to fail soon after takeoff from La Guardia Airport
- 15—Airbus announced 42% drop in 2008 plane orders and Boeing announced 53% drop due to higher costs of aviation fuel and worsening economic climate
- 15—UK government approved plans for construction of third runway (2200 m) at London's Heathrow Airport
- 17—President-elect Obama arrived in Washington by special train from Philadelphia prior to inauguration
- 18—Oldest (1936) in-service EF55-1 electric locomotive nicknamed *Moomin* retired by JR East after *sayonara* run on Joshu Line following restoration by JNR in 1986 despite prior withdrawal from service in 1964
- 22—UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction announced victims of natural disasters in 2008 reached 235,816, slightly less than 241,647 victims of Sumatran tsunami in 2004, comprised mostly of 138,366 victims of Myanmar cyclone and 87,476 victims of Sichuan earthquake
- 22—Bus struck overturned truck on expressway in Jiangxi Province, China, killing 8 people onboard

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- 25—Heavily overloaded, 20-m wooden boat rated for 20 passengers sank in Saigon River, central Hanoi, Viet Nam, drowning 40 people with 36 rescued and some others missing
- 26—Japan’s Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism started flight testing at Shizuoka Airport scheduled for opening on 4 June
- 27—Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) announced figures for inbound tourism of 8.351 million (0.1% year-on-year increase) and for outbound tourists of 15.987 million (7.6% year-on-year decrease)
- 28—Automobile and medium-sized passenger bus collided in Jilin Province, China, killing 22 people and injuring seven others
- 30—JAL successfully completed test flight between Tokyo and Sendai with Boeing B747-300 running 1 of 4 engines on 50% mixture of aviation fuel and biofuel
- 30—Dominican Republic in Caribbean opened first 14.5-km line of subway running north–south in capital Santa Domingo to be followed by 6 more lines by 2026
- 30—Bus carrying Chinese tourists overturned in southern Arizona, USA, killing 7 people and injuring 16 others
- 31—Large fire started by fireworks in nightclub in Fujian Province, China, left 17 people dead and 20 others injured
- 31—Gasoline being stolen from tanker overturned on main road in southwest Guinea caught fire and exploded, killing 111 people

## MILESTONES

Representative Managing Director Shin’ichiro Ito appointed provisional President of All Nippon Airways, which he joined after graduating from Kyushu University in 1975 and where he held various senior management positions before current appointment. Current President Mineo Yamamoto to become Representative Director and Vice Chairman

## February

- 3—Bus overturned into 4-m ravine in Inner Mongolia, China, killing 7 of 23 people onboard
- 4—Large German railway operator Märklin announced court application to start bankruptcy proceedings despite restructuring by UK investment company in 2006
- 7—Small aircraft crashed into Amazon tributary in northern Brazil, killing 24 people onboard and leaving 4 survivors
- 12—Continental Airlines DHC8-400 crashed into houses near Buffalo, USA, killing 49 people onboard and 1 person on ground
- 12—Long-distance bus in Shanxi Province, China, ran off road and fell 20 m into drainage ditch, killing 10 people and injuring 16 others
- 12—Medium-size bus ran off cliff road in Chongqing, China, killing 3 passengers and injuring 13 others
- 13—Express train derailed and overturned in Orissa State, India, killing at least 14 people and injuring more than 40 others
- 13—British Airways Avro RJ100 crashed on landing at London City Airport, UK, injuring 4 out of 71 people onboard
- 16—JR Central announced closure of Sakuma Rail Park in Hamamatsu City from 3 October 2009 with transfer of 16 pieces of historic rolling stock to new JR Central Museum (provisional name) opening in Nagoya in 2011
- 20—Northwest Airlines B747-400 from Manila, Philippines, hit turbulence over Chiba Prefecture, Japan, injuring 43 out of 422 people onboard
- 22—Forest fires spread through Victoria State, Australia, killing 209 people and destroying over 1800 homes
- 23—JR West announced plans to expand Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum in Kyoto City by building new railway museum on adjacent land to free-up space in cramped Osaka Modern Transportation Museum by moving some rolling stock displays to new museum with opening planned for 2014
- 24—Japan’s Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism approved railway business restructuring plan submitted by Fukui Railway, three trackside cities including Fukui City, and Fukui Prefecture as first approval based on legislation for revitalizing and reviving local public transport. This law enables local government to use third sector (public–private) railway business model with vertical separation following free

transfer of railway land ownership, as well as receive national government assistance, such as subsidies and tax relief

- 25**—Turkish Airways Boeing 737-800 crashed and broke apart on landing at Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands, killing 9 people including 3 crew members, and injuring 84 others
- 25**—Passenger train derailed and fell 75 m from bridge into river in Kashmir, killing at least 33 people onboard and injuring 19 others
- 26**—Jointly operated JR West and JR Kyushu trains running on section between Osaka and Kagoshima following 2011 full opening of Kyushu Shinkansen to be nicknamed *Sakura*, inheriting name of first 1929 express trains running between Tokyo and Shimonoseki

## MILESTONES

**Hiroshi Kawakami** appointed Vice-President of Central Japan International Airport. Joined Toyota Motors in 1972 after graduating from Faculty of Law at Kyoto University, becoming Vice-President of Toyota Tsusho Corporation in June 2008. Current President Yoshimi Inage returns to Toyota Motor Corporation

## March

- 3**—Eurotunnel Group operating Channel Tunnel between UK and France announced final 2008 accounts with payment of first dividend since 1994 tunnel opening following small profit in 2007
- 5**—Laos opened first railway since end of WWII, linking Tanaren outside Laotian capital Vientiane with Nong Khai across Mekong River in Thailand using twice-daily, diesel, return services
- 5**—Air France B777-200 flying from Paris to Narita, Japan, hit by turbulence over Niigata injuring 2 French cabin crew
- 8**—Ferry carrying foreign tourists sank in storm near Phuket Island, Thailand, leaving 7 people missing
- 10**—Panamanian car transporter and Korean container ship collided near Izu Oshima Island south of Tokyo, leaving 16 crew missing after Korean vessel sank
- 12**—Sikorsky helicopter crashed into sea off Newfoundland, Canada, while en route to oil platform, leaving 16 of 18 people onboard missing, 1 dead and 1 rescued
- 16**—JR Bus Kanto's double-decker bus caught fire on Tomei Expressway in Shizuoka, Japan, but none of 78 people onboard injured
- 20**—Namba Line (3.8 km between Hanshin Nishi Kujo and Osaka Namba in Osaka Prefecture, Japan,) opened after construction by third-sector Nishi Osaka Express Railway as extension of Nishi Osaka Line to be operated by Hanshin and linking Sannomiya with Nara using through operations with Kintetsu
- 22**—Swiss-built Pilatus PC-12 crashed near Butte, Montana, USA, killing all 14 people on board
- 23**—MD-11 Federal Express cargo plane crashed on landing during strong winds at Narita Airport, Japan, killing both flight crew
- 23**—Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism approved delayed 4-June opening of 300-m shorter runway at Shizuoka Airport following problems with high trees at west end of originally planned 2500-m runway
- 24**—IATA announced expected 12% drop in income of world's air carriers for FY2009 due to world business recession with expected losses of \$4.7 billion, improvement from loss of ¥8.5 million of last year
- 24**—JR Central announced spring 2010 start of TOICA electronic wallet service and compatibility with JR East's Suica and JR West's ICOCA cards
- 26**—Bus collided head-on with heavy truck east of Moscow, Russia, killing at least 25 people and injuring 4 others
- 27**—JR Central announced summer establishment of project to export high-speed shinkansen technologies overseas while JR East also announced April establishment of project to promote overseas railway business
- 27**—Dam collapsed after heavy rains south of Jakarta, Indonesia, flooding downstream villages and killing at least 96 people with more than 130 others still unaccounted
- 29**—Wall collapsed at entrance to football stadium in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, during World Cup elimination game, killing at least 22 people and injuring more than 130 others

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**31**—JR Freight closed Hokuriku branch Tsuruga Port Line (2.7 km between Tsuruga and Tsuruga Port), ending line's 127-year history and Tsuruga Port Station's role from 1912 as Japan terminus of Trans-Siberian Railway linking Europe with Asia

**28**—Tourist bus overturned on expressway in central California, USA, killing 4 of 36 people onboard and injuring remaining 32

**29**—World's largest, single-arch span Chaotianmen Yangtze River Bridge opened in Chongqing, China, with total length of 4881 m and central arch span of 552 m between piers

## April

**1**—Helicopter returning from North Sea oil platform crashed into sea 20 km off Scottish coast, killing 8 of 16 people onboard and leaving other 8 missing

**4**—Pilot of light aircraft died suddenly while flying in S. Florida, USA, and control tower talked 1 of 4 passengers with flight experience through safe plane landing

**13**—Small boat struck bridge pier under construction in estuary in northwest Florida, USA, killing 5 of 12 people onboard and injuring 7 others

**14**—Fishing boat (135 tonnes) overturned and sank off Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, leaving 12 of 22 people onboard missing after other 10 rescued

**14**—Truck collision and multiple pileup on expressway linking Hangzhou with Shanghai, China, left 4 of 9 people in one vehicle dead and 9 others injured

**16**—US President Obama announced plan to build high-speed railway network linking major US cities centred on California as well as 6 other east and mid-west lines, using \$8 billion from Recovery Act plus another \$5 billion over 5 years from supplementary government funds

**17**—Light aircraft crashed into houses in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, killing pilot but not injuring anyone on ground

**19**—Large tourist bus caught fire on Matsuyama Expressway, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, but all 21 passengers escaped unharmed

**19**—Armed man hijacked flight from Montego Bay, Jamaica, to Canada but arrested with no harm done to released 176 passengers and 6 crew hostages

**20**—Freight truck overturned in Maharashtra State, India, killing 19 people riding on back of truck and injuring 17 others

**24**—Air Canada Boeing 777 flying from Sydney, Australia, to Vancouver, Canada, hit air turbulence, injuring 11 passengers and crew

**24**—Crane collapsed from 37-storey building in Taipei, Taiwan, crushing Chinese tourist bus, killing 2 people and injuring 3 others

## MILESTONES

**JR East Vice-Chairman Yoshio Ishida** appointed UIC Chairman (Head Office: Paris) on 1 April 2009 until December 2010 as first Japanese to hold post since UIC was founded in 1922

**Nagoya Railroad Vice-President Ado Yamamoto** appointed President from next business term. Joined Nagoya Railroad in 1971 after graduating in politics and economics from Nagoya University. Held various senior posts before appointment as Vice-President in 2008. Current President Eiichiro Kimura to become Representative Chairman and current Chairman Misao Kimura to become Senior Advisor

**Mamoru Takiyama (JNR Chief Engineer)** died 7 April 2009 aged 99 years. Joined Ministry of Railways after graduating in civil engineering from Tokyo Imperial University in 1932. Appointed JNR Managing Director in 1960 and retired in 1963 to later become JNR Chief Engineer from 1973 to 1979 after holding posts as Managing Executive Officer and Senior Executive Officer at Kajima Construction. Also held posts as Chairman of Japan Society of Civil Engineers and Board Chairman of Japan Railway Technical Service

**Keio Railway Managing Director Tadashi Nagata** appointed next President from June 2009. Joined forerunner of Keio Railway in 1974 after graduating in law from Rikkyo University. Appointed Director in 2004 before current posting in 2007. Current President Kan Kato to become Representative Chairman