

# October–December 2009

## October

- 5—State Railway of Thailand express train derailed near Huahin, killing at least 10 people and injuring 88 others
- 6—JR East announced development of prototype 'NE Train Smart Denchi Kun' powered by lithium-ion storage batteries for running on non-electrified sections with commercialization targeted to start after 2010
- 7—French government approved large-scale, 130-km, 10-year extension plan for Paris Metro starting from 2012
- 7—Cloudbursts in Karunakata and Andhra Pradesh states of India caused severe flooding, killing at least 270 people and displacing more than 250,000 others from homes
- 8—Suspended JR group rail services before landfall of Typhoon 18 stranded more than 3 million passengers in JR East region alone
- 10—Ferry overturned in Mekong River, Cambodia, drowning 13 people with 17 others rescued
- 10—Mid-air collision between two light aircraft over Louisiana, USA, killed 2 people and injured 2 others
- 10—Direct hit by Typhoon 17 on Luzon Island, Philippines, caused widespread flooding, leaving at least 193 people dead and 2.2 million displaced from homes following previous strike by Typhoon 16 one week earlier
- 12—Japanese Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLITT) Seiji Maehara explained plans to develop Tokyo's Haneda Airport as international regional hub following completion of fourth runway in 2010, causing concern in neighbouring Chiba Prefecture about future role of Narita Airport but clarified next day with discussion of integrated dual hub roles for both Haneda and Narita
- 13—JR Central announced cost of constructing new 438-km maglev linking Tokyo and Osaka in 67 minutes through Southern Alps route at ¥8.44 trillion (\$93.6 billion)
- 15—MLITT Minister Seiji Maehara announced plans to attract 20 million tourists to Japan by 2016; Tourism Agency's FY2010 budget quadrupled to ¥25.7 billion to achieve goal
- 16—Tobu Railway announced plans to increase height of Tokyo Sky Tree terrestrial digital broadcast tower now under construction in Tokyo's Sumida Ward by 24 meters to 634 meters, making it world's tallest tower
- 21—JR Central announced plans for adding earthquake countermeasure to Tokaido Shinkansen, such as derailment guard rails on curves, and landslide countermeasures, etc., costing ¥83 billion with completion by March 2013
- 21—Rear-end collision between stopped express train and another running express in Uttar Pradesh State, India, killed at least 22 passengers and injured 26 others
- 21—Boeing 777 cargo plane belonging to Sudan Airlines crashed on takeoff from Sharjah Airport in UAE, killing 6 crew
- 22—Extended runway B (2500 meters) opened at Tokyo's Narita Airport to handle services for large aircraft such as Boeing 747 and increasing annual arrivals and departures from 200,000 to 220,000 in conjunction with 4000-meter runway A
- 24—Rear-end collision between passenger trains near Cairo, Egypt, when ahead train stopped for cow on tracks killed 18 people and injured 39 others
- 26—MLITT established National Transport Agency Development Strategy Committee tasked with developing future strategies in marine transport, tourism, open skies air transport and globalized construction and transport business
- 30—JR group of six rail passenger operators and JR Freight visited MLITT Minister Seiji Maehara to ask government to reconsider policy of free expressway tolls expected to cause ¥75 billion impact on railway business as rail passengers and rail-freight shippers switch from rail to road
- 30—Japanese government formed JAL Task Force headed by MLITT Minister Seiji Maehara to help with reconstruction of Japan Airlines (JAL) business following JAL application for government assistance on 29 October
- 30—Light plane crashed in tropical rainforest near Amazon River in Brazil, leaving 2 of 11 people onboard missing while 9 others rescued
- 31—Hokuriku Railway (Kanazawa City, Japan) closed operations on sections of Ishikawa Line (15.8 km between Nomachi and Kaga, and 2.1 km between Tsurugi and Kaga) due to drop in passengers and aging infrastructure
- 31—World's longest bridge (8.9 km)–tunnel (10.3 km) combination with 6.3 km of access roads opened in China, linking Pudong district of Shanghai with Chongming Island

## November

- 4—Collision between freight train and passenger train north of Karachi, Pakistan, killed 12 people and injured 19 others
- 4—Shanghai Metropolitan government announced approval from Chinese government for construction of new Disneyland close to Shanghai Pudong International Airport with expected opening in 2014
- 6—Japan ranked in 7th place for 2009 travel and tourism branding by US consulting company, moving up 2 places from previous ranking based on survey of 102 countries for 29 items such as art, culture, shopping, safety, etc.
- 12—British Airways (BA) and Spain's Iberia announced business tie-up, creating world's 5th largest airline
- 13—Japan Airlines (JAL) announced business restructuring plans after posting record half-year losses of \$1.312 billion on sales of \$7.639 billion (26.9% year-on-year decrease)
- 14—Fire at indoor shooting range in Pusan, Korea, killed 12 people including 8 Japanese tourists and injured 4 others
- 14—Korean fishing vessel (29 tonnes) sank after collision with Hong Kong freighter (3836 tonnes) near Jeju Island, Korea, leaving 4 of 9 crew dead, 3 missing and 2 rescued
- 15—Wooden passenger vessel carrying at least 200 people collided with fuel transporter and sank in river mouth, S. Myanmar, killing 34 people and leaving at least 16 missing
- 21—Gas explosion in coal mine in Hegang City, Heilongjiang Province, China, killed 104 miners and trapped 4 others
- 22—Ferry sank in storm off Sumatra, Indonesia, drowning at least 26 people with 250 others rescued
- 25—Serious flooding after heavy rains in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, drowned 106 people
- 27—Express train of 14 cars bound for St Petersburg from Moscow derailed and overturned by terrorist bomb, killing 26 people, injuring 9, and leaving 18 others missing
- 28—MD11 cargo plane crashed on takeoff from Shanghai Pudong International Airport, killing 3 crew members and injuring 4 others

## December

- 2—Mitsui Shipping announced plans to build next-generation, large-scale ferry with halved levels of carbon dioxide production by converting from heavy fuel oil to LNG and using storage batteries while in port
- 4—Karaoke bar in four-storey building on Sumatra, Indonesia, gutted by fire, killing at least 20 customers
- 5—Fire in nightclub in Urals region of Russia started by fireworks killed at least 120 people and injured more than 120 others
- 6—JR East opened 6.2 km of new elevated section between Mitaka and Kokubunji on Chuo Line, eliminating 13 level crossings
- 7—Members of Tokaido Freight Shinkansen Working Group announced proposal to build new dedicated freight line between Tokyo and Osaka using centre divide of second Tomei Expressway now under construction to slash carbon dioxide emissions from freight trucks at construction cost of ¥ 2 trillion
- 8—JR East announced plans to restore C61 steam locomotive now in public park in Gunma Prefecture to working order, adding to collection of working D51 and C57 locomotives
- 11—Japan and US airline industry concluded formal Open Skies agreement allowing four return flights between Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) and USA for airlines flying between both countries from October 2010
- 12—Pleasure fishing boat carrying 7 members of Japan's self-defense forces overturned in storm force winds off Hokkaido, drowning 6 people
- 14—Japanese-built Class 395 high-speed train debuted on CTRL line linking London with Channel Tunnel running at 225 km/h between London and Ashford
- 15—Boeing's fuel-efficient *Dreamliner* B787 made maiden test flight over Washington State 2 years behind schedule despite orders for 840 planes from 55 airlines (35 orders from JAL) with first delivery scheduled for Q4 2010
- 15—IATA announced predicted worldwide losses by international airlines for 2010 of \$5.6 billion for third successive year of red ink, despite signs of recovery in S. America and Asia
- 15—Work started on world's largest combined road and rail bridge and tunnel link between Zhuhai, Macau, and Hong Kong extending 49,968 m including tunnel sections

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- 16—Keisei Railway announced *Narita SkyAccess* nickname for new high-speed rail link between Tokyo and New Tokyo International Airport (Narita) opening in July 2010
- 16—Tourist bus ran off road down 30-m bank in South Korea, killing 14 people and injuring 16 others
- 17—Uruguayan vessel carrying 83 people and livestock sank off coast of Lebanon leaving at least 4 people dead and 38 rescued
- 17—First Russian high-speed train started operation between Moscow and St Petersburg cutting 45 minutes off journey to link cities in 3 hours 45 minutes using broad gauge (1520 mm) rolling stock based on Siemens design for German ICE3
- 18—Six *Eurostar* high-speed trains failed due to extremely cold winter weather in Europe with one train stopped in Channel Tunnel affecting 2000 people; full services restored after 4 days
- 20—Korean fishing vessel sank off Tsushima in Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, with 20 of 25 crew rescued and 5 missing
- 21—JR East, JR West, and JR Central announced agreement to make electronic money functions of each company's IC cards mutually compatible from 13 March 2010
- 22—American Airlines Boeing B737 carrying 154 passengers and crew overran runway at Norman Manley (Kingston) International Airport, Jamaica, injuring 91 people
- 23—ANA of Japan and United and Continental of USA announced filing of application for ATI antitrust exemption with US Dept. of Transport as requirement for previously concluded Open Skies Agreement, allowing integrated management of flight schedules
- 23—Tramway services resumed after 36-year break in centre of Toyama City, Japan, using dedicated Centrum 3-car sets with first vertical separation of tramway business whereby Toyama City owns track and rolling stock and Toyama Chiho Railway manages operations
- 24—Free Gauge Train (FGT) reached design speed of 270 km/h in running tests on Kyushu Shinkansen
- 24—Small ferry carrying 73 passengers and crew collided with fishing vessel off Luzon in Philippines, leaving 27 missing and 46 rescued
- 24—Long-distance bus carrying 60 passengers and driver ran off wet main road into 100-m deep ravine near Cusco, Peru, killing 41 people
- 24—Bridge collapsed while under construction in west India, killing 11 workers
- 26—High-speed, 1068.6-km Wuhan–Guangzhou High-Speed Railway line linking Wuhan and Guangdong, China, opened as part of high-speed line between Beijing and Hong Kong
- 26—Ferry carrying at least 88 people sank off Luzon in Philippines, leaving 6 dead and 20 missing
- 28—Snow plough struck express train at JR Hokkaido Torano Station slightly injuring 12 people
- 29—Smoking passenger on crowded train at Guangzhou North Station on recently opened Wuhan–Guangzhou High-Speed Railway line in China, set off fire safety equipment, delaying departure by 3 hours

## MILESTONES

**Retired president and chairman of Nankai Railway Shigeo Yoshimura** died aged 91. Joined Nankai in 1942 after graduating from Osaka Commercial University (now Osaka City University) and held various executive positions, including director, managing director, and president

**Ex General Manager and Representative Director of Oita Football Club Hiroshi Misohata** appointed Director of Tourism Agency of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Joined old Ministry of Home Affairs after graduating from Faculty of Law at University of Tokyo, and held positions for promoting 2003 World Cup, and establishment of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University