

August–December 2015

August

- 4—Two trains carrying about 1600 people partly derailed on bridge flooded by swollen river in Madhya Pradesh state, southern India, killing at least 27 people
- 12—Chemical storage warehouse exploded in Binhai New Area, Tianjin City, China, killing at least 158 (including 94 firemen), with 15 other people missing and 367 admitted to hospital
- 12—Helicopter leaving oil rig near Lagos, Nigeria, crashed into lagoon, killing at least 4 people onboard and injuring 6 others
- 15—Airbus announced largest-ever order from Indigo (LCC with largest share of Indian market) for 250 units of A320neo following signing of memorandum of understanding in October 2014; Indigo previously ordered 280 units of A320 series
- 15—Russian helicopter carrying tourists crashed into Sea of Okhotsk near Khabarovsk, killing 11 of 16 people onboard with 5 others missing
- 16—French-built ATR42-300 turboprop operated by Trigana Air Service crashed into mountain in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, killing all 54 passengers and crew onboard
- 16—Two small aircraft, a Sabreliner and a Cessna, collided in mid-air in southern California near Mexican border, killing all 4 people in both planes
- 17—JR West Bus belonging to JR West group announced 1 October establishment of Nishinihon JR Bus Service subsidiary specializing in charter buses focusing on services to foreign tourists; operations starting from early 2016
- 19—Mitsui Bussan announced receipt of ¥76 billion order for civil engineering and track works on 320-km section of high-speed freight line between Delhi and Mumbai, India, partly financed by Japanese government overseas development yen loan
- 21—Utsunomiya City, Japan, announced formation of LRT operator as third-sector type of business called Tochigi Ken'ou LRT with operations starting in 2019
- 22—1950s era Hawker Hunter jet fighter crashed on busy main road during the annual Shoreham Airshow, engulfing vehicles in fireball killing 11 people, injuring 14, and seriously injuring pilot

- 23—Two light aircraft participating in airshow in Dittingen, Switzerland, crashed in mid-air, killing one pilot with other pilot ejecting successfully
- 25—Seaplane crashed into forested region of Québec Province, Canada, killing 6 people onboard
- 28—Truck *en route* to traditional Reed Dance ceremony for choosing new bride for King Mswati III of Swaziland in southern Africa collided with passenger car, killing 38 young women and injuring 20 others

September

- 3—Hitachi English subsidiary Hitachi Rail Europe opened rolling-stock yard at Newton Aycliffe in northeast England for manufacturing of new Class 800 for Intercity High-Speed Rail services, and AT-200 for Scotrail suburban services
- 5—Fishing vessel with crew of 21 overturned off Chuja, S. Korea with loss of 10 crew, 3 rescued and 8 missing
- 7—Carriages for 23-km Purple Line linking northern Bangkok, Thailand, with suburbs were shipped from Yokohama Port to fulfill orders taken by JR East, Marubeni and Toshiba partners; 63 carriages to be delivered by January 2016 with partners also supplying infrastructure for 16 stations, signalling systems, etc.
- 8—Port engine of British Airways B777-200 caught fire immediately after takeoff from Las Vegas McCarran International Airport forcing emergency landing and injuring 14 of 172 passengers onboard
- 11—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism announced selection of business group composed of Tokyu Railway, Maeda Construction, and Toyota Tsusho Corp as preferred vendors for selling management rights to Sendai Airport as first stage in shift to fully privatized management of national airports to be completed by June 2016
- 11—Large construction crane collapsed on a mosque at Mecca, Saudi Arabia, killing 107 visiting pilgrims and injuring 238
- 14—Airbus confirmed order for 110 units of A321neo by low-cost carrier Wizz Air Group serving central European countries such as Hungary, Poland, Romania, etc., and most-ordered model at June Paris Air Show

- 16—** JR Freight announced 1-year (starting October 2015) consigned order in conjunction with Nippon Koei to assist Indian Railways with freight management knowhow as part of JICA project to introduce business planning and IT systems in 2018
- 16—** Tanker truck exploded after traffic accident in southern Sudan killing at least 186 people gathered nearby collecting oil products
- 17—** Chinese state-run Xinhua News Agency reported formation of joint venture construction plan by China Railway Corporation and US businesses to build approx. 370-km high-speed railroad between Los Angeles and Las Vegas
- 23—** Boeing announced order for 300 civilian aircraft from China on occasion of US visit by Premier Xi Jinping, composed mostly of 190 units of smaller B737, and 50 units of wide-body version
- 24—** Stampede during Hajj at Mecca, Saudi Arabia, left 760 pilgrims dead and 934 others injured
- 24—** School bus carrying visiting foreign-exchange students in Seattle, USA, struck by amphibious vehicle used for tourism, killing 4 students including a Japanese national, and injuring 51 others
- 24—** Miyazaki Transport and Yamato Transport announced 1 October start of delivery service using buses in Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan; Yamato started similar service in Iwate Prefecture in June 2015
- 25—** JR East announced twinned stations agreement proposed by Deutsche Bahn (DB), between Tokyo Station and Frankfurt Central Station of DB with signing in Frankfurt on 30 September; Frankfurt Central Station completed in August 1888, 26 years before Tokyo Station but both share common historic design features representing railway architecture
- 29—** Government of Indonesia announced surprise decision to award bid to build 150-km line between Jakarta and Bandung to China following severe competition between Japan and China bidders and September announcement by government to abandon plans for high-speed rail link in Java
- 29—** Currently rehabilitating Skymark Airlines announced joint code-sharing agreement with ANA under ANA Holdings umbrella and start of winter schedule from October 2016

- 30—** JR Hokkaido announced plans to scrap 10 aging diesel railcars and reduce services by 80 others from March 2016 in line with new timetable and rationalization of operating losses; also discussing plans with regional users to close 9 underused stations

MILESTONES

Mr Akihiko Tamura appointed Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency on 11 September. Joined old Ministry of Transport in 1980 after graduating from University of Tokyo Faculty of Law. Held positions such as Assistant Vice-Minister, Deputy Director-General Railway Bureau, and Director-General Civil Aviation Bureau before current appointment

Mr Yoshinobu Sato appointed Director-General of Civil Aviation Bureau on 11 September. Joined old Ministry of Transport in 1982 after graduating from University of Tokyo Faculty of Law. Held positions such as Deputy Director-General Civil Aviation Bureau, Deputy Director-General Tourism Bureau and Deputy-Director of Coast Guard before current appointment

Mr Takashi Kitamura appointed Chairman of Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency on 1 October. Joined old Ministry of Transport in 1976 after graduating from University of Tokyo Faculty of Law before holding positions as Director of Coast Guard, and Special Counsel for Osaka International Airport Terminal

October

- 2—** DHC-6 airliner belonging to Indonesian domestic carrier Aviastar crashed on takeoff from airport in Sulawesi, killing all 10 passengers and crew onboard
- 13—** Cessna light aircraft crash-landed on highway in Idaho, USA, without loss of life
- 19—** Beechcraft B60 light aircraft crashed into a bakery in a densely populated housing immediately before departing an airport in Bogota, Colombia, killing all 4 people onboard and 3 people on ground
- 22—** JR Central announced first introduction in last 4 years of 20 sets of new shinkansen N700A series rolling stock from 2016 and modification of current N700 to replace current 700 series and upgrade safety and stability of operation by achieving max speed of 285 km/h in all cars
- 23—** Tourist bus in head-on collision with oncoming truck near Bordeaux, France, before catching fire and killing 43 people with 8 others injured

August–December 2015

- 27—Utsunomiya City in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, announced appointment of Utsunomiya City Mayor Mr Toru Takai as President of third-sector Utsunomiya Light Rail operator with formal ratification at General Meeting on 6 November
- 29—Boeing 767-200e suffered engine fire as about to takeoff from Ft Lauderdale Airport in Florida, USA, forcing emergency evacuation of 101 passengers and crew with 17 people injured and temporary closure of airport
- 30—JR East, JR West and JR Central presented consolidated mid-term accounts for September; mid-term profits from shinkansen operations reached record levels due to opening of Hokuriku Shinkansen (JR East and JR West) increases from San'yo Shinkansen (JR West) and Tokaido Shinkansen (JR Central); all 3 companies revised full-year earnings upwards
- 30—Explosion and fire in Bucharest nightclub in Romania left 45 people dead and 180 others injured; cause of fire attributed to sparks from indoor fireworks at opening of rock concert
- 31—Russian-owned Airbus A321 crashed in Sinai Peninsula so in Egypt, killing all 224 passengers and crew; crash suspected to be caused by bomb onboard
- 31—10.8-km section between Okegawa Kitamoto to Shiraoku Gamo in Saitama Prefecture of Metropolitan Central Expressway planned as outermost ring of three metropolitan beltways opened to link all expressway roads enabling easy passage from Tomei Expressway to Tohoku Expressway via new link and expected to solve congestion on Tokyo Metropolitan Expressway
- 31—Food-themed Expo in Milan, northern Italy closed on schedule after 6 months; number of visitors exceeded expected 20 million, reaching 21 million with 2.2 million visiting Japanese pavilion

MILESTONES

Mr Kei'ichi Ishii appointed Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Third Abe Cabinet on 7 October. Joined former Ministry of Construction in 1981 after graduating from Faculty of Engineering at University of Tokyo and retired in December 1992 before winning first post as New Komeito Party member for Tokyo's 5th Ward in 40th House of Representatives election; appointed Party Chairman of Policy Affairs Research Council in October 2010

November

- 4—Russian Antonov 12 crashed immediately after takeoff from airport at Juba, southern Sudan, killing all 36 people onboard; mechanical failure blamed as cause
- 7—US Federal government announced subsidy of US\$27.8 million for superconducting linear motor car design proposed by Japanese government and JR Central to run about 70 km between Washington DC and Baltimore
- 10—Hawker 700 jet crashed into housing in Akron, Ohio, USA, killing all 9 people onboard
- 11—Small Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ) for about 80 passengers made inaugural flight at Nagoya Airport and expected to enter service from April 2017 with orders for more than 400 units from Japanese domestic carriers
- 14—French TGV derailed near Strasbourg, northeast France, during test run of next-generation car design to be introduced next Spring with some cars overturning, killing 11 people including children and injuring 42 others
- 17—Baltimore Washington Railroad (BWRR) company working with JR Central aiming to export superconducting linear motor car to USA announced obtained railroad business concession from Maryland state government
- 18—JR West announced Kyoto Railway Museum now under construction in Shimogyo Ward, Kyoto, to open on 29 April 2016 with exhibit of 53 pieces of rolling stock including first Series 0 shinkansen as well as 20 locomotives from Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum
- 18—Helicopter lost control on landing at San Diego International Airport, California, USA, killing two people onboard
- 19—JR Central announced plan to stop ticket inspections in Green and Reserved Seat cars from Spring 2016 with inspections only in unreserved seats; JR East and JR West already implemented same policy
- 20—New Kansai International Airport Corporation announced business concession with ORIX and French airport management company VINCIA to jointly manage Kansai International Airport and Osaka International Airport (Itami) from April 2016
- 20—JR East announced construction of shinkansen driving simulator in California State Railway Museum, San Diego, where new high-speed railroad planned; simulator offers realistic images of surrounding scenery and near-realistic ride experience

- 21—Japanese Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism approved investment in Texas, USA, high-speed railway business using public funds with release of US\$40 million in JOIN funding for introduction of shinkansen system proposed by JR Central
- 21—Helicopter carrying tourists to view Fox Glacier on New Zealand's South Island crashed onto glacier, killing all 7 passengers and crew
- 22—Robinson R22beta helicopter crashed onto Joshin'etsu Expressway in Gunma Prefecture, Japan, before rolling down roadside inclined verge, killing 2 people onboard
- 22—Helicopter cleaning high-voltage transmission lines in New Taipei City, Taiwan, crashed, killing 2 people onboard
- 24—Keihin Electric Express Railway announced cooperative management agreement with SRTET Thai international subsidiary of Airport Rail Link (ARL, 28 km) operator with signing ceremony in Thailand on 4 December
- 24—Okayama Electric Tramway announced plan to investigate 100-meter extension to reach JR West Okayama Station plaza with pedestrian walkway linking station building and street-level tram stop
- 25—Paris Municipal Government announced free transport on city's metro and bus services on 29 and 30 November to promote public awareness of COP21 international conference on manmade global warning and reduction of carbon-dioxide emissions
- 6—Sendai Subway opened second line (13.9 km east-west between Yakiyama Zoo and Arai) using linear motor and connecting with existing north-south line at Sendai Station
- 6—Morning commuter train collided with minibus on crossing in Jakarta, Indonesia, killing 16 people onboard including train driver and injuring 8 others; minibus driver ignored crossing warnings
- 7—Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) approved application from Toyama City, Toyama Light rail (LR) and Toyamachiho Railroad to operate through services at Toyama LR Toyama Station by extending tracks under shinkansen elevated section by 90 m for through operations with Toyamachiho Railroad; part of Toyama LR to become multitracked with Toyama City to operate and maintain by vertical separation of rail business opening in March 2020
- 9—Mitsui Busan announced transfer of 33.9% of shares in wholly-owned Brazilian urban railway company Guarana Urban Mobility (GUMI) to JR West along with further 16% of shares to JOIN public fund supporting overseas transport and city development; in addition to operating urban railways near Rio de Janeiro, GUMI also owns subway Line 6 in Sao Paolo (opening in 2021) and Rio de Janeiro LRT (opening 2016)
- 9—Hitachi announced receipt of additional order worth ¥25 billion by Hitachi Rail Italia from Italian railway operator Trenitalia for 136 double-deck commuter rail cars (including 24 lead cars) to increase total order to 706 carriages (121 train sets); Rail Italia inherited by Hitachi at purchase of AnsaldoBreda S.p.A from Italian Finmeccanica

December

- 2—JR Central announced investment of several billion yen (<2% of total cost) in new railway construction company for building proposed 400-km high-speed track between Dallas and Houston in Texas, USA
- 3—Hokkaido Prefecture and JAL concluded cooperation agreement over six items, such as promotion of prefectural tourism and local gourmet foods for in-flight meals and airport lounges; registered Hokkaido Smile Station as government offices providing tourism information about Hokkaido at both Bangkok and Manila international airports
- 4—Soujitz announced purchase of 41% of shares in Canadian CAD Railway Industries as first Japanese business to enter North-American rolling stock maintenance market
- 9—Honda announced receipt of US FAA airworthiness certificate for company's business 'Hondajet' supporting mass-production of orders for more than 100 jets from North American customers
- 10—Hitachi, Mitsui Busan, and Hitachi India announced orders for signalling, communications, and train control systems from DFCCIL freight railway subsidiary of Indian Railways worth ¥39 billion; financed by Japanese government 0-yen loan and record order in India for Japanese-made signalling infrastructure
- 10—IATA forecast 2106 world airline net profits to reach US\$36.3 billion and 10% possible record year-on-year increase over 2015; increase due to falling oil prices and expected 7% increase in passengers to 3.78 billion

August–December 2015

- 12—Japan and India announced plan to construct 500-km high-speed line between Mumbai and Ahmedabad in western India using Japanese shinkansen technology at total cost of ¥1.8 trillion using up to ¥1.46 trillion in Japanese government yen loans
- 14—Bus carrying 60 border police officers drove off bridge on mountain road in northern Argentina to fall 15 m into icy river, killing at least 43 officers and leaving 8 hospitalized
- 15—New Kansai International Airport Corporation operating New Kansai International Airport and Osaka International Airport (Itami) announced signing of concession agreement with Kansai Airports established by Orix and French airports operator VINCI Airports; Kansai Airports to manage both airports for 44 years from April 2016 for ¥4.9 billion annually and total of ¥2.2 trillion; 30 companies in Kansai will make new investments
- 17—JR Central announced change in shinkansen car inspection period from current 30 days or 30,000-km running distance, dating from 1964, to new system of 45 days or 60,000-km running distance from March 2016 timetable revision; change made possible by carriage improvements and increase in train sets
- 18—JR Central held groundbreaking ceremony marking start of construction of Southern Alps tunnels considered most difficult section of new Maglev Shinkansen; construction of mountain tunnels totalling 25 km and crossing three prefectures of Yamanashi, Shizuoka and Nagano expected to take 10 years
- 19—Ferry hit by storm off Sulawesi, Indonesia, sank, leaving 63 people dead, 15 missing, and 40 rescued
- 20—Sapporo City announced start of circle Sapporo tram services (8.9 km) following 400-m extension between Nishi 4-chome and Suzuki stops; extended section and previous terminus now located close to the sidewalk
- 22—Hiroshima City announced reduction in number of services where Hiroshima Electric Railway and Hiroshima Bus services overlap in city centre as social experiment to investigate better use of new lines; test to run 51 days from 23 January to 13 March 2016
- 22—Small aircraft carrying border-patrol soldiers crashed on landing at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi, India, before catching fire, killing all 10 people onboard
- 22—Hitachi announced order worth US\$338 million from **Ansaldo** STS Group for signalling system for US Massachusetts Transport Bureau (MBTA) operating Commuter Rail Line
- 24—Freighter crashed into nearby housing on landing at Mbuji-Mayi airport, Democratic Republic of Congo), killing 7 people
- 25—JR East and local regional governments held meeting to discuss plans to restore Ofunato Line (43.7 km between Sakari and Kessenuma) and Kessenuma Line (55.3 km between Kessenuma and Yanaizu); decided on full-scale replacement of Ofunato Line by high-speed bus service (BRT) and delayed decision on Kessenuma Line until March 2016
- 25—MLIT approved application by Kita-Osaka Kyuko (Osaka Municipal Government, 5.9 km between Ezaka and Senrichuo) to start services to Mino City (2.5 km between Senrichuo and Shin-Minoo) with planned opening in 2020
- 27—Freight train wagons carrying 820,000 liters of sulphuric acid derailed and overturned in Queensland, northern Australia, slightly injuring train crew of 3; some 30,000 liters of sulphuric acid may have leaked into environment

MILESTONES

Mr Iwao Nisugi died aged 100 on 25 December. Joined old Ministry of Railways in 1938 after graduating in engineering from Teikoku University and retired in 1968 after holding posts as JNR Chief Engineer, JNR Director, etc. Subsequently held posts as Vice-President of Seibu Railway, President of Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation (today Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency), and President of JNR from December 1983 to June 1985 before returning to Seibu Railway in 1985, becoming President from 1989 to 1996

Mr Yoshifumi Kato appointed on 25 December first President of Keihan Holdings (established 1 April 2016). Joined Keihan Railway in 1975 after graduating in law from Tohoku University and appointed Director in 2005 and President in 2011