

August 2016–January 2017

August

- 2—Abe Cabinet of Japanese government announced decision to extend interest-free ¥3 billion loan to JR Central to facilitate extension of Maglev Chuo Shinkansen to Osaka 8 years earlier than initially planned
- 3—Emirates Boeing B777-300 crashed on landing at Dubai International Airport before catching fire but all 300 people onboard evacuated safely although one firefighter killed by blaze
- 3—Bridge collapsed in Maharashtra State, India, crushing 2 buses killing 2 of 22 passengers onboard and 20 others missing
- 5—DHL Boeing B737-400 freighter overran runway on landing at Bergamo Airport, N. Italy, before coming to stop at nearby road without injuries to crew
- 6—Yen-loan financed 23-km Purple Line opened in Bangkok, Thailand, connecting north and northwest section of the city; JR East group rolling stock manufacturer supplied 63 cars with Marubeni and Toshiba supplying operation systems including maintenance
- 6—Japan's Minister of Infrastructure, Land, Transport and Tourism Mr Keiichi Ishi on visit to Thailand signed memorandum of cooperation between Japan and Thailand with Thai Minister of Transport Arkhom Termpittayapasith regarding introduction of high-speed railway between Bangkok and Chiang Mai (about 670 km) using Japanese shinkansen technology, targeting basic development plan in 2017
- 8—Tourist bus carrying visitors to UNESCO Heritage Site at St Paul's Church in Macau, China, ran 100 m down steep hill into building, injuring 30 people onboard
- 12—Stolen small plane crashed onto road in Peterborough, near Lake Ontario in Canada, killing thief
- 13—Arsonist set fire and attacked passengers with knife on train in Lichtenstein near Swiss border, killing 1 woman and injuring 5 other people; arsonist suffered severe burns and died following day
- 15—Overloaded bus ran over cliff near Kathmandu in central Nepal, killing at least 33 people and injuring 38 others
- 16—Wagon and passenger car caught fire in road tunnel in Nara Prefecture, Japan, after head-on collision, killing 3 people in two vehicles and injuring 2 others
- 17—Large passenger and freight ferry *Caribbean Fantasy* caught fire in Caribbean forcing evacuation of 510 people onboard before ferry stranded and sank
- 24—Richter Magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck villages in central Italy causing collapse of many old stone houses and leaving at least 292 dead (count at 30 August); majority of the old buildings collapsed in hardest-hit Amatrice, resulting in large number of deaths
- 29—Large American airline United Airlines (UA) announced appointment of former president of competing American Airlines (AA) Scott Kirby as new UA president; UA has code sharing agreements with ANA while AA has agreements with JAL
- 29—Norwegian Environment Agency announced lightning strike killed herd of 323 reindeer in Hardangervidda National Park; the area is a natural habitat of about 1,000 reindeers
- 31—Scheduled charter airline services restarted between USA and Cuba with up to 110 daily flights after 55-year suspension stemming from breakup of diplomatic relations in the Cold War era

September

- 4—Bus and gasoline tanker caught fire after collision near Zabul, south Afghanistan, killing at least 35 people
- 8—Ropeway stopped on Italian side of Mont Blanc in French Alps, leaving 33 people stranded above glacier at 3800 m for 18 hours and another 77 rescued by helicopter
- 9—Passenger train derailed in Galicia, northwest Spain, killing 4 people including driver and injuring 49 others; accident caused by speeding at 118 km/h or almost four times 30 km/h speed limit
- 9—Tokyo Metro, Tobu Railway, and Yamato truck delivery company tested delivery system using subway network on Yurakucho Line from Koto Ward in Tokyo to Wako City in Saitama Prefecture linking with trucks at intermediate stations in 10 trials running until mid-October

- 10**—World's highest Beipanjiang bridge (565-m high and 1341-m long) connected from both sides in Guizhou Province, southwest China, prior to full opening in late 2016
- 12**—Tobu Railway opened yard in Saitama Prefecture with 'Lighting Ceremony' and prayers for safe service of C11 class steam locomotives due to resume operation in summer 2017 after 66 years on 23.4-km section between Imaichi and Kinugawa Onsen (hot springs) on Kinugawa Line
- 12**—All billboards at Clapham Common underground station, London, covered with pictures of cats for 2 weeks as part of creative campaign by CATS (Citizens Advertising Takeover Service)
- 15**—Tokyo Stock Exchange announced listing of JR Kyushu from 25 October as first listing of so-called island operators in JR group with sale of all stocks currently held by Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism administrative agency, and Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency expected to raise total of about ¥400 billion
- 15**—High-speed boat carrying foreign tourists off coast of Bali, Indonesia, exploded, killing 2 tourists and injuring 18 others; accident attributed to battery fault near fuel tanks
- 15**—Small plane flying in air show near Zhuang City, China, crashed killing pilot and three people onboard
- 16**—Passenger train crashed into freight train stopped by fault near Multan, central Pakistan, killing at least 4 people and injuring more than 100 others
- 18**—Overloaded boat carrying Islamic worshippers crashed into bridge pier on Chao Phraya River, Thailand, before sinking, leaving at least 18 people dead and 12 missing
- 20**—3-day Inno Trans 2016 exhibition opened in Berlin, Germany, to demonstrate railway technologies and infrastructure, including public transport, carriage interiors, tunnelling technologies, etc., as world's largest railway expo; JR East, Hitachi and Kawasaki Heavy Industries all exhibited from Japan
- 20**—Large French electrical engineering company Alstom demonstrated zero-emissions *Coradia iLint* railcar using hydrogen fuel-cell batteries at Inno Trans 2016 with possible world-first service introduction on railway in Lower Saxony, Germany, in December 2017
- 23**—Kobe City, Japan, opened company briefing session on Kobe Airport management concession attended by 26 large companies including Oryx managing Kansai International Airport (Osaka), with concession award expected in April 2018
- 26**—Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism approved LRT business plans submitted by Utsunomiya and Hagamachi cities in Tochigi Prefecture to operate 15-km next-generation light rail tram with ¥22 billion of total investment cost of ¥48.5 billion covered by national budget and expected opening in December 2019
- 29**—4-car passenger train over-ran buffers at Hoboken, New Jersey terminal station before mounting platforms, killing 1 woman and injuring 114 other people
- 30**—More than 50 schoolchildren fell into river when rope bridge over river collapsed in northern Laos, leaving 2 people drowned, 3 missing and 52 rescued

October

- 8**—Passenger and work train collided near New Hyde Park Station on Long Island Railroad, New York, derailing 3 of 12 cars and injuring 33 people
- 11**—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) issued stern warning to ANA about incident which occurred on 30 September when company boarded incompletely documented passenger on flight at Fukuoka Airport bound for Haneda Airport, exceeding aircraft capacity by 1; oversight noticed by cabin attendant before departure and passenger removed from plane
- 12**—Electrical underground cable fire in Niiza, Saitama, caused power cut to 590,000 households, businesses, and government offices in Saitama and Tokyo as well as stoppages on some private railway lines

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- 13**—Tourist bus struck centre guard rail on expressway near Ulsan, South Korea, before catching fire, killing 10 people and injuring 7 others trapped inside by jammed door
- 15**—Japan's MLIT banned passengers from taking Samsung Galaxy Note 7 mobile phones onboard all domestic flights following phone fires and similar ban by US aviation authority
- 15**—Drunk driver drove pickup truck off bridge in San Diego, California, killing 4 people and injuring 9 others
- 16**—Suspension bridge (100-m long) collapsed on small island near Bali, Indonesia, dropping people on bridge into sea, killing 8 and injuring 30 others
- 17**—Sojitz Corporation announced additional order worth ¥64 billion for works on freight line (DFC West Line) between Delhi and Mumbai, India, to be constructed with Japanese government yen loan and making largest-ever yen loan totaling ¥350 billion
- 18**—Japanese cabinet announced first revision in 120 years of legislation governing commercial aviation business with changes to clarify for compensation for damage to air freight in addition to air transport rules
- 18**—Institute of Urban Strategies at The Mori Memorial Foundation announced 2016 Global Power City Index with Tokyo replacing Paris in third place behind New York in second place and London in top place; first upward jump for Tokyo since ranking of world's 42 cities started in 2008
- 20**—Bus overturned on mountain road near San Jose, Costa Rica, killing 12 passengers and injuring 12 others
- 20**—Odakyu Railway announced March 2018 introduction of new Class 70000 *Romance Car* and revision to train timetable following completion of quadruple tracking between Higashi-Kitazawa and Izumi-Tamagawa stations on Odakyu Line
- 21**—Largest Chinese rolling stock maker, China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation, announced start of development of linear motor car with maximum operations speed of 600 km/h as national project for developing domestic technology; linear motor car using German technology opened in Shanghai in 2002 running at 430 km/h
- 21**—20-carriage passenger train derailed and overturned in Cameroun, Africa, killing at least 70 passengers and injuring 300 others
- 21**—Mi8 helicopter crashed on emergency landing near Urengoy, northern Russia, killing 19 of 22 oil exploration company employees and injuring 3 others
- 24**—Small plane carrying drug reconnaissance team crashed immediately after takeoff from airport on Malta killing all 5 French nationals onboard
- 25**—JR Kyushu completed listing on Tokyo Stock Exchange to become fourth publicly listed company in JR group after JR East, JR Central and JR West; initial offer price ¥3100 dropped to ¥2600, raising ¥478 billion
- 25**—Accident at Dreamworld theme park on Thunder River Rapids ride at Gold Coast, Australia, killed 4 visitors
- 28**—JR Freight announced considering stock listing with concrete plans for IPO will be pursued after reaching 70% increase (¥10 billion, compared to FY2015) in ordinary profits in FY2018
- 28**—Malayan Railways (KTMB) freight train derailed and overturned in north Malaysia to block both up and down tracks, causing delays for 12,000 commuters
- 28**—Starboard wing of American Airlines Boeing 767 caught fire on takeoff from Chicago's O'Hare Airport but all 170 passengers onboard safely evacuated down emergency chutes with 20 minor injuries
- 31**—Japan Tourism Agency announced inbound foreign tourists exceeded 20 million on 30 October 2016, breaking 20 million number for first time; Asian visitors from China, Korea and Taiwan increased along with more visits from cruise liners—annual total for 2016 expected to reach 24 million
- 31**—JR West announced purchase of real estate business from Mitsubishi Heavy Engineering for ¥97 billion as 70% stock holding and taking control of 400 properties, including rental apartments and offices in Tokyo metropolitan and Kinki regions

Norbember

- 1—Following minor scrape with other vehicle, empty school bus crossed centre line before crashing head-on into oncoming commuter bus in Maryland, USA, killing at least 6 people and injuring 10 others
- 3—Express train collided with another express standing in station in Karachi, south Pakistan, killing at least 20 people and injuring some 60 others
- 6—Tourist bus overturned on expressway in central South Korea, killing 4 people and injuring 42 others
- 8—Large sinkhole 15-m deep and 30-m wide opened in front of JR Kyushu Hakata Station, due to tunnel collapse at nearby Fukuoka City Nanakuma subway line extension under construction
- 9—Speeding tram overturned on curve near Croydon, south London, UK, killing 7 people and injuring 51 others; driver arrested for professional negligence resulting in death
- 11—Japanese Prime Minister Abe met with Indian Prime Minister Modi visiting Japan to sign cooperation agreement in nuclear power making export of reactor to India possible; discussed 2018 start of construction of new high-speed 500-km line between Mumbai and Ahmadabad agreed in December 2015 using Japanese shinkansen technology and confirmed opening in 2023
- 11—Mitsui Bussan announced ¥49 billion order from Indian Freight Exclusive Railway Public Corporation for civil engineering and track works on 120-km section between Jawaharlal, Nehru Port, and Vaitarana, and taking booked work orders to 422 km
- 13—Cabinet Office and Semboku City in Akita Prefecture in National Strategy Development Region announced 400-m return-trip running tests of DeNA French unmanned self-driving *Robot Shuttle* bus system on prefectural roads along shore of Lake Tazawa as first test on public roads in Japan
- 18—JR Hokkaido announced 13 sections of 10 lines running at deficit totalling almost 1237 km or almost half of JR Hokkaido lines with intention to close three sections (47.6 km between Health Sciences University of Hokkaido and Shintotsukawa on Sassho Line; 81.7 km between Furano and Shintoku on Nemuro Line; and 50.1 km between Fukagawa and Rumoi on Rumoi Line)
- 18—JR Central applied to Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency (JRTT) for ¥3 trillion to cover part of construction costs of Linear Maglev; two tranches of ¥1.5 trillion to be borrowed from Treasury investments and loans via JRTT until 2017
- 20—Express train derailed and overturned near Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, north India, killing at least 120 people and injuring 131 others
- 21—School bus overturned and hit tree in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA, killing 6 people and injuring 23 others
- 22—Transavia Airlines of Taiwan filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations following loss of customers and severe business conditions after fatal accidents in 2014 and 2015
- 24—Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) announced ¥860 million in financial assistance for recovery of JR Hokkaido Sekisho Line, Nemuro Line and other track sections damaged by August 2016 typhoon and flooding; total recovery costs estimated at ¥3.8 billion with JR Hokkaido to bear ¥2 billion of costs
- 24—National Transportation Safety Board announced findings of accident investigation into 2015 tram derailment in Nagasaki due to worn rails with four similar derailments at same location on sharp curve between 2007 and June this year
- 25—Passenger ran into back of express train stopped by human error on main line in north Iran, engulfing two express cars in fire and derailing/overturning four passenger train cars, killing 44 people and injuring 82 others
- 28—Hokkaido Economic Federation announced proposal targeting medium to long-term adjustment and standardization of Hokkaido transportation systems, including re-examination of JR Freight line usage fees due to deteriorating JR Hokkaido business conditions, etc.
- 28—British Aerospace Avro RJ85 chartered by Lamia Airlines of Bolivia and carrying players, families, and staff of Brazilian Chapecoense soccer club team to game in Medellin, Colombia, crashed in mountains, killing 71 people onboard with 6 rescued

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28—JR Kyushu announced new investment in company targeting acquisition of management rights for Fukuoka Airport; new management company formed by local alliance of companies, including JR West, Kyushu Electric, etc.

MILESTONES

Mr Yoshihiro Omori died aged 87 on 10 November. Joined old Japanese National Railways (JNR) in 1955 after graduating from University of Tokyo Faculty of Law. Held post as President of JR Hokkaido until 1996 following JNR privatization and division. After retiring as President, held posts as Chairman, Councillor, and Special Advisor between 2007 and 2010. Also held post of secretary of Hokkaido Association of Small Business Owners from 1990 to 2006

December

- 1**—Hitachi Ltd., announced rolling stock maintenance contract agreement with Trenitalia operator to service and provide spares for 400 Hitachi-built high-speed carriages for 9 years along with further 2-year maintenance contract for 80 dual-level commuter cars
- 7**—Domestic flight (ATR42 turboprop) of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) crashed in northwest Pakistan, killing all 48 people onboard
- 9**—Hitachi Ltd., announced completion of first carriage built domestically at Hitachi Rail Europe's UK rolling stock works and due to enter service as one of 866 cars in 122 Class 800 trainsets as part of high-speed Intercity Express Programme (IEP)
- 9**—Myanmar Railways (MR) opened bids to build 24 railway carriages for diesel-electric services on tracks between Yangon and Mandalay currently being built with financing by Japanese government ODA assistance and including part-financing of rolling stock
- 10**—JR East re-opened 23.2-km section of Joban Line between Soma and Hamayoshida following restoration of tracks (moved 14.6 km further inland) damaged by Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami
- 10**—Last two gas tanker wagons of 24-wagon trainset touched electric power lines after train derailed in northeast Bulgaria before exploding, killing 7 people, injuring 53 others, destroying 20 nearby houses and forcing residents to evacuate
- 10**—Truck carrying flammable materials collided with vehicle convoy near Nairobi, Kenya, before exploding, killing at least 39 people
- 11**—World's longest St Gotthard Base Tunnel (57 km) under Swiss Alps opened to trains piggy-backing passenger vehicles, pushing previous Seikan Tunnel (53.9 km) into second place longest tunnel
- 11**—Iran Air concluded procurement contract with Boeing for 80 passenger planes split into 50 units of B737 and 30 units of B777 worth US\$16.6 billion. Agreement of procurement was reached in June 2016 following lifting of US economic sanctions
- 13**—Malaysia and Singapore signed joint agreement to build high-speed 350-km railway line linking Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in 90 minutes; international bidding for rail systems expected in Q4 2017
- 16**—JR Central announced 4 March 2017 timetable revisions with unification of Tokaido Shinkansen regular *Nozomi* and *Hikari* services into high-speed N700A services
- 20**—Japan's LDP and Komeito political parties' shinkansen construction promotion project team formally approved Obama to Kyoto route of Hokuriku Shinkansen westward beyond Tsuruga; decision on section between Kyoto and Shin-Osaka expected to be made before end of FY2016
- 20**—JTB announced target inbound visitor numbers for 2017 of 27 million (+12% over 2016) with 315 million Japanese passenger side trips (+0.4%)
- 20**—Local B727 cargo plane crashed immediately after takeoff in eastern Colombia, killing 5 of 6 people onboard
- 21**—Due to estimated recovery costs of ¥8.6 billion and subsequent annual maintenance costs of ¥1.64 billion, JR Hokkaido proposed plan to close 116.0-km section of Hidaka Line (Tomakomai-Samani 146.5 km) between Mukawa and Samani following 2-year service suspension after tsunami damage; closed services to be replaced by local government operated bus services

- 21**—Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Indian Railways, and Japanese joint venture group (JV) concluded memorandum of understanding related to detailed railway design planning; JV composed of Japan Consultants, Nippon Koei Co. Ltd., and Oriental Consultants Global
- 22**—Ministry of Infrastructure, Land, Transport and Tourism (MILT) announced 28% year-on-year increase in FY2017 shinkansen development expenses to ¥263 billion, broken down into ¥36 billion for Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto to Sapporo section of JR Hokkaido Shinkansen, ¥134 billion for Kanazawa to Tsuruga section of Tohoku Shinkansen and ¥80 billion for Takeo Onsen to Nagasaki section of JR Kyushu Shinkansen
- 22**—Iran Air confirmed purchase agreement with Airbus for 100 passenger planes worth \$18 billion (book value), broken down into 46 units of smaller A320, 38 units of medium-range A330, and 16 units of new medium range A350
- 22**—Second tunnel opened to general passenger vehicle traffic under Bosphorus between European and Asian sides of Istanbul, Turkey, following 2013 opening of parallel rail tunnel
- 25**—Russian military Tu154 plane bound for Syria crashed into Black Sea soon after takeoff from Sochi in southern Russia, killing all 92 people onboard including members of Alexandrov Ensemble military choir
- 28**—10-car express train derailed and overturned in Uttar Pradesh, India, killing at least 2 people and injuring 28 others; previous derailment nearby in November 2016 killed 146 people
- 29**—Indonesian Ministry of Transport announced cooperative agreement with Japanese government in future track upgrades, electrification, etc., of 750-km line across Java between Jakarta and Surabaya
- 1**—Ship carrying some 240 tourists exploded and caught fire in Jakarta Bay, killing 23 people, injuring 17 others, and leaving 17 missing
- 4**—Long Island Railroad train overran buffers at Atlantic Station, Brooklyn, before 2 cars derailed, injuring 103 passengers
- 4**—Japan's National Police Agency (NPA) announced 2016 annual traffic fatalities of 3904 people (year-on-year decline of 213 and less than 4000 for first time in 67 years since 1949) with drops in fatal pedestrian and bicycle accidents too; government aiming to cut deaths to 2500 from peak of 16,765 in 1970
- 6**—Japan Association of Travel Agents (JTA) announced February establishment of Outbound Promotion Council to increase Japanese outbound tourism numbers in partnership with 100 other groups including tourism bodies, airlines, railway operators, hotel groups, and Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO), aiming to reach 20 million outbound tourists by 2018
- 8**—Bus overturned at accident hotspot on expressway in Saone-et-Loire Prefecture, Central France, killing 4 Portuguese tourists and injuring about 20 others
- 9**—Wooden footbridge collapsed in Villavicencio nature reserve in Colombia, killing 7 people and injuring 15 others
- 10**—Dutch Railways (NS) announced all services from 1 January (5500 per day) are run only on electricity generated by wind power in partnership with Eneco power utility; The plan for this world-first initiative was started 2 years ago with target completion at January 2018
- 12**—Mitsui Busan (Mitsui & Co., Ltd) announced acquisition of 40% of shares in Greater Anglia railway franchise (English subsidiary of Dutch Railways (NS) Abellio Transport Group Limited) running public transport services including railways and buses in East Anglia with 1600 km of suburban routes from London to Cambridge, Norwich, etc.

January

- 1**—New Second Avenue Line (3-km Q Line extension) started operation in New York, USA, after repeated construction interruptions and extensions for more than 50 years
- 12**—Airbus announced large year-on-year 305 drop in orders for 2016 from 731 in 2015, but record increase of 53 units to reach 688 deliveries; competitor Boeing announced year-on-year decreases with 668 orders (100 drop) and 748 deliveries (14 drop) but managed better deliveries than Airbus in 2016

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- 12**—N. Korean cargo vessel in E. China Sea off Nagasaki Prefecture issued mayday emergency message before sinking but all crew of 26 rescued from lifeboats by Japan Coast Guard
- 13**—Following fourth derailment since May 2007, Nagasaki Electric Tramway announced rail deformation as cause of June 2016 derailment and published plans to upgrade rails, crossovers, and curves with reopening in November
- 16**—Turkish airlines (ACT) owned freight Boeing 747 crashed near Bishkek Manas International Airport, Kyrgyzstan, killing 4 air crew and 33 other people on ground
- 17**—JNTO announced revised inbound tourism figure for 2016 of 24,039,000 people (21.8% year-on-year increase and first time over 20 million) due to increase of tourists from E. Asia as result of more airline services and cruises; Chinese tourists accounted for biggest increase of 27.6% to 6,370,300 people
- 18**—Ryobi Holdings (Okayama City) and Kanto Bus (Tokyo) announced *Dream Sleeper* world-first night bus services with private passenger compartments operating between Ikebukuro in Tokyo and Namba in Osaka for ¥20,000 one way
- 20**—Expressway bus carrying young Hungarian passengers crashed into pillar on expressway near Verona, Italy, killing 16 people and injuring 36 others
- 21**—Eight cars of passenger train derailed in Andhra Pradesh State, India, killing 32 people and injuring more than 50 others
- 23**—Kansai Vitality Cultural Sphere Promotion Council formed by Kansai local governments, economics groups, news organizations, awarded JR West's Kyoto Railway Museum with 2016 Kansai Vitality Culture Prize for helping revitalize Kansai region of Japan
- 23**—Test runs of unmanned automatic shuttle bus using sensors and cameras started in Paris, France, along 130-m route between Austerlitz Railway Station and R. Seine
- 23**—Mitsubishi Heavy Industries announced delay until mid-2020 for first deliveries of MRJ passenger plane under development by subsidiary Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation; fifth announced delay in first deliveries to ANA
- 24**—Rescue helicopter crashed on Campofelice ski slope in central Italy, killing all 6 people onboard
- 26**—Narita International Airport Corporation announced 2016 business figures with 13.92 million incoming foreign tourists (11% year-on-year and third successive increase) and first ever time to exceed 13.3 million Japanese passengers
- 31**—Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism selected 6 ports of Yokohama, Shimizu (Shizuoka Prefecture), Sasebo (Nagasaki Prefecture), Yatsushiro (Kumamoto Prefecture), Motobu (Okinawa Prefecture), and Taira (Okinawa Prefecture) as bases for international cruise ships, using funds of cruise-ship companies to maintain ports which saw increase in cruise passengers to 1,992,000 people in 2016 as part of government target to reach 5 million inbound cruise passengers by 2020