

4 August—Major US rail freight carrier Union Pacific announced sell off of small freight subsidiary Overnite to concentrate on main business

6 August—Fire in railway tunnel under construction in central Spain trapped 34 workers for 5 hours before rescued

7 August—Two mountain railway trains collided head-on in Interlaken, Switzerland, injuring 64

7 August—Okinawa-based newcomer Lequios Airlines filed with Naha District Court for protection under Civil Rehabilitation Law before starting operations

8 August—Pusan-bound express train collided with freight train in south Korea, killing two passengers and injuring more than 90

10 August—*Yui-rail* monorail (12.9 km, Naha Airport–Shuri) opened in Okinawa as first rail system since WWII

10 August—Echizen Railway's Mikuniawara Line (25.2 km) completed with opening of Nishi Nagata–Mikuni-minato section (13.5 km)

16 August—Passenger boat capsized on tributary of Amazon River in northern Brazil, drowning 10 and leaving approximately 20 missing

17 August—Some 10,000 m² of embankment collapsed on Oigawa Railway in Kanaya Town, Shizuoka Prefecture, leaving no date for return to service of popular steam operations

20 August—Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI) announced first successful test of battery-powered tram without overhead wire (see Photostory on p. 2)

20 August—JR West announced start of *ICOCA* IC card ticket services at major Kansai stations from 1 November

23 August—JR Kyushu announced opening of Shin Yatsushiro–Kagoshima Chuo section of Kyushu Shinkansen from 13 March 2004 with consequent major timetable revision throughout Kyushu (see Photostory on p. 71)

24 August—Small passenger plane on domestic flight exploded and crashed in Haiti, killing all 21 passengers and crew

26 August—Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced visa exemption for Chinese tourists and businessmen visiting Japan for 14 days or less

28 August—Bridge over Daman Ganga River in western India collapsed, killing 23

3 September—Committee for Study of Future of City Transportation submitted interim report to mayor of Yokohama recommending full privatization and conversion into joint stock company of heavily indebted (¥487 billion at end FY2002) Yokohama subway lines 1 and 3 (40 km) and line 4 (Hiyoshi–Nakayama) under construction

3 September—Approximately 2-km pipe completed by JR East and Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) between Shinobazu Pond in Ueno Park and underground springs in nearby Tohoku Shinkansen tunnel to carry about 270 m³ of spring water to clean pond and save JR East about ¥30 million in annual water disposal costs

5 September—First car of Big Thunder Mountain roller-coaster at Disneyland Anaheim, California, derailed, killing one passenger and injuring 10 others

15 September—Cruising sailboat capsized on Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, Japan, drowning three children and four adults on board

16 September—Small TB21 single-engine plane crashed at Tsushima Airport in Nagasaki Prefecture, killing all three on board



Yui-rail monorail departing from Naha-kuko (Naha Airport) Station

(Okinawa Urban Monorail)

18 September—Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) approved application by Sendai City for category-1 railway licence to operate planned (2015 opening) 13.9-km linear-motor subway Tozai Line between Dobutsu-koen and Arai

19 September—MLIT, TMG and Teito Rapid Transit Authority (TRTA) announced plan to mark all subway stations with letters and numbers from April 2004 for easy identification by foreign visitors

20 September—Sightseeing helicopter crashed into western side of Grand Canyon in USA, killing all seven passengers and crew

20 September—Train slammed into bus on crossing 150 km south of Pakistan capital of Islamabad, killing at least 40 people on bus

23 September—Swiss airline SWISS announced business alliance with British Airways (BA), joining One World Federation of eight airlines, including BA, American Airlines, and Cathay Pacific Airways

25 September—French Ministry of Health announced severe summer heat between 1 and 20 August killed some 14,800 people

25 September—Ceremony held in Darwin to mark completion of 1420-km Transcontinental Australian Railway between Alice Springs and Darwin 145 years after first planned

28 September—Worker error and other construction problems caused points failure on JR East's Chuo Line near Mitaka, causing cancellation of 234 trains and affecting about 180,000 people

28 September—Two trains belonging to Deutsche Bahn AG collided head-on on single track near Weimar in central Germany, killing one passenger and injuring 29 others

28 September—Tour boat with 349 passengers ran aground near Lorelei Rocks in River Rhine in Germany, injuring 40 passengers

30 September—Air France and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines announced merger agreement to create Europe's largest airline

1 October—Shinagawa Station opened on Tokaido Shinkansen, creating new western gateway to Tokyo with major JR Central timetable revision and switch to *Nozomi* shinkansen services running at 270 km/h (see *JRTR* 37, p. 2)

1 October—Domestic airfreight carrier Orange Cargo started flights between Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) and Nagasaki and Kagoshima airports

2 October—Railway transport statistics for FY2002 released by MLIT with estimated total passenger traffic at 21.44 billion people and 382.245 billion passenger-km (year-on-year decline of 1.3% and 0.8%, respectively); freight traffic estimated at 56.592 million tonnes and 22.131 billion tonne-km (year-on-year decline of 3.5% and 0.3%, respectively)

9 October—Viet Nam and US governments signed agreement to open air passenger and freight routes between two countries

10 October—Ferry struck bridge and sank in River Benue 700 km east of Nigerian capital of Abuja, killing more than 100 passengers

10 October—Europe's largest raised waterway crossing completed in Magdeburg, eastern Germany, allowing ships to cross River Elbe on 918-m long and 34-m wide canal bridge

12 October—Seven-car train derailed outside Chicago, injuring 100 passengers

15 October—Staten Island Ferry struck Manhattan Terminal pier, killing 10 passengers

15 October—Wire derailed on cableway at Mitake Ropeway Ski Resort on eastern slope of Mt Ontake (3067 m) in Nagano Prefecture throwing couple out of gondola and killing them

18 October—Six-car express train overran stop position in Shin Gifu Terminal of Nagoya Railroad (Meitetsu) to crash into buffer and derail, injuring four passengers

19 October—Subway train passing through London Underground's Camden Town Station derailed into platform wall, injuring seven people

19 October—Cableway gondola plunged 100 m to ground in Darjeeling in north-east India, killing four and injuring 11 on board

26 October—Ground-breaking ceremony held at JR West's Nagahama Station on Hokuriku main line to start construction of Lake Biwa Loop Line linking section between Nagahama and Tsuruga on Hokuriku main line (38.2 km) and Nagahara and Omi Shiotsu on Kosei Line (5.8 km)

24 October—*Concorde* supersonic airplane retired by British Airways after making final flight between New York and London

29 October—Meitetsu and Itochu Corporation announced HSST System Sales joint company to market new HSST (High Speed Surface Transport) maglev linear-motor car urban transportation system overseas

31 October—Japan Air System and All Nippon Airways announced start of air shuttle services between Haneda and Kimpo Airport in Korea from 30 November 2003

MILESTONES

Mr Nobuteru Ishihara

Appointed Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in reshuffled Koizumi Cabinet on 24 September. After graduating in literature from Keio University in 1981, worked as TV journalist before elected to House of Representatives in 1992. Held positions as Parliamentary Vice Minister for International Trade and Industry and Minister of State for Administrative Reform and Regulatory Reform