

JR East: Our Origins and Long-Term Goals

FROM COMPANY ESTABLISHMENT TO ACHIEVEMENT OF FULL PRIVATIZATION

JR East was incorporated as a joint stock corporation under Japanese law on April 1, 1987, as one of several successors to the railway operations of the Japanese National Railways (JNR). In 1949, as part of the postwar reorganization of Japan's national passenger and freight railway, JNR was established as an independent public entity that owned and operated the nationwide railway network. Despite Japan's economic growth following JNR's establishment, JNR experienced financial difficulties and an increasing debt burden, which rendered it effectively insolvent. In 1986, legislation was passed to restructure and eventually privatize JNR by transferring its railway operations and certain related assets and liabilities to the JR Companies^{*1}.

The JR Passenger Companies^{*2} assumed the passenger railway operations of JNR in their respective geographic areas, other than those of the Tokaido and Sanyo Shinkansen lines, which involve the operation of railway facilities spanning the service areas of other JR Passenger Companies. JR Freight assumed JNR's nationwide cargo operations. Because JR Freight does not own railway lines other than lines used exclusively for freight operations, it pays track access charges to the JR Passenger Companies, including JR East.

Certain other businesses and related assets and liabilities were transferred to other JNR Successor Entities^{*3}, including the Shinkansen Holding Corporation, as explained below. After that transfer, the remaining assets and liabilities of JNR became assets and liabilities of JNR Settlement Corporation (JNRSC). JNRSC was in turn dissolved in October 1998. Most of the liabilities of JNRSC were assumed by the national government or canceled, and its assets (including all shares of JR East then held) and certain of its liabilities were transferred to the Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation (JRCC). In connection with the dissolution of JNRSC, legislation was passed that required certain pension-related liabilities of JNRSC to be transferred to the JNR Successor Entities, including JR East (see "Disposition of Long-Term Liabilities of JNR").

SERVICE AREAS OF THE JR PASSENGER COMPANIES



*1 "JR Companies" collectively refers to JR East, Hokkaido Railway Company (JR Hokkaido), Central Japan Railway Company (JR Central), West Japan Railway Company (JR West), Shikoku Railway Company (JR Shikoku), Kyushu Railway Company (JR Kyushu), and Japan Freight Railway Company (JR Freight).

*2 "JR Passenger Companies" refers to the JR Companies other than JR Freight.

*3 "JNR Successor Entities" refers to entities that assumed JNR's railway and other operations on April 1, 1987, consisting of the JR Companies, the Shinkansen Holding Corporation, Railway Telecommunication Co., Ltd., Railway Information Systems Co., Ltd., and the Railway Technical Research Institute.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF JR EAST

			Number of JR East shares held by government agency
April	1987	JR East was established upon the division and privatization of JNR.	4,000,000 (100.0%)
October	1993	The first public sale of shares held by JNRSC. Listed on the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange and other exchanges in Japan.	1,500,000 (37.5%)
August	1999	The second public sale of shares held by JRCC, a successor of JNRSC.	500,000 (12.5%)
November	2000	JR East announced medium-term management plan— <i>New Frontier 21</i> .	
December	2001	The amendment to the JR Law took effect.	
June	2002	The third public sale of shares held by JRCC, and full privatization achieved.	0 (0.0%)
January	2005	JR East announced medium-term management plan— <i>New Frontier 2008</i> .	

In addition to the JR Companies, the restructuring of JNR resulted in the creation of the Shinkansen Holding Corporation to own and lease the facilities of the four then-existing Shinkansen lines, previously owned by JNR, to JR East, JR Central, and JR West. Although JR East initially leased the Tohoku and Joetsu Shinkansen lines from the Shinkansen Holding Corporation, on October 1, 1991, it purchased both lines pursuant to a long-term purchase arrangement. Subsequent to this purchase, the Shinkansen Holding Corporation was dissolved, and payments to be made by JR East in respect of its Shinkansen purchase liabilities are now made to the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency, the ultimate successor entity to the Shinkansen Holding Corporation.

Prior to December 1, 2001, all JR Companies were subject to the Law for Passenger Railway Companies and Japan Freight Railway Company (JR Law), and their business and management were under the supervision of the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. As of December 1, 2001, JR East, JR Central, and JR West were, on the whole, no longer subject to the provisions of that law (see page 47 for details).

Initially, all capital stock of each of the JR Companies, including JR East, was owned by JNRSC. In October 1993, JR East's common stock was listed on the Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya stock exchanges in conjunction with the sale by JNRSC of 2,500,000 shares, or 62.5%, of JR East's total outstanding common stock to the public in Japan. The proceeds from the sale of those shares were used by JNRSC to repay its long-term liabilities. Upon the dissolution of JNRSC in October 1998, its assets and liabilities, including 1,500,000 shares of JR East's common stock, were assumed by JRCC. JRCC sold 1,000,000 shares, or 25.0%, of JR East's common stock in August 1999 and all 500,000 remaining shares, or 12.5%, in June 2002, both through international share offerings. As a result, JR East finally achieved full privatization by becoming an entirely private-sector enterprise 15 years after its establishment.

DISPOSITION OF LONG-TERM LIABILITIES OF JNR

When JNR was restructured in April 1987, responsibility for its long-term liabilities was clearly divided between the national government and the JR Companies following Diet deliberations. At the time of restructuring, JNR's liabilities totaled ¥37.1 trillion, including future costs that were to be incurred. The JR Companies were allocated ¥14.5 trillion of that amount, and JNRSC assumed responsibility for the remaining ¥22.7 trillion.

It was decided at this time that JNRSC would repay as much of this amount as possible using funds generated by the sale of land left by JNR and the sale of the JR Companies' stocks held by JNRSC. Any remaining liabilities were to be assumed and disposed of by the national government.

However, the sale of land by JNRSC was temporarily halted by the October 1987 Guidelines for Urgent Measures to Deal with Land adopted at a Cabinet meeting. Subsequently, the Japanese economy entered a recession in the early 1990s, making it difficult for JNRSC to sell the land. Furthermore, a delay in the sale of shares in the JR Companies and other factors meant that, rather than decreasing, liabilities actually increased due to interest payments.

As of April 1987, liabilities held by JNRSC were ¥25.5 trillion, the combination of the aforementioned ¥22.7 trillion and ¥2.9 trillion. The ¥2.9 trillion was one portion of the Shinkansen usage fees paid by the three JR Passenger Companies in Japan's main island and was to be used to repay JNRSC's debt. Due to the above factors, those liabilities had grown to ¥28.3 trillion at the time of JNRSC's dissolution in October 1998.

In October 1998, the Law for Disposal of Debts and Liabilities of the Japanese National Railways Settlement Corporation was enacted and came into effect. It included the following provisions concerning the disposal of JNRSC's liabilities:

- JNRSC's interest-bearing liabilities would be assumed by the national government's general account, and JNRSC would be absolved of its non-interest bearing liabilities to the government.
- The land, the JR Companies' stocks, and other assets held by JNRSC would be transferred to JRCC, which would pay for pension and other obligations.
- With regard to the amount to be transferred from the Japan Railways Group Mutual Aid Association to the Welfare Pension, a portion of the liabilities legally assigned to JNRSC would become additional obligations of the JR Companies.

Discussing the possibility of imposing further additional liabilities on the JR Companies, the then Prime Minister stated during Diet deliberations prior to the passage of this law: "Regarding those debts and pension liabilities of JNRSC that have not been designated for assumption by the JR Companies, the government is of the view that such obligations must not be imposed on the JR Companies in the future."