

Normal Service Is Resumed



The new train Hayabusa cuts through the countryside on the Tohoku Shinkansen line, which reopened on April 29. This photograph was taken before the earthquake of March 11.

The Tohoku Shinkansen line, which was damaged in the Great East Japan Earthquake, was reopened April 29 along the whole line connecting Tokyo Station and Shin-Aomori Station. April 29 is also the first day of Golden Week, a long holiday in Japan, so many tourists, people returning to their hometowns, and volunteers going to help in the recovery of the disaster-affected region, rode the bullet trains which serve the cities along the line.

The Tohoku Shinkansen is a 713-kilometer railway that runs through Fukushima, Sendai, Morioka and other major cities in the Tohoku region, connecting Tokyo with Shin-Aomori. On March 5 this year, the new train, Hayabusa, which can travel up to 300 km/hr, commenced operations, making it possible to travel from Tokyo to Shin-Aomori in just three hours and ten minutes. The earthquake damaged stations and severed overhead lines, but thanks to early detection of tremors, running trains were automatically stopped before the real shaking from the earthquake began, and not a single passenger train derailed.

Sendai Airport, in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, was heavily damaged by the tsunami caused by the

Great East Japan Earthquake. On April 13, domestic flights at the airport resumed, with flights going to and from Sapporo in Hokkaido, Nagoya, Osaka and other cities.

The damage to Sendai Airport was so severe that immediately following the quake, even predicting when the airport would reopen was impossible. But then, because it was one of the focal points of Operation Tomodachi, Japan Self-Defense Forces and the U.S. Army worked together in recovery efforts twenty-four hours a day, and Sendai Airport was able to reopen in just over a month.

HJ



A Japan Airlines plane lands near debris at Sendai Airport, April 13.

AP/AFLO