

Foreign visitors to Japan break 20 million mark, already top last year's record

1) The estimated number of foreign visitors to Japan this year has already surpassed last year's record 19.74 million, topping 20 million in only 10 months, the Japan Tourism Agency said Monday.

2) The number of visitors in the first nine months of this year was up 24.1 percent from the same period in 2015 to 17.98 million, and the total is estimated to have topped the 20 million line as of Sunday, the agency said.

3) The rate of increase for the first nine months, however, was half the 47 percent increase logged for the whole of last year, with the yen's appreciation and the Chinese economy's slowdown apparently eating into growth.

4) Major earthquakes in Kumamoto Prefecture and its vicinity in April caused a temporary drop in visitors from South Korea.

5) The government has set its sights on increasing the number to 40 million in 2020, when Tokyo will host the Olympics again.

6) The agency attributed this year's rise generally to increased port calls by cruise ships and airlines launching new routes. Continuous tourism promotion campaigns and eased visa restrictions led to gains in visitors from Southeast Asian countries, it said.

7) The government's top spokesman welcomed the figures but said the achievement is "just the halfway point."

8) "We have set a goal of 40 million (foreign visitors annually) in 2020 ... so there are still many more things for us to do," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference.

9) To help reach that goal, the government will consider further relaxing visa rules, including for Chinese, Indian and Russian nationals, while addressing a shortage of accommodations, Suga said.

10) The number of monthly visitors topped 2 million for the first time on record in March when many visited for the cherry blossom season. The record was then rewritten in July with nearly 2.3 million visitors.

11) Buying sprees by shoppers from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong have subsided, with spending by foreign visitors decreasing year on year in the July-September quarter for the first time since fourth quarter 2011. The figure was down 2.9 percent to ¥971.7 billion.【Oct 31, 2016/Kyodo】

- 1) estimated 推定の、見積り
surpass 超える、しのぐ
top ~を上回る、勝る
- 3) log 記録する
yen's appreciation 円高
eat into 食い込む、侵食する
- 4) vicinity 近所、付近
temporary 一時的な
- 5) set one's sights on ~に照準を合わせる、狙いを定める
- 6) attribute A to B AをBに起因させる
port call 寄港、入稿
continuous 連続的な、切れずに続く
restrictions 制限、制約
gain 得る事、増加
- 8) Chief Cabinet Secretary 内閣官房長官
- 9) address 取り組む
accommodation 宿泊施設
- 11) buying spree 爆買い
subside 平常の状態に戻る、おさまる
quarter 四半期



Chinese tourists flock to a duty-free electronics store in the posh Ginza district in Tokyo in September 2015. (flock:群がる posh:しゃれた)

☆Ice breaker for active discussion

1. What are common purposes of foreign tourists to Japan?
2. If you were to recommend some products and services to tourists, what would you recommend?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a lot of tourists?
4. What are the problems that Japan need to address in order to achieve 40 million visitors by 2020?
5. Make sentences using the following words: surpass, set one's sight on, vicinity, subside and accommodation.