

Lawson, Rakuten join to test drone delivery system in disaster-hit Minamisoma

1) Convenience store chain Lawson Inc. and Japanese cybermall operator Rakuten have announced plans for a demonstration test on Oct. 31 of drone delivery services in an area devastated by the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster in Fukushima Prefecture.

2) The test will be conducted in the Odaka district in the city of Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture, utilizing an outlet, a mobile Lawson shop and Rakuten's drone.

3) When the traveling shop visits an area some 2.7 km from the convenience store in the district, it will take orders from locals. The drone will then deliver products, including warm cooked food, from the outlet to the moving shop.

4) The service will be available only on Thursdays during the test run over a period of six months.

5) The drone can carry up to 2 kg of products and deliver them in about seven minutes.

6) The central government lifted its evacuation order for Minamisoma in July last year after it was imposed in the wake of the triple meltdown at Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings Inc.'s wrecked Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant.

7) Although residents have begun returning to their homes, there are few places to buy food and daily necessities.

8) Lawson President Sadanobu Takemasu said he hopes the service will play a valuable role in the community, where a number of older people have difficulty visiting stores.

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- 1) cybermall サイバー・モール、電子仮想商店街、インターネット上の商店街
demonstration test 実証試験
devastate 荒廃させる
ensuing 続く、次いで起きる following
- 2) utilize 利用する
outlet 店舗
mobile 移動式の
- 3) district 地方、地区
local 地元の人
- 4) available 利用できる、入手可能な
- 5) up to ~ 最大~まで
- 6) lift 解除する
evacuation order 避難命令
impose 課す
in the wake of ~の後
triple meltdown 三重溶融
wrecked 壊れた
- 7) daily necessities 生活必需品
- 8) play a role 役割を果たす
valuable 貴重な、大切な

☆Icebreaker for active discussion

1. What can you say about drone delivery mentioned in the article?
2. Which would you prefer, delivery service by a person or drone delivery? Why?
3. What products would you like to be delivered by a drone in case it becomes a reality?
4. How do you imagine shopping and delivery systems 50 years later?
5. Make sentences using the following words: ensuing, utilize, mobile, district, daily necessities, valuable and play a role.