Japan plans to raise visa and departure tax fees from 2026

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Dhaka: Japan plans to raise visa fees, departure taxes and hotel levies from 2026 as the government seeks to curb overtourism and boost revenue amid record visitor numbers.

Between January and September 2025, Japan welcomed 31.65 million international visitors, up 17.7pc from a year earlier.

Officials expect arrivals to surpass 40 million in 2025, driven by a weak yen and a rebound in Chinese tourists.

While the surge has supported the economy, it has also strained infrastructure and fuelled tensions between locals and visitors.

The government is seeking new revenue sources to expand free high school tuition, a programme requiring about €2.25 billion, without increasing the burden on taxpayers.

Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said Tokyo is reviewing visa fees that have remained largely unchanged since the 1970s and are below the averages among G7 and OECD countries.

Currently, visitors pay ¥3,000 (€17) for a single-entry visa and ¥6,000 (€34) for a multiple-entry visa, compared with €90 for a Schengen visa and £127 (€145) for a UK visa.

“The details of the review are undecided, but we are considering various factors, including a possible impact on inbound tourism,” Iwaya told Kyodo News. “Japan’s fees are quite low at present.”

The government is also reviewing the ¥1,000 (€5.50) departure tax introduced in 2019, paid by both Japanese and foreign travellers.

Raising the fee could help upgrade airports, improve security checks and fund domestic projects, according to local media including the Nikkei and Asahi Shimbun.

To offset higher costs for citizens, Tokyo may cut passport application and renewal fees. Officials have not confirmed when or by how much the visa and departure fees will rise.

The move aligns with recent steps to address overtourism. Earlier in October, the city of Kyoto announced a tiered hotel tax, sharply increasing rates for higher-end accommodations.

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