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Japan rail pass price hiked by 70pc

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Dhaka: Rail pass in Japan, that allows 14 days of unlimited travel across the country, witnesses an aggressive hike of 65-77 per cent as the price has gone up from USD 316.32 to USD 535.56.

Despite the price hike of Japan rail pass, strong demand is expected to continue, thanks to a favourable exchange rate for the yen and a steady influx of foreign visitors.

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Starting November 2023, Japan's rail pass offerings have expanded to include one/three-week passes and a first-class option, in addition to the existing 14-day pass.

The price hike of Japan rail pass follows the increased availability of bullet train destinations, as the JR network now spans over 19,000 km across the country, compared to when the previous fares were set when there were

fewer destinations.

Behind the price hike of rail pass imposed by the JR group, that comprises six train operators, lies another reason—the lack of pass adjustments for system upgrades, like online seat reservations and automatic ticket gates.

Foreign travellers can now opt to pay extra to ride the faster Shinkansen bullet trains (Nozomi and Mizuho) instead of the slower ones with more stops. These passes cover local lines, express trains and some ferries but are not available for Japanese residents.

The recent price hike for rail passes in Japan could lead some travellers to consider low-cost carriers like Jetstar and Peach for long-distance travel, as airfares can be notably cheaper than standard train tickets, according to reports.

However, despite the higher Japan rail pass cost, many travellers still find them convenient and cost-effective for exploring Japan, added the reports.

The rail passes still provide a good value even after the price increase, said reports citing JR Central’s spokesperson Koki Mizuno.

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