

Japan reopens doors to tourists as Covid-19 curbs scrapped

A Monitor Report

Date: 16 October, 2022



Tokyo : Japan has reopened its doors to tourists after two-and-a-half years of tough Covid-19 restrictions, with officials hoping an influx of travellers enticed by a weak yen will boost the economy.

From October 11, visa-free entry resumed for travellers from 68 countries and territories. Tourists must still present either proof of vaccination or a negative coronavirus test taken three days before departure.

Japan slammed its borders shut early in the pandemic, at one point even barring foreign residents from returning, and has only recently begun cautiously reopening.

In June, it began allowing tourists to visit in groups accompanied by guides, a requirement that was further relaxed to include self-guided package tours.

In 2019, a record 31.9 million foreign visitors came to Japan, putting the country on track for its goal of 40 million by 2020, when Tokyo was supposed to host the Summer Olympics. But in 2021, the figure plummeted to just 250,000.

In Japan, tourists will find a country that is still adhering to many of the health guidelines that helped it keep pandemic deaths to around 45,500, far lower than many other developed economies.

Before the pandemic, travellers from Hong Kong and mainland China made up 37 per cent of all foreign visitors to Japan, and 44 per cent of tourism income.

In 2019, a record 31.9 million foreign visitors came to Japan, but in 2021 the figure plummeted to just 250,000.