

JATA International News Letter

April 2026

Remarks by Mr. Hiroyuki Takahashi, Chairperson of JATA

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your continued support of JATA's activities. We are pleased to present the first issue of the 2026 fiscal year and the fourth issue overall of the JATA English Newsletter. While the environment surrounding international travel has become increasingly uncertain due to recent global developments, the Japanese market continues to show steady growth. In the fiscal year ending March 2026, the number of international visitors to Japan increased by 3.5% year-on-year, marking a new record high, and the number of Japanese outbound travelers also rose by 6.7% year-on-year.

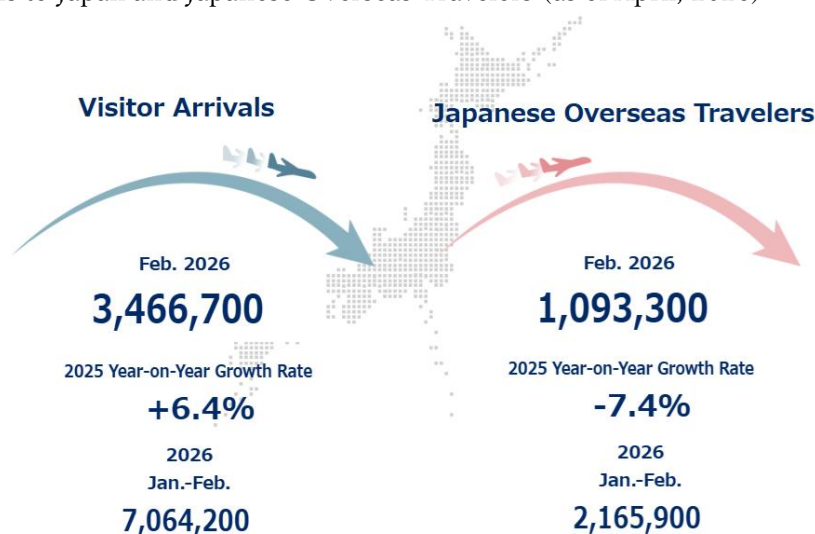
JATA will continue to closely monitor developments and will remain committed to fostering this positive trend by promoting two-way exchanges. We sincerely appreciate your continued support and cooperation for JATA's activities.



Hiroyuki Takahashi Chairperson
Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA)

Topics Related to the Japanese Travel Market

Feb. 2026 Visitor arrivals to Japan and Japanese Overseas Travelers (as of April, 2026)



Source: JNTO statistics.

For more details please visit: <https://statistics.jnto.go.jp/en/graph/#graph--latest--figures>

JATA's Key Activities

Outbound Travel Promotion Division

Launch of the Japan–USA Tourism Campaign 2026

The Outbound Travel Promotion Division is engaged in various initiatives to promote outbound travel among member travel agencies. In this context, we are pleased to announce the launch of the Japan–USA Tourism Campaign 2026, in cooperation with the Japan Tourism Agency and public and private sector partners in both Japan and the United States, which is aimed at further enhancing two-way exchanges with the United States in the 250th year since its founding.

The year 2026 will be a significant milestone year for the United States, celebrating its 250th anniversary of independence. It will also feature a series of internationally notable events, including the World Baseball Classic and the FIFA World Cup. We view this as an opportunity to expand tourism exchange between Japan and the United States further.

Campaign Purpose and Objectives

In 2025, the total number of travelers exchanged between Japan and the United States reached 5.27 million—the second-highest level on record—demonstrating a steady recovery and continued growth following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead to 2026, the United States will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its founding, while also hosting major international events such as the World Baseball Classic and the FIFA World Cup. In addition, a reduction in Japan's passport issuance fees is planned. Together, these factors are expected to create a favorable environment for further growth in Japanese outbound travel to the United States.

At the same time, promoting travel from the United States to Japan remains essential for diversifying Japan's inbound tourism market, encouraging visits to regional destinations, and expanding overall tourism-related consumption.

Key Initiatives and Campaign Period

To build momentum for enhanced bilateral exchange, a special campaign logo (see below) has been created and will be widely utilized by public and private-sector stakeholders in both Japan and the United States.

For details on the campaign's main initiatives, please refer to the Japan Tourism Agency at the link below:

<https://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/content/001989698.pdf>

The campaign period will run from April 2026 through March 2027.



Use of the “Japan–U.S. Tourism Exchange Promotion Campaign” Special Logo

The special campaign logo has been created to promote mutual visits and tourism exchange between the people of Japan and the United States. It may be used in exchange programs and events organized by travel and tourism stakeholders in both countries, as well as in various media aimed at encouraging tourism exchange, including websites, social media platforms, brochures, and newspaper advertisements.

Please note that prior application to the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) is required for use of the logo. If you are interested in utilizing the logo, kindly contact us for further details.

Contact Information:

JATA Overseas Travel Promotion Department

Email: outbound@jata-net.or.jp

Inbound Travel Promotion Division

A site visit for inbound tourism professionals was held at Takanawa Gateway City, one of Japan’s largest integrated station-city developments.

The Inbound Travel Promotion Division conducts various initiatives to support member travel agencies in expanding their inbound tourism business. As part of these efforts, a familiarization tour for inbound tourism professionals was held on February 24, 2026, at Takanawa Gateway City.

Conceived as one of Japan’s largest integrated “station-city” developments, Takanawa Gateway City has attracted significant attention both domestically and internationally. It is expected to continue playing an important role as a global gateway for Tokyo, a leading global city.

An overview of TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY is available at the link below:

<https://www.takanawagateway-city.com/en/>

Takanawa Gateway City, opened to the public in 2025 and scheduled for its grand opening in March 2026, was visited as part of the familiarization tour. Participants walked through the area, experienced its development firsthand, and received the latest updates on its facilities.

Around 70 participants from JATA member companies engaged in inbound travel product development and MICE-related businesses took part in the program, sharing insights on future travel opportunities.

At the beginning of the program, a manager from the Urban Development Department, Marketing Division of East Japan Railway Company provided an overview of the Takanawa Gateway City project.

The presentation highlighted the area’s strategic potential in the Takanawa–Shinagawa district, the core concept behind the urban development, and the project’s overall vision and current phase. It also introduced the key facilities, which are broadly divided into three categories: a hotel (JW Marriott Hotel Tokyo), a convention center (Takanawa Gateway Convention Center), and a commercial facility (NEWoMan Takanawa).

Overview presentation



Following the presentation, participants toured the on-site facilities. Guided by staff from each venue, they visited the three key facilities in sequence.

Participants actively engaged throughout the visit, taking notes, photographing the sites, and using the opportunity to gather information and build connections with the facility representatives.

Site tour



The concept of Takanawa Gateway City positions the entire district as a “living laboratory for a more fulfilling life 100 years into the future.” By treating the whole area as a field for experimentation, the project aims to foster innovation to contribute to a better and more sustainable future. Located just 17 minutes from Haneda Airport and a single stop away from Shinagawa Station—the gateway to the Kansai region—via the Yamanote and Keihin-Tohoku Lines, this project leverages its exceptional accessibility to attract visitors from both Japan and abroad, including inbound tourists. On the tour, this ambitious initiative attracted significant interest as it continues striving to become the “Global Gateway Shinagawa”—a hub for international exchange where new businesses and cultures are constantly emerging—.

The Inbound Travel Promotion Division will continue to carry out initiatives of this kind, providing member companies with opportunities to experience a wide range of tourism and travel content aligned with current trends.

GREEN×EXPO 2027 site visit and momentum-building meeting

GREEN×EXPO 2027 (International Horticultural Expo 2027) will be held in Yokohama City from March 19, 2027. With the event now just one year away, the Domestic Travel Promotion Division held the GREEN×EXPO 2027 Site Visit and Momentum-Building Meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. The meeting aimed to build momentum toward the successful delivery of the Expo and to strengthen collaboration between the International Horticultural Expo Association and travel agencies.

On the day of the event, a total of 60 participants attended, including 46 representatives (responsible for product planning and sales, group sales, and educational travel sales) from 14 travel agencies that have concluded or are scheduled to conclude sales agreements for GREEN×EXPO 2027 admission tickets, 9 representatives from the Expo Association, 1 representative from the Japan Tourism Agency, and 4 representatives from JATA.

Following briefings on the current status of site development and future plans, participants entered the actual venue area and observed the site from the windows of a chartered bus.

(Please note that photography was not permitted in areas under construction; we apologize that no images can be included.)

Participants viewed the construction site while envisioning the completed venue with the help of renderings of the finished site.

Participants were briefed that construction progress is currently at approximately 10–20% completion. Basic infrastructure work, including water, sewage, and electrical systems, has been completed, and foundation work for pavilions and other buildings has just begun.

To help participants grasp the overall scale and spatial layout of the venue, the bus tour covered nearly all areas of the site.

Participants commented that while it is still difficult to go beyond imagination at this stage due to the absence of buildings and greenery, it was valuable to be able to experience the scale of the site firsthand.

* It has been announced that the total designated area for GREEN×EXPO 2027 is approximately 100 hectares, of which about 80 hectares will comprise the main venue area. In comparison, the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai site covered 155 hectares (including approximately one-third occupied by water and large-scale solar power areas). Based on these figures, the scale of GREEN×EXPO 2027 can be considered slightly smaller than that of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. After the site visit, participants moved to Yokohama Chinatown, the largest Chinatown in Japan, where an opinion exchange session was held between travel agencies and representatives of the Expo Association. The session provided a valuable opportunity to deepen communication and engage in constructive discussions toward the success of the Expo, including sharing current challenges related to attracting visitors and exchanging ideas on possible solutions.

We will make use of the information gained through this visit, as well as the connections built among all stakeholders, to continue working toward the success of GREEN×EXPO 2027.

Official website: GREEN×EXPO 2027 (International Horticultural Expo 2027)

<https://expo2027yokohama.or.jp>

International Affairs Department

PATA Nepal Chapter Hosts Nepal Tourism Seminar & B2B Workshop

The International Affairs Department of JATA also serves as the secretariat of the Japan Chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA). In this milestone year marking the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal, a 23-member PATA Nepal Chapter inbound mission visited Japan from April 1 to April 6.

During their stay, Nepal Tourism Seminars and B2B workshops (business meetings) were held in Tokyo and Osaka with Japanese travel agencies and tourism stakeholders.

In Tokyo on April 2, 69 participants attended, and in Osaka on April 5, 37 participants joined from Japan. Attendees learned about the appeal of Nepal through presentations by the Nepal Tourism Board and Nepal Airlines. This was followed by individual business meetings with Nepalese travel companies, the Nepal Tourism Board, and the PATA Nepal Chapter.

After the workshops, a reception hosted by the Nepal Tourism Board was held, providing further opportunities for networking and exchange with Japanese participants.

The event was also featured in a Japanese tourism industry newspaper.

ryoko-net.co.jp/?p=164346



Group photo after the tourism seminar



B2B workshop

The seminar also included an introduction to the Himalayan Travel Mart, a travel trade show held annually in June in Kathmandu, along with an invitation for Japanese buyers to participate.

The International Affairs Department will continue to engage in promotional activities with overseas tourism organizations and national tourism boards, building on exchange initiatives such as this PATA program.

Tourism EXPO Japan Promotion Office

Applications for exhibitor participation in Tourism EXPO Japan 2026 have reached full capacity.

Tourism EXPO Japan 2026, scheduled to be held from September 24 to 27 this year, has seen its exhibitor application slots filled as of April 17. We sincerely thank all applicants for their strong interest and support. Currently, applications are being accepted for a cancellation waitlist. As cancellations do occur each year, those wishing to exhibit are kindly requested to apply for the waitlist. Please note that allocation of available spaces due to cancellations will be made on a first-come, first-served basis; therefore, early application to the waitlist is strongly recommended for those considering participation.

You can find an overview of “Tourism EXPO Japan 2026” at the link below:

<https://www.t-expo.jp/en>

Applications for the “Japan Tourism Awards” are still being accepted.

The “Japan Tourism Awards,” which recognize exemplary initiatives by organizations, companies, groups, and individuals that contribute to revitalizing the “power of travel” and ensuring its sustainability, are celebrating their 10th anniversary this year, thanks to your continued support.

In addition to the regular awards, this year, a new “Special Awards for Startups” has been established to recognize startup companies contributing to the regeneration of tourism and the expansion of sustainability

initiatives. Applications are now being accepted (deadline: May 29). We look forward to receiving your submissions.

You can find an overview of the “Japan Tourism Awards” at the link below:

<https://www.t-expo.jp/en/biz/program/award>



JATA Column

Starting with this issue, we will introduce useful insights into Japan’s Travel Agency Act and related regulations, along with practical tips for travel in Japan that we hope you will find helpful.

In this first installment, we will explain the different types of travel contracts.

Types of travel services handled by travel agencies in Japan

Travel contracts can be broadly classified into “Organized Tour Contracts” and “Arranged Tour Contracts”.



- Organized Tour Contracts

Under an Organized Tour Contract, the travel agency prepares the travel plan, and the tour is presented with an inclusive price that covers all necessary costs for the trip, including the agency’s margin.

An Organized Tour Contract is further classified into two types: “Subscription-Type (solicited)” and “Order-Taking Type (custom)”.

A Subscription-Type Organized Tour Contract refers to a tour for which the travel agency prepares the travel plan in advance and promotes it widely through brochures and other materials. It is commonly called as a package tour.

An Order-Taking Type Organized Tour Contract refers to a tour in which the travel agency prepares the travel plan based on a traveler’s request, and it may not be offered for general solicitation. Such contracts are often used for group travel, such as company trips, school excursions, and community group tours where an organizer consults a travel agency to create the travel plan

- Arranged Tour Contracts

An Arranged Tour Contract is a contract under which a travel agency, at the request of the traveler, undertakes to arrange travel services provided by transportation and accommodation providers so that the traveler can receive such services.

Examples include the arrangement of train tickets, airline tickets, and accommodation.

Under an Arranged Tour Contract, the fares or charges set by transportation and accommodation providers, as well as the service fees charged by the travel agency, must be clearly indicated separately. Unlike Organized Tour Contracts, the total price cannot be presented as an inclusive amount; in other words, the agency cannot set a bundled or packaged price.

Travel agencies are classified into Category 1, Category 2, Category 3, and regional limited operators.

However, only Category 1 travel agencies are permitted to plan and operate outbound (overseas)

Subscription-Type Organized Tours. Order-Taking Organized tours can also be planned and operated by Category 2 and Category 3 travel agencies.

Overseas Arranged Tours may be handled by Category 1, Category 2, and Category 3 travel agencies.

However, regional limited travel agencies are only permitted to plan and operate package tours, as well as handle travel arrangements, only within a limited area of Japan—generally restricted to neighboring municipalities.

Courtesy calls and Visits to JATA

April 13th (Monday)

On Monday, April 13, Peruvian Commercial Counsellor Ernesto Lopez visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260413_peru/

April 7th (Tuesday)

On Tuesday, April 7th, Maricarmen Martí Villarreal, Director of the Nuevo León State Government Tourism Board, and others visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260407_mexico/

April 7th (Tuesday)

On Tuesday, April 7th, a delegation from the Palau Tourism Bureau visited the JATA headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260407_palau/

February 19th (Thursday)

On Thursday, February 19, Mr. Mundandamo Kaweza, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Zambia in Japan, visited JATA headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260219_zambia/

January 13th (Tuesday)

Enrique Ruiz, Tourism Counselor at the Embassy of Spain and Director General of the Spanish National Tourism Board, visited JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260113_spain/

December 18th (Thursday)

Sandun Sameera, First Secretary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, visited JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/251218_srilanka/

December 18th (Thursday)

Ambassador Farid Talibov of the Republic of Azerbaijan and others paid a courtesy visit to JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/251218_azerbaijan/

December 12th (Friday)

The Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Namibia, Rebecca Iyambo, and others paid a courtesy visit to JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/251212_namibia/

October 31st (Friday)

Abdul Hameed of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/251031_pakistan/

October 3rd (Friday)

Portuguese Vice Minister of Tourism Pedro Machado and others visited JATA headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/251003_portugal/

* For courtesy visit records prior to this, please visit the JATA website.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/visit2025/>

JATA's online Magazine Jatakomi

JATA introduces the daily activities of Head Quarters and regional offices on the website.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-information/mog_jjatakomi/mog_jatakomi_index/?lang=en

*The linked articles on the JATA website can be translated into Japanese, English, Korean, traditional Chinese, and simplified Chinese. If the language is not translated properly, please click the Google Translate button (see below) and select your preferred language.

Please select your language (English, Chinese and Korean are available)
at the above "Google translation"  button.

For Companies Based Overseas

Join us as an Overseas Allied member!

JATA welcomes you to join us as an Overseas Allied Member. You can get more details about the membership and application from the link below.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/english/whats/join-us/>

If you are looking for JATA membership for a business based in Japan, please check the link below.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/page-2298/>

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JATA International Newsletter February edition;

Written by JATA International Affairs Department

If you have any comments or inquiries regarding this newsletter please contact the following email address:

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