

DESPITE INCREASE, JAPAN FAILS TO MAKE TARGET



Despite welcoming more visitors in 2010 than in 2009, Japan's inbound tourism figures still fell short of government expectations. The failure to meet the targets has been blamed on the blemishing of relations between Japan and China.

The Japanese Liberal Democratic party set a goal for Japanese tourism in 2007, that 2010 would see 10 million foreign tourists in Japan. Japanese people have, in recent times, been famous for their tendency to visit other countries, yet reminders were made that Japan needs an influx of foreigners and revenue just as much. **Despite an all-time high last year, reaching almost 9 million, the 2007 target was not met.** Again, **this was in spite of an increase of 29.2% in terms of foreign arrivals.**

It was suggested that everything was going smoothly until September when the souring of relations between Japan and China along with the appreciation of the yen left the target a little too far away. Arrivals from Europe and North America were rising well and in line with the 10-million target. Similarly, **when the Japanese government decided to reduce visa requirements for Chinese citizens in July last year, they started to visit in greater numbers.**

However, the flocks of Chinese visitors stopped coming in such numbers when a political problem arose due to a Chinese fishing trawler and a Japanese patrol vessel near the disputed islands of Senkaku. **The event led to Chinese tour operators canceling many trips and the Japanese tourism industry lost out as a result.** If this event had not taken place then the extra million could have been probably achieved thanks to Chinese visitors.

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