

# Japan rethinks Go To Travel subsidy program amid virus resurgence

---

jt [japantimes.co.jp/](http://japantimes.co.jp/)

Japan will look at its Go To Travel domestic tourism promotion campaign, with a possible decision to suspend it for people living in areas where coronavirus infection numbers are climbing set to come later Saturday, a government source said.

Following record numbers of COVID-19 cases and calls from health experts to halt the government subsidy, the source said late Friday that the government has begun thinking of putting certain limits on the program aimed at supporting the virus-hit domestic tourism sector.

The discussions come a day after the government's coronavirus task force proposed reviewing the campaign in regions where infections are spreading rapidly.

On Friday, Japan reported 2,427 new infections, hitting a record high for the third day in a row, according to local authorities. Urban areas saw a sharp rise in its new cases, with Tokyo logging 522 cases, down from the record 534 marked Thursday, and Osaka Prefecture hitting a record 370.

Toshio Nakagawa, head of the Japan Medical Association, said there is no concrete evidence to indicate the program is responsible for the recent spike in coronavirus cases, but "there is no mistaking that it acted as a catalyst."

Haruo Ozaki, who heads the Tokyo Medical Association, separately said it is very possible that people's movements have spread infections.

"We would like (the government) to suspend (the program)," he said.

Despite such concerns, transport hubs around the nation saw increased traffic on Saturday, the start of a three-day weekend.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who said "maximum caution" is required in the current virus situation, has sought to strike a balance between preventing the spread of the deadly virus and revitalizing the battered economy.

The Go To Travel program was launched in late July and effectively covers half of domestic travelers' expenses.

Among the ideas being floated are leaving it to prefectural governors in the affected regions to decide to no longer accept the coupons given to travelers through the program, the source said.