

news release

New Challenges of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism!
Protecting Citizens' Lives from Intensifying Disasters Due to Climate Change

**Eight Enhancements of
the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel**

Launch of
the 100,000 People Project for 「personalization of disaster preparedness」
full-scale disaster prevention tourism is starting
We will develop Japan's world-renowned disaster prevention facilities into
the world's top tourist resources

In recent years, due to climate change, unprecedented heavy rains and large typhoons have frequently occurred across the country. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism aims to protect the lives of citizens from disasters by promoting "personalization of disaster preparedness (to take a Disaster personally)" To make disaster preparedness knowledge enjoyable for both children and adults from a **"tourism perspective,"** the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel will be further enhanced as an information dissemination base.

The Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel flows 50 meters underground in the Tokyo metropolitan area and is one of the world's largest underground rivers, constructed with Japan's cutting-edge civil engineering technology. The immense scale of the pressure-adjusting water tank, often referred to as the "underground temple," is particularly popular, attracting approximately 62,000 visitors annually for paid tours. Recently, a video of water flowing into the pressure-adjusting tank posted on the social media platform "X" has garnered over 14 million views, highlighting its appeal **as a tourist attraction, including among inbound tourists.**

In response to the imminent disaster threats facing the nation, **young members** of the Kanto Regional Development Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism have spearheaded discussions on **"personalization of disaster preparedness" to protect citizens' lives.** They have launched a "Disaster Preparedness Tourism" project in collaboration with **both public and private sectors.** Through various discussions and brainstorming sessions, they devised **eight enhancement plans** to improve public disaster awareness. They have also developed a "Disaster Preparedness Concierge" program and created a "Card to Promote Personalization of Disaster Preparedness" to protect lives from disasters.

Additionally, there is a grand plan to further utilize infrastructure as a tourism resource, leading to increased tourism in Saitama Prefecture and Kasukabe City, while showcasing Japan's cutting-edge disaster prevention and civil engineering technologies to the world. The eight enhancement plans include lighting up the pressure-adjusting water tank, opening the previously unreleased third vertical shaft as a new tourist attraction with an "adventure experience course," and creating content for children to learn about disaster prevention systems through the popular game "Minecraft." Other initiatives include introducing multilingual tools to cater to inbound tourists, **aiming to increase annual visitors to the Outer Underground Discharge Channel to 100,000.** Visitors will receive newly designed "Card to Promote Personalization of Disaster Preparedness" to strongly promote the initiative of "personalization of disaster preparedness."

Eight enhancement plans for the world's best disaster prevention tourism!

A New Challenge by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism! 'personalization of disaster preparedness for 100,000 People'

Eight Enhancement Plans for "The Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel", also known as "The Disaster Prevention Underground temple".

Disaster Prevention Underground Temple In response to the imminent threat of severe disasters in the Tokyo metropolitan area, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism aims to protect citizens' lives by promoting "personalization of disaster preparedness." Using the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel as the stage, the following eight enhancement plans will be launched and implemented sequentially by the end of 2025.

Enhancement 1: Accreditation of a New "Disaster Preparedness Concierge" and Development of the "Card to Promote Personalization of Disaster Preparedness for Protecting Lives from Disasters"

The Edogawa River Office will certify the "Disaster Preparedness Concierge" as "personalization of disaster preparedness Guide." They will distribute the newly developed worksheet-style "Card to Promote Personalization of Disaster Preparedness," which concisely summarize preparations for natural disasters, to all visitors. The "Disaster Preparedness Concierge" will provide enjoyable and thorough explanations on how to protect precious lives. The goal is to attract 100,000 visitors annually to promote "personalization of disaster preparedness"



Enhancement 2: Utilizing Infrastructure as a Tourism Resource! Introduction of an Unprecedented Light and Sound Experience System in the Disaster Prevention Underground Temple

To attract many citizens to disaster prevention infrastructure facilities, we will utilize them as new tourist attractions. Among the various infrastructures managed by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism nationwide, the Disaster Prevention Underground Temple will be illuminated with a bold and unprecedented concept! By creating a three-dimensional space with light and sound, we will offer a unique experience that cannot be found elsewhere.



Enhancement 3: Development of a New Infrastructure Tourism Course (Limited to 100 People Annually) An Uncharted "Adventure Experience Walking Through the Underground River"

The eastward diversion of the Tone River, initiated by Tokugawa Ieyasu, led to the creation of the Nakagawa and Ayase River basins, which have suffered repeated flood damage for approximately 400 years. The Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel was constructed to put an end to this history of flooding. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism will generously showcase the disaster prevention technologies they have invested in to combat natural disasters.



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In addition to the main attractions of the Disaster Prevention Underground Temple and the first vertical shaft, you are invited to the "Adventure Experience Course," which now includes the underground tunnel and the third vertical shaft. This special course allows you to experience the dedication of engineers to flood control and the importance of disaster prevention. It is designed as a course to learn about the mission of disaster prevention facilities, and participants will receive a "RyūQ Disaster Prevention Doctor" certificate.



Enhancement 4: (Disaster Preparedness Education for Children) Using "Minecraft" a Game that has become explosively popular around the world, new educational content will be introduced to the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel,

Using the globally popular game "Minecraft," played by one in ten people of Younger Generation worldwide, children will be inspired to freely explore the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel! Disaster prevention, often considered difficult, will be made enjoyable and educational through this game, with the disaster prevention system of the discharge channel available as a fun learning tool on the web starting in April. In June, new plans for inquiry-based learning and social studies field trips will be launched!



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Enhancement 5: (Disaster Preparedness Education for Children) Development of an Inquiry-Based Learning Program for Elementary School Students by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Going beyond the traditional framework of social studies field trips, we will newly start offering an inquiry-based learning program based on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's curriculum guidelines from April. This program aims to expand elementary school students' understanding of the threats posed by natural disasters and the importance of

"personalization of disaster preparedness" to protect their own lives.



Enhancement 6: The Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel as Japan's New Inbound Tourism Resource Multilingual Support in 21 Languages

In response to last year's record-high inbound tourism, and as a new tourism resource for Saitama Prefecture and Kasukabe City, we will align with the Japan Tourism Agency's inbound tourism policies and introduce Japan's world-renowned civil engineering technology through inbound tourism. We will evolve from providing explanations only in Japanese to offering multilingual support in 21 languages through 「VoiceOn」.



Eight enhancement plans for the world's best disaster prevention tourism!

Enhancement 7: Mystery Solving Event Around RyūQ-kan "The Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel and the Legend of the Fire-Preventing Dragon"

When the Five Cards' Mysteries Are Solved, the Legendary Dragon Awakens A mystery-solving event based on the "Legend of the Fire-Preventing Dragon" from Kasukabe City (formerly Shōwa Town) will be held at the RyūQ-kan, the public relations facility of the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel. This event targets primarily young people and mystery-solving enthusiasts, aiming to attract visitors from the generations that have fewer participants. It is designed to be enjoyable for both tour participants and non-participants alike.

There is a tale about a talisman with the character "龍" (dragon) written on it by a monk. According to the story, when a fire broke out, the talisman burned instead of the house, saving it from destruction.

Enhancement 8: Creating a new base for tour-type tourism in Saitama Prefecture and Kasukabe Cit Expanding Infrastructure Tourism as a New Tourism Resource

By encouraging the 100,000 visitors to the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel to explore tourist spots within Kasukabe City and Saitama Prefecture, we aim to promote "tourism that enriches the local community." We will develop engaging attractions that combine local events, festivals, seasonal highlights, and the natural beauty and seasonal foods of Kasukabe and its surroundings, ensuring visitors have a memorable and varied experience.



collaborative image

Upcoming schedule

- ◆ March 10, 2025 (Monday) ⇒ Joint press conference
- ◆ March 14, 2025 (Friday) ⇒ New course reservation begins
- ◆ March 26, 2025 (Wednesday) ⇒ Monitor tour (For the media)
- ◆ April 16, 2025 (Wednesday) ⇒ New course begins