

Japan to test walk-through explosive sniffers during APEC

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Passengers check in at a counter of South Korea's Asiana Airlines at the newly opened international terminal building of the Tokyo International Airport on October 21. Japan will test new "walk-through" bomb detectors that can pick up minute traces of explosives when the country hosts an Asia-Pacific summit next month, government officials said Wednesday.

Japan will test new "walk-through" bomb detectors that can pick up minute traces of explosives when the country hosts an Asia-Pacific summit next month, government officials said Wednesday.

The system, still in the development and test phase, will be installed on November 12-14 at a train station in Yokohama near Tokyo, the venue for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, officials said.

Passengers will be alerted by signs and given the choice of whether to help trial the Hitachi-made system, or whether to pick another gate, under a test that is meant to check for false positives.

However, [police](#) also hope the new device will act as a deterrent against terrorist attacks during the summit, a police official said.

The walk-through gate works by blowing a stream of warm air that brushes the passing passenger before it is captured by a suction device for chemical analysis of any [airborne particles](#).

Explosives particles can be recognised within two or three seconds, according to the science and technology ministry.

When a person makes or carries home-made bombs, "chemical substances from the explosives can stay on the producer's hands, clothes or bags... The air jet can blow them off," said Akiko Kobayashi at the ministry.

The system, believed to be the first of its kind in the world, has also been tested at Tokyo's Haneda airport and in Akihabara, Tokyo's electrical goods and comic and anime shopping district, since last year.

Security has been tightening ahead of the APEC meetings, which will bring government leaders from 21 economies, with more police officers patrolling train stations, airports, parks and other locations.

The national police said it will mobilise a maximum of 21,000 officers a day when a string of meetings are held from November 7 to 14, the largest international event in Japan since a Group of Eight summit in 2008.

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