

# One dead as heavy snow and record cold hit Japan

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Snow blanketed the ancient capital Kyoto.

Tourists reveled in wintry scenes across Japan on Wednesday, as much of the country was blanketed by snow in a cold snap that has killed at least one person and disrupted travel.

"These temperatures are some of the coldest we've seen in a decade," Japan Meteorological Agency official Takafumi Umeda told AFP.

Record lows were logged in several locations, including one area of southern Kumamoto, where the mercury hit -9 degrees Celsius (16 degrees Fahrenheit), the coldest logged there since 1977 when that observation site began keeping track.

Top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said one person had died in the [cold snap](#), while meteorologists warned of blizzards, high waves and traffic snarl-ups due to icy roads.

Authorities were also investigating whether two other deaths were related to the freezing weather across much of the archipelago, Matsuno told reporters.

Hundreds of flights were canceled due to the snowstorm, while delays and cancelations disrupted both local trains and long-distance Shinkansen services. Vehicles on major roads in several locations were left stranded, local media said.

At the seventh-century Zenkoji Temple in the mountainous region of Nagano, north of Tokyo, a chilly calm descended with trees, old-fashioned lamp posts and the place of worship itself covered in layers of powdery [snow](#).



Snow covered popular tourists sites across parts of Japan.

Visitors included some who were there for skiing but had been forced off the slopes by [blizzard](#) conditions.

"I came to ski, but the snow was incredibly heavy so I cut my plan short and instead decided to do a bit of sightseeing," 30-year-old Akiko Sotobori told AFP.

"The blizzard (at the ski resort) was such that I couldn't see anything three meters (10 feet) ahead."

There were picturesque scenes in the former capital, tourist favorite

Kyoto, where the shining walls of the famous Golden Pavilion contrasted with the temporary bright-white brilliance of its tiered roofs.

The country's Sea of Japan coast was hit hardest by the overnight blizzard, with Tokyo and its surrounding regions spared the snow but seeing unseasonably low temperatures.

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