

Japan Pokemon fans in agonising wait for game launch

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Pokemon Go has sparked a global frenzy since its launch two weeks ago, but has yet to be released in Japan

Legions of Pokemon fans were left disappointed Wednesday after a rumoured release of the franchise's hugely popular smartphone game in Japan proved wrong.

The app has now been released in more than 30 countries, but Japan—where Nintendo started the mythical creature franchise 20 years ago—has been kept waiting with no official launch date.

Technology website TechCrunch on Tuesday had flagged the rollout in Japan, but it backtracked within a day, saying it had been delayed.

The Nikkei business daily said Japanese fans may get relief this week.

But the agonising wait sparked a round of national hand-wringing in Japan Wednesday.

"Pokemon Go: When will it come out in Japan?" cried a headline in the afternoon edition of the top-selling Yomiuri newspaper.

But some took to social media to express their frustration at the delay in launching the game on Pokemon's home turf.

"Wouldn't it be better to say that the Japan release will be in the autumn if the Pokemon Go release is delayed several times and cause this confusion?" @im_usami001 wrote on Twitter.

User @aquasonic00 added: "Wanting to play Pokemon Go in Japan ASAP (o^o)."

Nintendo and the Pokemon Company have declined to comment on any official release date. US-based Niantic—which developed the game—has not replied to requests for comment.

Forbes earlier cited Niantic chief executive John Hanke as saying worries that Japan's server capacity was not powerful enough to keep up with expected demand delayed the game's rollout.

Since its global launch two weeks ago, Pokemon Go has sparked a worldwide frenzy among users who have taken to the streets with their smartphones in a bid to capture and train the creatures for battles.

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