

Shibuya Cancels Big New Year Event

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **succession** (noun) /sək'seɪ.ən/ – A number of similar events happening one after the other.
Example: This is the sixth year in succession that the city has canceled the party.
2. **intersection** (noun) /,ɪn.tə'sek.ʃən/ – A place where two or more roads meet or cross.
Example: The Shibuya scramble intersection is the most famous crossing in the world.
3. **rowdy** (adjective) /'raʊ.di/ – Noisy and possibly violent behavior in a public place.
Example: The police want to prevent rowdy behavior during the holiday celebrations.
4. **incident** (noun) /'ɪn.sɪ.dənt/ – An event that is either unpleasant, unusual, or dangerous.
Example: Large crowds can sometimes lead to a dangerous crowd incident or accident.
5. **eliminate** (verb) /i'lim.i.neɪt/ – To completely remove or get rid of something.
Example: The government wants to eliminate street drinking to keep the streets clean.
6. **banned** (verb/adjective) /bænd/ – Officially not allowed by law or rules.
Example: Drinking alcohol on the street is now banned during the night hours.
7. **fenced** (verb/adjective) /fenst/ – Surrounded by a wall or barrier to keep people away.
Example: The famous dog statue will be fenced off so no one can gather near it.



Tokyo's Shibuya ward has canceled its New Year's Eve countdown event once again. This is now the sixth year in a row that the party is not happening. Many people think this cancellation is now a tradition in the famous city area. Officials made this choice because they are very worried about too many people. They want to make sure that everyone stays safe during the night.

The famous "scramble" intersection is a place where thousands of people walk every day. Leaders are afraid that "rowdy" behavior and street drinking will cause dangerous accidents. In the past, people drinking on the street led to many problems for local residents. These same

reasons were used to stop the event during the pandemic years. Even without a party, the area remains very crowded and difficult to manage.

Last year, many people still went to Shibuya station even though there was no party. The police had to work very hard to keep the crowd moving constantly. News reports said that people were cheering "Happy New Year" while police gave loud instructions. It was a very noisy and busy scene for everyone who was there. The officers wanted to prevent people from standing in one spot for too long.

Japan is now seeing millions of tourists every year since the pandemic ended. The Shibuya intersection is one of the most popular places for visitors to take photos. In 2018, about 120,000 people gathered there for the New Year's Eve countdown event. Because tourist numbers are higher now, the crowd could be much larger and more dangerous. Officials believe that the area simply cannot hold that many people safely anymore.

Shibuya is also trying to stop people from drinking alcohol on the streets. Since October 2024, drinking outside is banned between 6 p.m. and 5 a.m. local time. Stores near the station have been asked not to sell alcohol during the night. Even the famous Hachiko dog statue will be hidden behind a tall fence. These rules are all designed to keep the area quiet and very safe.

DISCUSSION

1. If you were the Mayor of Shibuya, would you try to find a way to hold the party safely or just cancel it forever?
2. Do you think fencing off the Hachiko statue is a good idea, or does it make the city look unfriendly?
3. In your city, is there a famous place where too many people gather? How does the city handle the crowds?
4. Imagine you are a tourist who flew to Japan just for the countdown—how would you spend your night instead?
5. Some people say that "street drinking" is part of a fun night out. Do you agree, or do you think it should be banned everywhere?
6. If you had to organize a "virtual" countdown for 120,000 people, how would you make it feel exciting?
7. Police in Shibuya tell people to "keep moving" all night. What is the most difficult job to have on New Year's Eve?