

The Only Bookstore to Open in Matsuyama's Gintengai District:

(High School Student Appeal Writer Shogo Imamura Opens)

Naoki Prize-winning author and Ehime/Iyo Tourism Ambassador Shogo Imamura will open "Honmaru Gintengai"—a facility combining a standard bookstore with a shared-shelf bookstore—on November 1 within the Gintengai Shopping Arcade. The project was sparked by a plea from a high school student during a lecture Imamura gave in the city about a year and a half ago: "Could you please bring a bookstore back to our shopping arcade?" This marks the creation of a new place to encounter books, filling the gap left four and a half years ago when the last bookstore in Gintengai closed.

Seeking to revitalize the struggling publishing industry—plagued by declining bookstore numbers and a drift away from reading—Imamura took over a bookstore in Osaka in 2021 and currently operates shops in three locations nationwide. "Honmaru Gintengai" will be his second location, following the opening of a shop in Jimbocho, Tokyo, in April 2024.

"Honmaru Gintengai" will occupy approximately 108 square meters on the building's ground floor, housing both a standard bookstore and a shared-shelf bookstore. There will be a total of 141 shelves. The shared-shelf section operates by renting out individual shelf spaces, allowing "shelf owners" to sell books they have personally selected within their assigned area. The membership fee is 12,650 yen for both individuals and corporations, while monthly fees vary based on shelf location and size.

Imamura himself is involved in selecting the inventory for the standard bookstore section, which will feature titles tailored to the local character of Matsuyama alongside his own works.

The Gintengai arcade had been without a bookstore since February 2022, when "Haruya Shoten Matsuyama Main Store"—which had operated for 75 years—closed due to the aging of the building.

At an event held in the city in February 2025, high school students voiced a desire for a bookstore like Honmaru—a place they could easily drop by in their daily lives—and Imamura responded positively to the idea.

A commemorative event is also planned for the opening day. Mr. Imamura commented, "We aim to create a bookstore that once again becomes a part of the daily lives of the people of Matsuyama—a place that becomes a new part of young people's everyday lives."

(Ehime Shinbun, Sept. 16)

490m City Road Opens, Connecting JR Matsuyama Station's West Side to the Ring Road

As part of the redevelopment surrounding JR Matsuyama Station—accompanying the elevation of the railway tracks—a new city road named the "Matsuyama Station West Exit-Minamiedo Line" (approximately 34 meters wide and 490 meters long) opened at 3:00 a.m. on September 14th. This road improves access between the areas east and west of the station; during the morning rush hour, it saw a steady flow of bicycles and vehicles.

The urban planning decision for the project was made in 2008. The prefecture carried out construction at the request of Matsuyama City—which faced tight fiscal constraints—and handed the completed road over to the city. It features two lanes in each direction, along with dedicated bicycle lanes and sidewalks. It connects to the "Matsuyama Station West North-South Line" on the east side, while a section of the city road near the "Matsuyama Ring Road" on the west side was reorganized.

An office worker commuting by bicycle expressed optimism about the redevelopment's progress, saying, "Since the railway crossing was removed, roads have gradually been built, making it easier to travel between the east and west sides of the station. Now, I hope to see more buildings go up."

Regarding other road-related projects in the station's redevelopment, the underpass section of the "Chifunemachi-Airport Line" (Sacramento Street) is currently closed to traffic for backfilling work, with completion scheduled for the 2027 fiscal year. Other remaining projects include the construction of a city road running east-west along the north side of the station. (Ehime Shinbun, Sept. 14)

Iyo Bank Urban Renaissance Project

On September 9, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) announced that it had certified Iyo Bank's project to rebuild its main office building, located south of Matsuyama Castle, as a "Private Urban Renaissance Project." The ministry evaluated the initiative for creating a "new landmark leading urban revitalization." This

marks the first such certification within the prefecture.

Certification applies to development projects that meet specific criteria and are located within "Urgent Urban Renaissance Areas," designated by the national government as hubs for urban revitalization. The Iyo Bank Building is being rebuilt within the "Matsuyama Castle Vicinity Area," which was designated as an urban renaissance area in 2024; this status makes the project eligible for special tax incentives.

The new main building will be a 12-story, steel-structured facility with one basement level, constructed on the approximately 3,800-square-meter site. Construction began this July, with completion expected in 2029. MLIT also commended the project for creating green spaces that connect to Matsuyama Castle and Shiroyama Park, as well as for the building's high seismic resistance, which will allow it to serve as a temporary shelter for commuters unable to return home during a major disaster.

Upon receiving the certification, Iyo Bank commented, "We anticipate that urban development will progress in the area surrounding Matsuyama Castle by public-private partnerships. We intend to advance our plan in alignment with the city's regional development policies, while also addressing aspects such as disaster preparedness and the creation of a vibrant urban atmosphere." (September 10, Ehime Shimbun)

Disaster Drill Using New Technology

On July 30, Ehime prefecture held a disaster drill in Toon City, south of Matsuyama, simulating heavy rain and a massive Nankai Trough earthquake. About 6,000 people attended representing 116 organizations, including government agencies, fire departments, and local residents. Personnel from Gunma Prefecture, designated to be dispatched to Ehime in the event of a Nankai Trough earthquake, also participated.

They verified procedures such as shelter operations utilizing new technologies. They utilized a disaster victim support system for the first time, which was introduced in 2025. At the shelter reception, participants scanned 2D codes with their smartphones and registered details like their names and addresses on a dedicated screen. Those without smartphones wrote their information by hand, and then staff entered it into computers.

They introduced a medical container designed to serve as a makeshift clinic during

disasters. It was used in a practical setting for the first time during the disaster drill. Equipped with wheels, the unit can be transported to disaster-stricken areas with about 2.4 meters in width, 6 meters in depth, and 2.9 meters in height. It features two air-conditioned examination spaces, allowing for consultations that protect patient privacy. Equipped with solar panels and a water tank, it remains operational even if electricity and water supplies are cut off. It does not come stocked with medical equipment. Instead, supporting medical personnel, such as Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT), bring the necessary supplies when the unit is deployed.

A doctor, who simulated conducting the examinations, said, "Protecting privacy, such as ensuring that details of the consultation aren't overheard, is crucial, even during an evacuation. I would like to review and enhance the necessary equipment and supplies."
(August 31, Ehime Shimbun)

JR Matsuyama Station 'Lively Facility': Mitsui Fudosan, JR Shikoku, and Iori City selected as project partners

Matsuyama City has announced the selection of three business partners—Mitsui Fudosan, JR Shikoku, and Iori—to provide ideas and expertise for the development of "bustling facilities" (destinations designed to generate foot traffic and vibrancy) covering approximately five hectares on the east and west sides of the JR Matsuyama Station building. Mitsui Fudosan, known for its nationwide "LaLaport" large-scale commercial complexes, proposed commercial facilities and parking lots; JR Shikoku proposed commercial facilities, a hotel, and parking; and Iori, which operates hotels and specialty shops for Imabari towels, proposed amusement facilities and dining establishments.

The city plans to sign a basic agreement with the three companies in September. By the end of March 2027, the city will identify the challenges involved in realizing these proposals and will separately select the actual developer during the 2027 fiscal year. Following design and construction phases, the facilities are expected to open in the 2033 fiscal year. The city intends to establish a policy that grants bonus points to these three business partners should they apply to become the actual developer.

The city's Transport Hub Development Division explained that the development of these facilities will be privately funded and operated, noting that "the extent of city support will be

determined by future discussions." At the same time, the project must be coordinated with other initiatives—such as the "Busta" (consolidated public transport terminal) project currently under discussion by the city, national, and prefectural governments, and the extension of Iyo Railway's streetcar tracks into the site. Consequently, the timing of the development will be discussed with the business partners as each project progresses.

Mayor Katsuhito Noshi, speaking at a special press conference, said, "We want to create an area filled with fun and vibrancy. I am pleased that we can move forward with concrete discussions alongside these three companies, all of which have proven track records."

(Ehime Shinbun, Aug. 28)